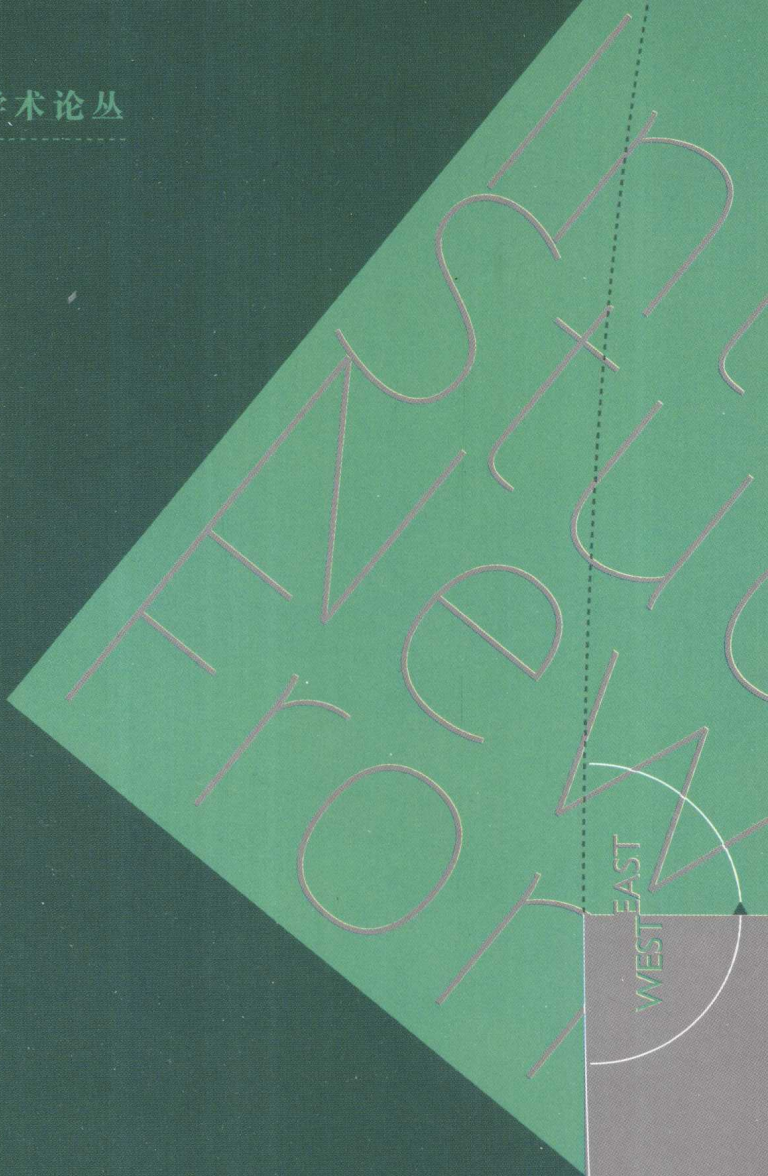


外研社高等英语教育学术论丛



孙有中
主编

跨文化研究前沿

Intercultural Studies:
New Frontiers

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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序 言

1997年在北京外国语大学召开了中国第二届跨文化交际研讨会。当时我国的跨文化交际研究还刚刚起步，中国跨文化交际研究学会也才成立两年。2009年北京再次主办跨文化交际国际研讨会。此时，我国的跨文化交际研究已经有了长足的进步，无论从教学、科研、队伍或是从其影响来看，与十二年前的情况不可同日而语。

中国跨文化交际研究始自上世纪80年代，从一开始它就具有一种特殊的双重性。*Intercultural communication* 引入我国时，曾经有过五六种译法，近年来大致已经归纳为“跨文化交际”与“跨文化传播”两种说法。具有外语教学背景的学者倾向于前者，具有传播学背景的学者则倾向于后者。在起始阶段，外语教学有关的研究占据跨文化交际研究的主导地位，传播学方面的跨文化研究所占比重很小，跨其他学科的研究更是凤毛麟角，但是近年来跨文化传播学的研究势不可挡，在这一本论文集中已可清楚地看出这一势头。跨文化研究的范畴还在不断扩大，除了传播学领域和外语教学，研究还涉及到跨文化交际理论、身份认同、价值取向、经贸关系、跨国企业文化、文化适应、跨文化培训等等。这在论文集中都有充分的反映。可以说，论文集既集中了我国学者的研究成果，也同时反映了国际学者的研究现状。

