LANGUAGE,CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

语言·文化·交际

跨文化交际研究

A Study of Intercultural Communication

杨　舒　编著

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序　　言

随着当代科学技术尤其是通讯网络的兴起与普及,全球性的交往得以形成。这一交往形式,无论是从心理学和社会学的角度看,还是从语言学的角度看,都是各种文化交织的产物,而不同文化之间的交流和合作是不可避免的现实。人们在文化取向、价值观念、社会规范和生活行为方式等方面的差异会导致人们在交际及言语行为方面的差异,这种差异使不同文化背景的人们之间相互理解和交际合作始终面临困难的挑战。文化背景决定人们的交际行为,交际行为反映交际者的文化背景。在这种情况下,跨文化交际学作为一门新兴学科在世界范围内应运而生。

跨文化交际研究源于美国,始于 20 世纪 60 年代,侧重于研究交际文化,是一门新兴的交叉学科。它以研究语言与文化的关系为主旨,以提高语言运用能力、文化鉴赏水平和有效地进行跨文化交际为目的。从兴起到现在的 40 多年里,它经历了巨大变化,这些变化与其相关学科的发展有关。这些相关的学科有语言学、交际学、语用学、语言心理学、人类学、社会学、社会心理学、文化学、哲学等。这些学科对跨文化交际理论的构建,研究的范围、内容等提供了建设性的帮助,为跨文化交际学成为一门独立的交叉学科打下了理论基础。

跨文化交际学之所以是一门交叉学科,具有多学科性,是因为广义的文化无处不在,无所不包。跨文化交际学之所以可以成为一门相对独立的学科,是因为它在借鉴其他学科的研究成果时,有它自身的研究重点,即不同文化背景的人在交际中会是什么样(包括面对面交谈、书面交流、非言语交际、对行为遗迹的反应等),为什么会那样(文化价值),如何避免出现消极的后果(交际效果)等等。跨文化交际学不是孤立地研究某一民族、某一群体的文化,而是专门研究文化接触、碰撞、摩擦、冲突、渗透及有效交际的策略。通过文化研究,尤其是比较文化的研究,人们可以发现并有可能解释交际行为的多样性与同一文化圈内交际行为的相对统一性;另一方面,通过具体描述某个群体的交际行为或生活方式,最有可能揭示该群体的文化特征。因此,跨文化交际学从本质上讲是一门探讨文

化与交际相辅相成之关系的学科。由于探讨文化与交际的关系主要是为了解决跨文化交际中的矛盾与问题,因而跨文化交际学在很大程度上又是一门应用学科。

跨文化交际的研究的兴起也是我国进行国际交流的需要。随着我国改革开放形势的发展,我国人民同世界各国人民的接触也日趋频繁。对这一学科的研究将有助于我们对世界各国文化的了解,有助于各国人民之间达到真正的沟通。目前,跨文化交际研究已成为外语教学与研究、国际商贸与交流、文化传媒等领域的热门课题。许多高校都面向本科生开设了跨文化交际课程,在研究生培养中增设了研究方向等。许多学者如胡文仲、邓炎昌、何道宽、贾玉新、关世杰等都在跨文化交际研究领域中成果突出,他们的研究成果对促进我国开展跨文化交际研究做出了极有意义的贡献。

20世纪90年代初,本人在读研究生期间,受西安外国语学院谭志明老师和杜润清老师的影响,对语言文化研究产生很大兴趣。1997年至1998年本人到英国做访问学者,在那儿接触到了英国文化研究和美国的跨文化交际研究,扩大了视野,并对此进行了积极地阅读和资料收集。回国后,给本科生开设了"中西语言与文化比较"课程并在本校研究生教育中增设了"跨文化交际研究"研究方向,至今已有8个年头了。本书结合自己多年来的教学和研究体会,以教案为基础,结合我国国情,借鉴了英国文化研究和美国跨文化交际研究的主要研究思路和方法,将语言、文化和交际有机地结合起来,尝试拓宽语言研究的社会面,把视野转向广阔的文化层面上,旨在提高人们认识问题和分析问题的能力,提高跨文化交际的水平。

