

INTRODUCTION TO CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

# 跨文化交际 研究概论

王卓洪宇著

涉外篇

中国铁道出版社  
CHINA RAILWAY PUBLISHING HOUSE

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Communication Research

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## 内 容 简 介

跨文化交际研究作为一个应用性很强的学科,往往会涉及跨学科的内容,当今中国在进行全球化的融合中也需要大量能够进行跨文化交际的人才。本书正是遵循实用性、阶段性和适度性的原则,从价值观、言语交际、非言语交际、跨文化冲突、休克与适应、跨文化交际心理与态度等不同维度来重点培养读者对于跨文化交际的终身学习意识。

本书适合作为研究世界不同文化的参考用书,也适合作为其他各专业人员在外活动中的跨文化指南。

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# 前言

## PREFACE

当前全球性金融危机之后的经济复苏过缓和其他若干全球性问题使国内外学者意识到以往的跨文化交际研究具有明显的局限性，对跨文化交际的价值观等核心问题的认识和阐述存在缺失。一方面该学科被引进中国的这些年来，我国的学者们借鉴国外理论，结合国内实际，使它高速地进步发展；另一方面，我国学者们的研究基本上承袭了西方的研究理论，相对来说，缺乏对自身文化和交际资源的认识与反思，缺乏独创性。在研究内容方面，体现为视野不够宽泛；“收集采购之功多，提炼转化之功少”；静态研究多，动态研究少；缺乏量化研究；对语用多样性的认识明显不足；对自身文化所具有的价值缺乏认识，对其阐述不到位，甚至出现偏颇。在研究方法上体现为，将西方的研究方法视为具有普遍意义，缺乏自身文化特点，缺乏与“多元一体”相得益彰的辩证统一的认识观，这些问题都影响我们对此领域研究的开拓和发展。

总之，在充分解读文化全球化的意义和总结经验的基础上，我们要在文化全球化时代的视野下建构 21 世纪跨文化交际研究框架，设计相关的研究内容和方法，发展适应文化全球化语境的跨文化交际研究。具有国际视野人才的跨文化交际实践涵盖语言交际能力、非语言交际能力和交际策略能力等，这强调语言、非语言、交际行为等各种知识与技能的综合、灵活运用，目的是在实际工作中完成交际任务，解决实际问题。语言能力、语用能力和篇章能力共同构成了语言交际能力。跨文化非语言交际能力就是对这些非语言行为的知觉、理解和运用的能力。根据统计，大多分类法将非语言行为分为两大类：由身体传递的非语言信息和与环境相关的非语

言行为。跨文化能力框架下的交际策略指以上两种技巧的综合运用，包括对不同文化中交际活动的开始、结束、维持、话题的转变以及交际失误产生后的补救等策略与技巧的掌握。跨文化交际策略告诉我们，我们不仅要注意到谈话双方的社会地位、性别以及各自对对方的态度等因素在跨文化交际时可能产生的影响，还要意识到文化对交际言语行为的时间、地点以及所谈的话题的影响，特定文化中的周围环境等因素也将在很大程度上决定交流信息的形式，决定语言的声调、语体、词汇、结构的恰当与否。简言之便是，在什么场合说什么话；什么样的行为方式能达到有效交际，就采用什么样的行为方式。

本书共分 17 章，由哈尔滨金融学院商务英语系王卓和洪宇著。其中王卓撰写了第 1 章~第 8 章；洪宇撰写了第 9 章~第 17 章。在撰写的过程中，哈尔滨金融学院张大鹏、贺晓光、邓微、梁雪和曹瑜五位老师为本书做了大量的校正工作，并提出了有益的意见，在此对他们的辛勤付出表示诚挚的谢意。

由于笔者水平所限，书中难免有遗漏和不足之处，敬请同行批评指正。

著 者

2017 年 9 月



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# Chapter 1 Intercultural Communication

## 1.1 The Introduction of Intercultural Communication

With the world becoming smaller, many young people decide to continue their studies abroad. Studying in a different country is something that sounds very exciting to young people. Many of those who leave their home to go study in another country think that they are going to have a lot of fun. Certainly, it is a new experience, which brings them the opportunity of discovering new things and a feeling of freedom. In spite of these advantages, there will also be difficulties when they are actually involved in intercultural communication.

