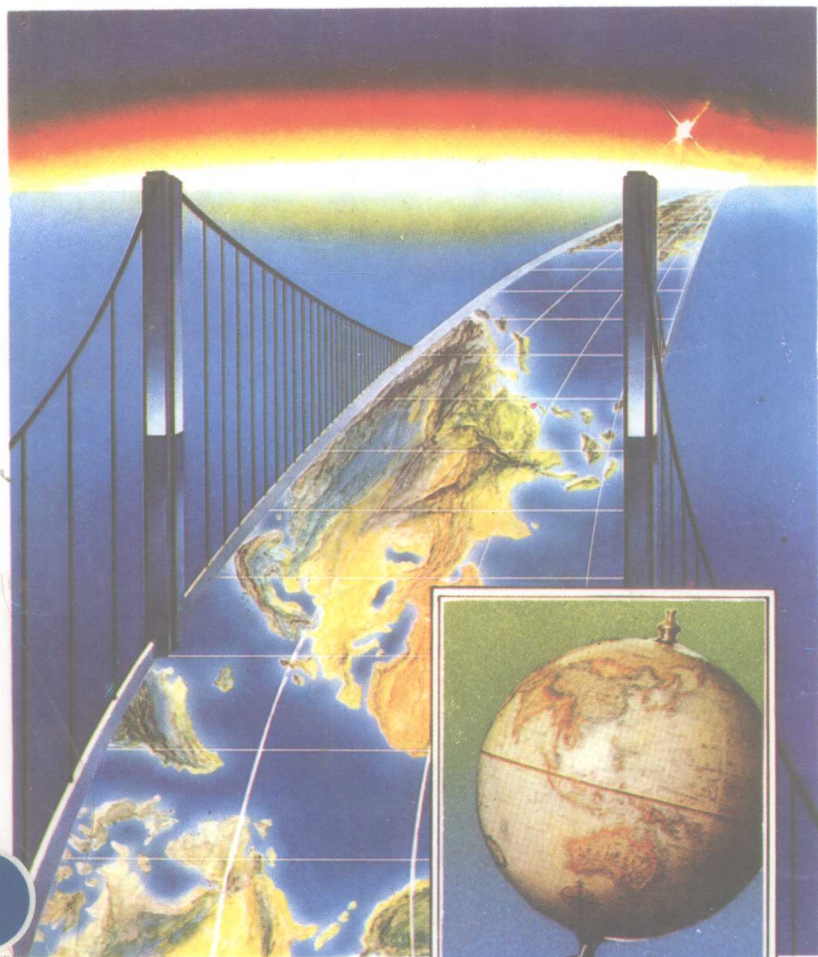


SELECTED READINGS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

跨文化交际学选读 (英文版)



胡文仲 编 湖南教育出版社

跨文化交际学选读

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前 言

跨文化交际学是一门新学科，从 60 年代兴起，至今不足三十年。作为一种现象，跨文化的交际活动有史以来就已经存在。在我国历史上，各民族之间的交往频繁，互相影响。我国与别的国家和地区的交流可以追溯到丝绸之路时期。据传在当年罗马帝国的街道上，可以买到中国的丝绸。佛教的传入带来了南亚文化的影响。明朝郑和下西洋，与东南亚、中东、北非的人民开始了接触。明末以来西学东渐，西方传教士输入宗教，还带来了欧美的科学与文化思想。留学生不仅学习科技，还接触了西方的哲学思想与学术。鸦片战争以来的历史是大家熟悉的，东西方文化的撞击屡屡发生。不同文化背景的人走到一起，进行交际，并不是那么顺当的事，各种矛盾、问题必然发生，专门研究这类矛盾与问题的学问就是跨文化交际学。

这一学科最早出现在美国，这也顺乎情理。60 年代，黑人争取民权的斗争汹涌澎湃，各少数民族的民族意识大为提高，要求社会承认和尊重他们的文化传统。在学校中，双语教育开始受到重视。另一方面，随着民用航空的迅速发展，国际间的交往愈益频繁和简便，每年大批美国商人、技术人员、官员、学者以及旅游者奔赴世界各地，与其他国家和民族的人们从事各种性质的交往。同时，大量的外国移民、留学生、旅游者从四面八方涌入美国。这些具有不同文化背景的人们互相交往是每天都在发生的事，但如何更有效地交际，避免误解和磨擦，愈来愈成为实际工作者和学者、教授们注意的课题。