本书共分十四个章节,从不同的方面介绍了语言、文化和交际的主要研究内容。在纵跨文化交际研究的历史和现状后,从宏观和微观不同层面探讨并比较中西文化深层结构的内涵部分,并由表及里、由浅入深地指出影响语言理解和日常行为的文化因素,介绍了跨文化交际研究必须具备的基本知识。本书还分析了语言作为文化的载体和交流活动的手段,在语义、表达方式、非言语交际手段等方面存在的文化差异。同时,在注意翻译在跨文化研究中的重要作用外,还兼顾了跨文化交际在外语教学中的问题等。此外,为了使读者对跨文化交际有一个较全貌的了解,本书在后几章还分别介绍了性别文化、传媒文化和商务交际文化等,供使用者灵活选用。书中的 Supplementary Reading 部分,是对该章节的知识补充,主要供对该章话题感兴趣的读者作深入学习使用。本书主要适合英语专业研究生或本科生使用,也可供从事外贸、外事、翻译工作的人员阅读,或供英语程度好,对跨文化交际有兴趣的人员阅读使用。

在编写此书的过程中,作者荣幸地得到了许多同仁和朋友的帮助,他们给作

者提出了许多宝贵的建议,其中包括:英国老师曼切斯特城市大学的 Dr. J. West-Burnham 和利物浦 J. M. 大学的 Dr. M. Parnell 对本书的构思和语言给予的指导,美国朋友 Dr. P. Quezzaire-Belle 对作者写作工作给予的极大的鼓励。中国矿业大学外文学院的同事刘丰参与了本书第七章的编写,王克强参与了第九章的编写,田春燕参与了第十章的编写,章礼霞参与了第十一章的编写。他们从不同角度对这些话题提出了宝贵的建议并给予了许多帮助,他们的见解和思想开阔了作者的视野,谨在此,作者表示真诚的谢意。本书的出版,还应感谢中国矿业大学研究生院和中国矿业大学出版社的支持和鼓励。

由于作者的学识有限,书中肯定存在不少疏漏和欠妥之处,欢迎读者和同行批评指正。

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作　者

2006 年 3 月

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Chapter 1

An Overview of Interculture Communication

Our world seems to be shrinking. This is not only due to technological advancements such as E-mail and cellular phones, but also because of global migration. While new computer technologies and satellite communication have made it possible to exchange ideas without face-to-face communication, global migration across and within national borders has made it possible to exchange ideas in person, as well. These interactions among people who do not speak each other's languages and who do not have similar historical or cultural backgrounds are challenging. The challenges multiply if the individuals are not provided with the necessary knowledge and cultural differences.

In the past, most human beings were born, lived, and died within a limited geographical area, never encountering people of other cultural backgrounds. Such an existence, however, no longer prevails in the world. The international and domestic changes in the past few decades have brought us into direct and indirect contact with people who, because of their cultural diversity, often behave in ways that we misunderstand or do not understand. It is no longer difficult to find social and professional situations in which members of once isolated groups of people communicate with members of other cultural groups. Now these people may live thousands of miles away or right next door to each other.

One of the ways in which we could describe the phenomena of intercultural communication happening everywhere would be an example of global culture. By this we mean that the event was not one to be contacted in just one local or

national culture but across all cultures. McLuhan[①] in the 1960's forecast 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, mobile phones and the **World Wide Web** now allow people throughout the world to share information and ideas at the same time. It is now possible for a person in one country to communicate with a person in another country within seconds.

When we list the benefits of these developing communication links in the examples provided above, there may also be other aspects that may worry or concern us. People all over the world are faced with the same environmental issues, such as pollution or AIDS, which affect all cultures. It has become clear that pollution or disease does not observe geographic and cultural boundaries. Nations are beginning to realize that we must work together to solve these problems or face common disaster.

Also, 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 such as terror attack have given credence to the axiom 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 more commonplace than in any other period of the world's history. Multinational corporations now participate in various international business arrangements such as joint ventures, licensing agreements, turnkey projects, subcontracts, and management contracts. Each country's economy is now tied to the economic fortunes of others. These and countless other economic ties mean that it would not be unusual for you to work for an organization that does business in many countries or for you to conduct business in

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① McLuhan, (Herbert) Marshall (1911 — 1980), Canadian literary and communications theorist, known for his theories on the mass media. His term "the global village" conveys the idea that the mass media have "shrunk" the world through their pervasive cultural influence.

remote parts of the world.

And part of the aim of the book is to unfold and discuss some of these difficulties and differences in cross-cultural communication. In order to minimize misunderstandings when we communicate with people from other cultures, we need to understand the process of intercultural communication, and we need to understand people of other cultures and their patterns of communication. This is important not only to decrease misunderstandings but also to make the world a safer place for all of us to live.

We choose to study language, culture and communication because language is a cultural product and culture, to a great extent, is revealed through the use of language and culture plays a very important role in our communication. As we go about our daily lives we do things and think things almost automatically —without perhaps having the time to analyze or evaluate fully some of the foundations for our thoughts and actions. We hope to demonstrate how these elements of culture and language phenomena are, not only to our understanding of our own lives but also to the understanding across the globe.