Intercultural communication is communication between members of different cultures. The definition is simple, but the process is complex. Intercultural communication involves differing perceptions, attitudes and interpretations. We know that even two people from the same culture can have communication problems.

Suppose that you're planning to go to study in a country about which you know very little. You are sophisticated enough to expect that the spoken language and probably some gestures will be different. You know, too, that customs will be different, but you are not sure exactly what this will mean. At least there will be interesting things to take pictures of or write home about. The climate and foods will be different, of course, but these differences are attractions and are not really problems.

From the moment you arrive, your cultural and personal background will influence everything you expect and a great deal of what you do and do not do. Most of the people you meet will be similarly influenced by their own backgrounds, culturally, socially, and personally. If some of the people you meet think you act a little strangely, they may never know whether you are

peculiar, or whether most people from your country are strange, or whether all “foreigners” are strange.

Most of what you do in a foreign country will be “what comes naturally”—which means what you have always done or seen others do back home. Most of our behavior is outside of our awareness so that “normal behavior” means behavior according to the norms of our culture and not what is done everywhere or done “naturally”. Still, to the extent that you are aware of the possibilities of different behavior in the land you are visiting, you may be unusually self-conscious of some of this “normal behavior”.

Cultures do not communicate; individuals do. Everyone has a unique style of communication, but cultures determine a general style for their members. The relationship of the individual to his culture is analogous to an actor and his director. The actor puts his own personality into his acting but is nevertheless influenced by the director. We are not always aware of the subtle influences of our culture. Likewise, we may not perceive that others are influenced by their cultures as well.

Problems and misinterpretations do not result every time members from two cultures communicate. However, when cultural conflicts do arise, they may be perceived as personal rather than cultural. In the following example it is a cultural misunderstanding that creates negative feelings and confusion:

Yaser, a student from Jordan, met Steve in their chemistry class at an American university. He was excited to get to know an American, for he wanted to learn more about American culture. Yaser hoped that he and Steve would become good friends.

At first, Steve seemed very friendly. He always greeted Yaser warmly before class. Sometimes he offered to study with Yaser, and even invited Yaser to eat lunch with him. But after the semester was over, Steve seemed more distant. The two former classmates didn't see each other very much at school. One day Yaser decided to call Steve. Steve didn't seem very interested in talking to him. Yaser was hurt by Steve's change of attitude. “Steve said we were friends,” Yaser complained. “And I said friends were friends forever.” This misunderstanding was due to Yaser's failure to understand that for Americans a friendship may be superficial, casual, situational as well as deep and enduring.

If he had known more about American culture, he could have avoided misunderstanding Steve.

Some misunderstandings are insignificant and can be easily ignored or remedied. Other conflicts are more serious in that they can cause misinterpretations and create persistent negative attitudes toward foreigners. Difficulties in intercultural communication arise when there is little or no awareness of divergent cultural values and beliefs. In cross-cultural interaction, speakers sometimes assume that what they believe is right, because they have grown up thinking their way is the best. This ethnocentric assumption can result in negative judgments about other cultures.

In the following example, two women demonstrate that they cannot understand each other's points of view. In Rosamine's culture children live with their parents until marriage because dependence on parents is considered positive. In Merita's culture children leave home when they are eighteen because independence and self-reliance are considered positive.

Rosamine: I think it's terrible that in your country children leave their parents when they're so young. Something that shocks me even more is that many parents want their children to leave home. I can't understand why children and parents don't like each other in your country.