多年以来，我国跨文化交际研究的一个明显弱点是实证研究的缺乏。我曾经做过一项调查，我查阅了1999-2002年中国期刊全文数据库，在文史哲、教育和社科项下，共查到涉及跨文化交际的文章1066篇，其中基于数据统计的文章只有6篇，占总数的5.6%。这一数字十分惊人，说明我国的跨文化交际研究与国际上主流研究还有很大的差距。许多学者为此忧虑，纷纷著文提出批评和建议。我们高兴地看到，这一情况正在改变。一方面，我们在期刊上仍然看到不少一般议论性的文章，题目陈旧，内容重复，但是，另一方面，我们也发现论文的研究题目不断扩大，研究方法越来越与国际上的主流研究范式靠近，定量定性的研究数量不断增加。本论文集就是明证：论文内容新颖，研究方法科学，研究结果十分有趣。一般人常常把论文集与枯燥的阅读相联系，但是读了这本论文集，你的感受会完全两样。

我国的跨文化交际研究方兴未艾，有志的年轻学者不断加盟，形势喜人，但要真正提出具有我国特色的跨文化研究理论，拿出有分量的研究成果，跻身于国际跨文化交际/传播研究的前列，我们还有很长的一段路要走。

胡文仲

2010年6月

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一、理论前沿

Toward a *I Ching* Model of Communication

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Abstract: The paper aims to develop a model of communication based on the thought of *I Ching*. The dialectical and dialogical interaction between *yin* and *yang* serves as the foundation of the model development, which leads to the conceptualization of communication as an interdetermining process in which interactants develop a mutually dependent relationship through the exchange of symbols. The model stipulates five characteristics of human communication: holistic, hierarchical, interconnected, creative, and harmonious. In addition, the holistic and dynamic nature of communication is delineated based on the model from three perspectives: forces of human communication, forms of the movement of human communication, and the outcome of human communication. It is concluded that while a universal model can be used to describe the universal phenomenon of human communication, the *I Ching* model reflects potential differences of value or moral orientations toward communication between Chinese and Westerners. Hence, the model can be used to better understand Chinese behaviors from an emic perspective in the future research.

Key words: communication; *I Ching*; model

Introduction

As a universal concept, “communication” exists in all human societies. In other words, people in different societies must go through the process of exchanging symbols in order to achieve the goal of mutual understanding. Hence, the development of a universal model or theory of human communication is possible, especially when applied to the explanation of, for example, the existence, nature and components of communication. Nevertheless, while recognizing the fact claimed by scholars that “we cannot not communicate” (Watzlawick, Bravin & Jackson, 1967), “Communication is symbolic, dynamic, and developmental” (e.g., Chen & Chen, 2005), or “Communication involves elements such as sender, encoding, channel, message, receiver, decoding, feedback, noise, environment, etc.” (e.g., Adler & Rodman, 2006), it is important to know that the way to perceive the concept and to exercise communication activities is

subject to the influence of the culture a person lives by (Chen, 2004).

Take one of the universal components of human communication as an example. “Encoding” is a necessary internal process of creating symbols in the sender’s mind before a message can be developed and delivered to the receiver via a channel. However, in the process of encoding, Chinese people are conditioned by their cultural teachings, such as “sincerity in speaking”, “silence is gold”, and “talking much errs much”, and therefore tend to be very cautious in creating symbols. Reflected in the message originated from the encoding process, the amount of self-disclosure is therefore less than Westerners (Chen, 1995), and the quality of the message tends to be more relational and other-oriented (Chang & Holt, 1991; Hwang, 1987). Moreover, the belief of “harmony is a great virtue” also leads the Chinese to be more restrained, indirect, and less confrontational in the process of feedback (Chen, 2001; Chen & Ma, 2002). All these demonstrate that, from a cultural perspective, it is apparent that different cultural groups possess different communication styles.

The cultural influence on the communication process is then providing a *de facto* rationale for developing a valid model of communication, which can be used to explain interactional behaviors of people from a specific cultural group. In this sense, this kind of emic model of communication is not a universal one any more, although it won’t challenge the universal way of treating communication from a more abstract or etic level. Based on this argument and distinction, this paper attempts to propose a model of communication from the Chinese cultural perspective, specifically based on *I Ching* or the *Book of Changes*. It was assumed that the model can be used to better understand Chinese communication behaviors from a more micro perspective and to compare with the possible universal model of human communication. The characteristics of communication based on the model of *I Ching* first are delineated, followed by the analyses of the holistic and dynamic nature of human communication from the perspectives of communication forces, forms of communication movement, and communication outcomes.