I   The Study of Culture

The study of culture or cultures has been developing over the last forty plus years within the context of academic study. It is now more common to call this area of study — Cultural Studies. The prime concern within the area is to analyze and think about the connections between a variety of cultural activities and cultural productions in order to evaluate how changes in society affect both individuals and the public image of nations to the rest of the world. Fundamentally, these concerns are to do with the phenomena of the modern world and the impact of change on individuals, social groupings (such as the family, young people, the elderly and so on) and the implications of change with regard to issues such as perception and understanding.

What does the word "culture" mean? It may mean many things. For example, we sometimes say that people who are able to read and write or who know about art, music and literature are cultured. For different people, the word has a different meaning.

In fact, culture is really a large and evasive concept, very complex and

difficult to define. It is said that there have been at least over 150 definitions of culture, but none of them seem to be able to tell us everything about culture. The following definitions are just some of the well-known ones.

Culture is a general term used in two broad senses: the customs, civilization, and achievements of a particular time or people; and the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. In the study of society, few words are as difficult to define as culture, and much has been written on its definition alone.

At the very beginning, we would like to mention Raymond Williams[1] who is a very well-known scholar in Cultural Studies. His most influential work can be seen in a book called *Keywords*(1976), in which he provides an extensive cultural dictionary of words and their meanings and associations. In Chinese, a lot of words are culturally-loaded, too, such as *yin* and *yang*, *fengshui*, idiomatic expressions like *qiren youtian* (be haunted by an imaginery fear), which all needs explicit explanation and definition.

In *Keywords*, Williams provides three different meanings that have become attached to the word culture and it is useful to repeat these and to think about the ways in which these different meanings have been developed in different areas of academic study:

(1) Culture can be seen as a general process of intellectual, spiritual and/or aesthetic development.

(2) Culture can be seen as a particular way of life, and its associated products and practices.

(3) Culture can be used to describe the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. (Williams,1976)

Others define culture in the following as the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, meanings, beliefs, attitudes, religions, concepts of self and universe, interpersonal relationships, hierarchies of status, role expectations, spatial relations and time concepts acquired by a large group of people in the

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① Raymond Williams, a founding figure in Cultural Studies in Britain. His representative works are *Culture and Society 1780 — 1950* (1958), *Communications* (1968), *Keywords* (1976), *Culture* (1981).

course of generations through individual and group efforts. Culture manifests itself both in patterns of language and thought, and in forms of activities and behaviors. These patterns become models for common adaptive acts and styles of expressive behavior, which enable people to live in a society within a given geographical environment at a given state of development. Culture is a communication problem because it is not constant; it is a variable. And, as cultural variance increases, so do the problems of communication.

"Culture may be defined as what a society does and thinks." (Sapir, 1921)

"What really binds men together is their culture—the ideas and the standards they have in common." (R. Benedict, 1935)

"Culture is man's medium; there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. This means personality, how people express themselves, including shows of emotion, the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved, how their cities are planned and laid out, how transportation systems function and are organized, as well as how economic and government systems are put together and function." (Edward T. Hall, 1959)

"By 'culture', anthropology means the total life way of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group. Or culture can be regarded as that part of the environment that is the creation of man." (Clyde Kluckhohn, 1965)

"A culture is a collection of beliefs, habits, living patterns, and behaviors which are held more or less in common by people who occupy particular geographic areas." (D. Brown, 1978)

"... culture refers to the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes." (R. Kohls, 1979)

The various meanings of the word may be placed in two main groups: roughly, the anthropological and the artistic. The first defines culture as the whole way of life of a society: its beliefs and its ideas, its institutions and its systems, its laws and its customs. The second group of meanings defines culture more narrowly, but in the view of its proponents, more deeply, as the

civilized manners of a society, especially as they are expressed in its arts. By the first meaning, all humans are cultured because all are members of a culture, whatever its nature. By the same token, an individual tends to approach and judge other cultures from the standpoint of his or her own culture; a crucial idea in anthropology and other social sciences is cultural relativism, the view that beliefs are relative rather than absolute. By the second meaning, however, only a minority is likely to be cultured at any one time because culture is a refinement, to be worked for and to be aspired towards.