Merita: In your country parents don't allow their children to become independent. Parents keep their children protected until the children get married. How are young people in your country supposed to learn about life that way?

Both women are insensitive to each other's values concerning family life. They have been raised and conditioned according to cultural norms. Therefore, each has a different view of what is right. Preventing cultural conflicts is possible with increased awareness of our own attitudes as well as sensitivity to cross-cultural differences.

Developing intercultural sensitivity does not mean that we need to lose our cultural identities but rather that we recognize cultural influences within ourselves and within others.

### Notes

sophisticated 老练的, 富有经验的

- analogous to... 与……相似  
persistent 持续存在的  
divergent 有分歧的, 有差异的  
ethnocentric 有种族或民族优越感的  
identity 身份, 特性

### Self-reflections

- (1) What kind of problems are people likely to have when they visit a foreign country?
- (2) How do you understand the sentence “The definition of intercultural communication is simple, but the process is complex”?
- (3) What may lead to difficulties in intercultural communication?

## 1.2 The Development of Intercultural Communication

In the past most human beings were born, lived, and died within a limited geographical area, never encountering people of other faces and/or cultural backgrounds. Such an existence, however, no longer prevail in the world. Even members of once isolated groups of people now frequently have contact with members of other cultural groups.

McLuhan characterized today's world as a “global village” because of the rapid expansion of worldwide transportation and communication networks. We can now board a plane and fly anywhere in the world in a matter of hours. Communication satellites, sophisticated television transmission equipment, and the World Wide Web now allow people throughout the world to share information and ideas at the same time.

Nowadays, people all over the world are faced with the same environmental issues, such as pollution, that affect all cultures. It has become clear that pollution does not observe geographic and cultural boundaries. Nations are beginning to realize that we must work together to solve these problems or face common disasters.

As the population of the world has increased, it has become more difficult to remain detached and isolated from global tensions and conflicts. When people

of different nationalities and ethnic origins, who frequently speak different languages and hold different convictions, attempt to work and live together, conflicts can easily arise. Recent events have shown that hostility anywhere has the potential to become hostility everywhere. And we should not forget that the reality of a global economy makes today's contacts far or commonplace than in any other period of the world's history. Multinational corporations now participate in various international business arrangements. Each country's economy is now tied to the economic fortunes of others. This means that it would not be unusual for you to work for an organization that does business in many countries often confronted with languages, rules, and norms different from our own. Confronting these differences can be a source of insight into the rules and norms of our own culture, as well as being a source of frustration or gratification.

Therefore, in order to minimize misunderstandings when we communicate with people from other cultures, what we have to learn is to understand culture, communication, how culture influences communication, and the process of communication between people from different countries or for you to conduct business in remote parts of the world understand and communicate effectively with people from other cultures takes on extreme urgency. However, we may find intercultural communication different from communication within our own cultural group. Even if we overcome the natural barriers of language difference, we may fail to understand and to be understood. Misunderstanding may even become the rule rather than the exception. And, if we are unaware the blame for communication failure on those other people.

It is recognized widely that one of the characteristics separating humans from other animals is our development of culture. The development of human culture is made possible through communication, and it is through communication that culture is transmitted from one generation to another. Culture and communication are intertwined so closely that Halle maintains that "culture is communication" and "communication is culture." In other words, we communicate the way we do because we are raised in a particular culture and learn its language, rules, and norms. When we communicate with people from other cultures, we are cultures. Such knowledge is extremely important.

In fact, it is necessary if we are to comprehend fully the daily events of today's multicultural world. It will help us analyze our intercultural encounters in order to determine where misunderstandings occur and determine how these misunderstandings can be minimized in future interactions. This is important if we hope not only to decrease misunderstandings but also to make the world a safer place for all of us to live.