A *I Ching* Model of Human Communication

Bian or change is the key concept of *I Ching*, an ancient collection of Chinese wisdom appeared more than two thousand years ago, and this is why *I Ching* is also called the *Book of Changes*. The concept of change later formed

the ontological assumptions of Chinese philosophy and dictated the behaviors of Chinese communication. The dialectical interaction between the two opposite but complementary forces, i.e., *yin* and *yang*, is the origin of *bian* or change. Based on *I Ching*, three ontological assumptions were generated to bring continuity into the process of change and to regulate the alteration of *yin* and *yang* (Chai & Chai, 1969; Chen, 2008a). First of all, the universe, including human interaction, is a great whole, in which all is but a transitional process. Second, the transformation of the universe is moving in a cyclic manner. And third, this cyclic transformation of the universe is an on-going, endless process. Thus, all the contradictions in human society will be resolved in this continuously transforming process of the universe.

According to Cheng (1987), the dialectic completion of relative polarities is the end result of the pulling and pushing of *yin* and *yang*. Everything is then a synthetic unity embedded in the mutual functions of *yin* and *yang* in different stages of the transformation. The holistic nature of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* represents a totality “to which all things belong and the source from which all things spring forth” (p. 36). The view of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* as the source of life became the framework Chinese people used to explain the rise and fall, the flourishing and decline of human activities (Xiao, 2006). Moreover, a state of dynamic but harmonious balance for the interaction and the transformation of *yin* and *yang* is the key to sustaining life. The lack of harmony infers the absence of the dynamic equilibrium, which results in the failure of human actions (Chen, 1993). Figure 1 shows a *I Ching* model of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* which can be used to represent the process of human communication.

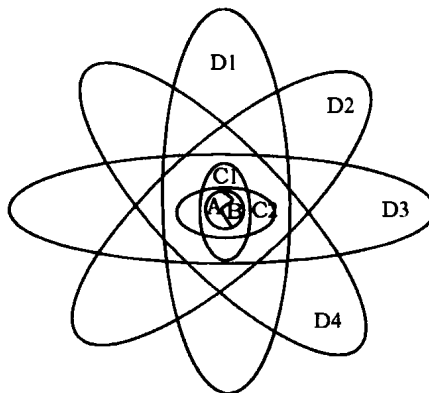


Figure 1. A *I Ching* Model of Human Communication

Figure 1 indicates that the progressive direction of the interaction of the two cosmic forces, i.e., *yin* and *yang*, takes the form of continuous cycles and results in the development of human society. The non-ending cyclic transformation implies two important attributes: interconnected creativity and harmonious hierarchy (Fung, 1983; Chen, 2001).

Creativity refers to that the movement of the interdetermined *yin* and *yang* is a process of production and reproduction. In other words, change means production and reproduction or what Fang (1981) called “creative creativity” (p. 109). This successive movement of *yin* and *yang* constitutes the Way or Tao, which is manifested in humanity and penetrates all things, and brings about infinite interpretation, possibility and potentiality of reality. What stirs the state of absolute quietness and inactivity before the interaction of *yin* and *yang* is the function of *gan ying* (i.e., wholehearted responding) embedded in *cheng* (i.e., sincerity). In other words, it is the sincere and honest mind that forms the basis of wholehearted responding between *yin* and *yang*, and unites the two opposite forces in order to emit the continuous production revolving in the interconnected cycles of movement (Wang, 1989; Wu, 1976).

From the perspective of human communication, Xiao and Chen (2009) stipulated that the concept of *gan ying* in *I Ching* is an organic capacity which cultivates interconnection and interaction between two elements. In addition, *gan ying* endows an ethical and spiritual predisposition. It is the sympathy and empathy toward other living beings as a whole, in which an ethically appropriate act and response is required. A harmonious relationship is then established through this symmetrical and congruent communication process; a state of equilibrium is therefore reached.