Culture can also be understood as a particular way to satisfy human needs. All human beings have certain basic needs. Every one of us needs to eat and to make friends, for instance. Abraham Maslow[1], a psychologist, has suggested that people all over the world share five basic needs (1970). Beyond the details of air, water, food, and sex, he laid out five broader layers: the physiological needs, the needs for safety and security, the needs for love and belonging, the needs for esteem, and the need to actualize the self, in that order. (see the diagram below)

5. The self-actualization needs

4. The esteem needs

3. The belonging needs

2. The safety needs

1. The physiological needs
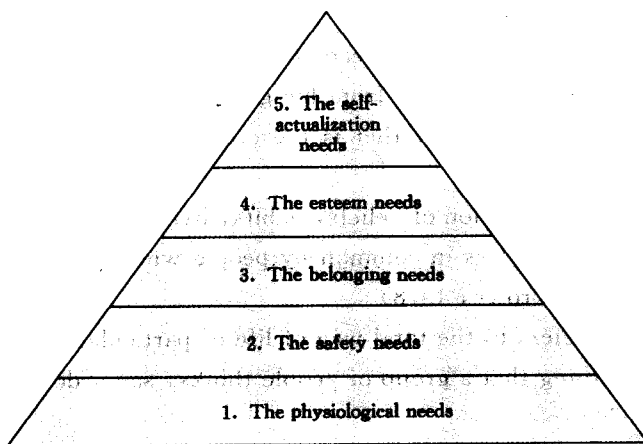
(1) The physiological needs. These include the needs we have for oxygen,

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[1] Abraham Maslow (1908—1970) played a major role in pressing the case for humanistic psychology, and developed a theory of motivation based on the idea that needs are organized hierarchically.

water, protein, salt, sugar, other minerals and vitamins. They also include the needs to maintain a pH balance and temperature. Also, there are the needs to be active, to rest, to sleep, to get rid of wastes (CO_2, sweat, urine, and feces), to avoid pain, and to have sex.

(2) The safety and security needs. When the physiological needs are largely taken care of, this second layer of needs comes into play. You will become increasingly interested in finding safe circumstances, stability, protection. You might develop a need for structure, for order, for some limits.

(3) The love and belonging needs. When physiological needs and safety needs are, by and large, taken care of, a third layer starts to show up. You begin to feel the need for friends, a sweetheart, children, affectionate relationships in general, even a sense of community. In our day-to-day life, we exhibit these needs in our desires to marry, have a family, be a part of a community, a member of a church, a brother in the fraternity, a part of a gang or a club. It is also a part of what we look for in a career.

(4) The esteem needs. Next, for the fourth level, self-esteem can be explained in two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity, even dominance. The higher form involves the need for self-respect, including such feelings as confidence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence, and freedom.

All of the preceding four levels maslow calls deficit needs, or D-needs. If You don't have enough of something—i. e. you have a deficit—you feel the need. But if you get all you need, you feel nothing at all! In other words, they cease to be motivating. As the old saying goes, "You don't miss your water till your well runs dry!"

(5) The self-actualization needs. The highest need of a person is to actualize oneself, to reach one's full potential, to become all that he or she might be. No one ever satisfies this need completely, partly because we are too busy trying to satisfy our lower needs.

Though the basic human needs are often said to be universally the same, people all over the world satisfy these needs in different ways. Each culture offers its people a number of options for satisfying any particular human need. Some of these options are widely shared across cultures, but many others are

not. Just as Maslow has stated, ends in themselves are far more universal than the roads taken to achieve those ends since the roads are determined locally in the specific culture.

Every culture has its ways of doing things in daily life, such as ways of eating, drinking, dressing, finding shelter, making friends, marrying, and dealing with death. People have to learn the cultural ways of their community to satisfy their basic human needs. These ways are not something that the people in the group are born with. Instinctive behavior, on the other hand, is a pattern of behavior that an animal is born with. Spiders' spinning their webs are examples. The mother spider does not teach her babies how to spin webs. (In fact, she is not even there when they are born.) Young spiders know how to do it when they are born.

As humans, we learn our ways of life by being taught by our parents or teachers. We learn more of the ways of our culture by growing up in it. We see how other people in our culture do things, and we do them the same way. We even learn how to think and feel in this way. Since we learn the ways of taking care of our basic needs in the cultural group in which we grow up, our own culture seems very natural to us. We feel in our hearts that the way we do things is the only right way to do them. Other people's cultures often make us laugh or feel disgusted or shocked.

Study Questions

☆ Which of the definitions given above do you prefer? Why?

☆ What have you learned from those definitions about culture?

☆ Do you agree that our lower needs always have to be satisfied before we can try to satisfy the higher needs?

☆ What examples can you give about how people of different cultures achieve the same ends by taking different roads?

II   The Study of Intercultural Communication

The rapid development of information technologies, the massive spread of