### Notes

prevail 盛行, 流行

McLuhan 麦克卢汉(1911—1980), 加拿大传播学家

the rule rather than the exception 常态而非例外

intertwine 紧密相连

Halle 霍尔(美国人类学家)

gratification 满意, 喜悦

### Self-reflections

- (1) What changes have occurred to people's way of life in modern era? What are the factors that lead to these changes?
- (2) Why is intercultural understanding important in modern society?
- (3) How do you understand the relationship between communication and culture in this global?

### 【Case One】

Professor Lin has published a book on the differences between Chinese and American culture. One day, he met Andrew who was teaching English in China. When Andrew found that he had been the author of the book that he had been trying to buy, he asked Professor Lin whether he had any spare copies that he could buy because all the bookstores he went to had run out of the book.

Professor Lin promised that he would send Andrew a copy of his book. A week later, Andrew received a book along with a note that said the book was a gift. Andrew was uncomfortable about this and called Professor Lin to thank him.

[Self-reflections]

- (1) Why was Andrew uncomfortable when receiving the book and the note sent by Professor Lin?

(2) If you were Professor Lin, what would you do to avoid this?

**【Case Two】**

A young Japanese student came to the United States, and he was overwhelmed by the cordial reception he was given. He said, “The American people are wonderful. They are so warm, so friendly—much beyond my expectations.”

Some time later while traveling in the West, this same young man had dinner with an American family and remarked that he greatly admired the country’s efficiency, organization, and accomplishment. But, he said, there was one thing he would never quite understand, and that was why Americans were so cold, so distant. His host was deeply hurt.

[Self-reflections]

(1) What had made the Japanese young man change his view about Americans ?

(2) What can you infer about American friendship based on this case?

**【Case Three】**

An American university student Tom is active in a foreign student club at his university and has several good friends from different countries. One of them tells Tom his parents and sister will be visiting, and he asks Tom if he would like to meet them. Tom invites all of them to visit his home one afternoon.

They arrive and present him with a nicely wrapped gift. Tom tells them they shouldn’t have brought anything, but thanks them and proceeds to open the gift, which turns out to be a very pretty vase from their country. He thanks them again. He senses some awkwardness and realizes that he has not offered them anything to drink. “Would you like coffee or tea or a soft drink?” he asks. They all refuse. Things seem more awkward now. But he talks a little of their country, about studies at the university, about the cost of living, and eventually the father whispers something to his son. “I think we must be leaving to return to the hotel,” he says. Everybody stands up, shake hands, and they start to leave. “Please come and visit again,” Tom says as he stands and watches the family walk to the door, open it, and disappear down the hall.



Two days later, in a very indirect way, Tom learns from another friend that the visitors thought he was a rude host.

[Self-reflections]

(1) Why is Tom considered the host with his visitors? Try to figure out at least three things among the following Tom does that were regarded to be impolite.

a. Tom invites them to visit his home but does not invite them to have dinner with him.

b. Tom opens the gift as soon as he is presented with.

c. Tom thanks them only twice for the gift.

d. Tom does not make a second offer of drinks when they refuse the first.

e. Tom talks about the cost of living in the U.S.A.

f. Tom does not ask them to stay longer when they say they must be leaving.

g. Tom does not go out to see them off.

h. Tom does not promise to return them a visit later.

(2) How can you explain the fact that actually wants to be kind and friendly? Tom is understood when he to the visitors?

### 1.3 Problems in Intercultural Communication

While visiting Egypt, Richard, an engineer from the United States, was invited to a spectacular dinner at the home of an Egyptian friend. And what a dinner it was! Clearly the host and hostess had gone out of their way to entertain him. Yet, as he was leaving their home he made a special effort to thank them for their dinner and sensed something he said was wrong. Something about his sincere compliments was misunderstood.

In Japan he had an even less pleasant experience though he thought he had handled it well. A number of serious mistakes had occurred in a project he was supervising. While the fault did not lie with any one person, he was a supervisor and at least partly to blame. At a special meeting called to discuss the problem, poor Richard made an effort to explain in detail why he had done what he had done. He wanted to show that anybody in the same situation could have made