The hierarchical structure of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* is illustrated in the arrangement of the six lines (*yao*) of each hexagram in *I Ching*. The movement required from the bottom line up to the top line dictates the principle and patterns of change or alternation. According to Chen (2008a),

The first or the bottom line indicates the foundation of change; the second line is the sprouting period, which indicates the formation of a change of things; the third line is the embodiment indicating the concretizing stage of change; the fourth line is like the leaves of a tree, indicating the strong growth of change; the fifth line is the blooming period, indicating the flourishing of change; and the sixth or top line is the fruit, indicating the fullness of change, which implies a stage of

transformation to another cycle. (p. 8)

The movement implies an orderly, rather than chaotic, dynamic process for the interaction of *yin* and *yang*. Two patterns of the hierarchical relationship are produced from the interaction of the six lines, each with a *yin* or *yang* attribute: distant responding and close neighboring (Li, 1987).

Distant responding refers to the connection of lines between the first and the fourth, the second and the fifth, and the third and the sixth. A positive responding emerges if one of the interconnected lines is of *yin* attribute and the other is *yang*; negative or null responding happens when both lines are with *yin* attribute or with *yang* attribute. A positive responding is said to produce the effect of attractiveness, while negative responding results in a mutual exclusion.

Close neighboring is the relationship formed between the two lines next to each other. The one on the top is called the “driving” line, and the one below is the “receptive” line. It is a good sign if the driving line is *yang* (representing the dominant force) and the receptive line is *yin* (representing the submissive force); a bad luck appears if the *yin* line drives over the *yang* line. A mutual exclusiveness becomes evident if both lines are with *yin* attribute or are with *yang* attribute (Xu, 1991).

According to *I Ching*, the stability of hierarchical relationships based on the mutually dynamic interaction among the six lines is dictated by the three elements rooted in the hexagram: *shi* (temporal contingencies), *wei* (spatial contingencies), and *ji* (the imperceptible beginning of change) (see Chen, 2008b; Wilhelm, 1990). In other words, a harmoniously hierarchical network of relationship is a function of recognizing the trace of change (i.e., *ji*) and knowing the right time (i.e., *shi*) to behave appropriately in a specific context with proper attributes (i.e., *wei*). The web woven by *shi*, *wei*, and *ji* provides a field in which Chinese people construct the reality of their behaviors and make sense of their daily lives.

Five characteristics of human communication can be summarized from the above discussion of *I Ching* imbued in the model of Figure 1: holistic, hierarchical, interconnected, creative, and harmonious.

First, human communication is a holistic system. The holistic system is formed by the dynamic, dialectical interaction between *yin* and *yang* (represented by B and A in the model). Although *yin* (and *yang*) itself is a system in which its own force generates an internal transforming process, *I Ching* claims that *yin* alone won't produce and *yang*

alone won't grow. In other words, without the interaction between the two opposite forces of *yin* and *yang*, a holistic system, illustrated by *tai chi* in which the dark area represents *yin* and white *yang* (see Figure 2), cannot be developed.

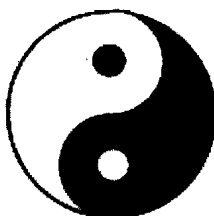


Figure 2. The *Tai Chi* Model

Second, human communication is creative. The holistic system of human communication is developed through an endless process of production and reproduction of the interaction between *yin* and *yang*, hence human communication is a suprasystem which contains different layers of subsystems (e.g., A, B, C1, C2, D1-D4 in the model).

Third, human communication is interconnected. All the subsystems within the model contain both *yin* and *yang* components, thus, they are interconnected, interdependent, interfused, interpenetrated, and interdetermined.

Fourth, human communication is hierarchical. The interconnection of components within the holistic system of human communication is based on the hierarchical structure of the relationship, which is confined by temporal and spatial contingencies.

Finally, human communication is harmonious. Harmony is the ultimate goal of Chinese communication (Chen, 2002; Chen & Chung, 1994). The dialectical interaction between *yin* and *yang* aims to reach a state of dynamic equilibrium, in which harmony is treated as the end rather than a means of human communication. Therefore, all the contractions should be resolved in the process of communication.

The following section further delineates of the dynamic nature of human communication from the perspective of *I Ching* model.

The Dynamic Nature of Human Communication

I Ching prescribes that change is the fundamental principle of the universe. Human communication is a dynamic process in which the interactants endeavor to reach a harmonious equilibrium through a dialectical, endless, and cyclic transformation.