人们通常认为 Edward Hall 在 1959 年出版的 *The Silent Language* 标志着跨文化交际研究的开端。在此之前，人类学家对于种族语言及文化的问题早就予以注意。在他们的著述中，不乏丰富的材料和精辟的观点，但从未有人对于跨文化交际中的理论和实际问题做过深入的研究。从 60 年代以来，文化人类学家、社会心理学家、社会语言学家及传播学家从各自的角度逐步开展了研究，论文、专著陆续问世，而且数量的增加愈来愈快。60 年代时，只有少数大学开设跨文化交际学课程，目前已经有二百多所大学开设一门至几门这类课程。有的大学还颁发跨文化交际学的硕士、博士学位。SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research) 逐渐发展成为国际性的组织，甚至还出现了专门出版这方面书籍的出版社——Intercultural Press。

在我国的外语教学中，一些教师早就注意到文化因素的重要性，引导学生在学习外语的同时研究其中的文化内涵。但从总体上看，对于语言和文化的密切关系重视不足，更没有专门的课程讲授这方面的知识。近年来，由于我国执行改革开放政策，在政治、经济、文化、教育等方面与世界各国的交往和联系大为增加，每年来华人数以百万计，而去国外工作、学习、出席国际会议、谈判贸易、访问的人数也与日俱增。我们与不同文化背景的人们的接触不仅涉及语言，同时也与文化密切相关。越来越多的人认识到学习一门外语只学习它的语音、语法、词汇、用法是远远不够的，实际上，语言本身就是文化的一部分，没有任何一种自然语言不反映某种文化。

跨文化交际学涉及文化的定义和特征，交际的定义和特征，影响跨文化交际活动的各种因素（其中又包括语言手段、非语言手段、社会组织、信念、态度以及价值观念等），提高跨文化交际认识的途径以及跨文化交际的研究方法等。由于这是一门新学科，它所包括的实际内容仍在不断丰富，牵涉到的理论问题人们仍在探讨。也可以说，这门学科目前还没有形成成熟的、完整的

理论体系。

这个选读本是为了介绍跨文化交际学这一学科而编纂的，企图通过十四篇选文比较全面地说明学科的主要内容。还由于篇幅的限制，有些内容未能列入，有的选文作了删节。由于这是一门跨学科的学问，因此在选用文章时必须注意涉及的各个学科以及作者的代表性。在这个选本的作者中，有人类学家 Clyde Kluckhohn, Francis Hsu, Edward Hall, 心理学家 Dan Landis, Richard Brislin, 语言学家 C. C. Fries, Nessa Wolfson 以及传播学家 Richard Porter, John Condon, Fathi Yousef, Roichi Okabe 等。跨文化交际学所涉及的学科也大致上是这四个方面。在选文时，注意避免纯理论性的探讨，使读者较易理解文章的内容，并举一反三，从中得到启发。为了帮助掌握要领，每篇文章之后附以提要；涉及背景方面的难点予以注释。一般在词典上可以查到的词语则不注。

全书共分四个部分：1) 跨文化交际学介绍；2) 文化及其特性；3) 影响跨文化交际的诸因素；4) 如何提高跨文化认识。本书附录中列了参考书目。

开设跨文化交际学课程的院校可以将选本作为指定读物，要求学生教师在教师讲课后逐篇阅读；读后组织讨论或写心得体会。不开设此课的学校可用作高年级参考读物。英语教师、翻译工作者以及高层次的自学者也可以通过阅读选文进一步提高运用英语的自觉性。

《跨文化交际学选读》在我国是这一学科的第一个读本，具有投石问路的性质。编者考虑不周，介绍不当之处在所难免，望读者不吝指教。

编 者

1989年8月

于北京外国语学院

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第一部分 跨文化交际学介绍

在这部分选了 Richard Porter 全面介绍跨文化交际学这一学科的文章。读这篇文章不仅可以了解这一学科的概貌、所包括的内容，而且能够掌握全书的脉络。

An Overview of Intercultural Communication *

Richard E. Porter

At times the world seems to be shrinking. We have increased our mobility until distances no longer matter. We can take a jet and be anywhere within hours. No place, however remote, can escape us. Even the Moon is now within our range of travel, and the addition of Mars is just a matter of time. We have become a mobile society. But, mobility is not only ours; we may claim no monopoly on travel. People everywhere are gaining mobility, and this is just the beginning!

Our mobility places us in contact with people from other cultures. And when we meet, we need to communicate; in fact, we *must* communicate. This communicative behavior is called intercultural communication; it occurs whenever a message sender is a member of one culture and a message receiver is of another.

We may find intercultural communication difficult. 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. This, of course, is both-

* 选自 *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, ed. by Larry Samovar and Richard Porter, Wadsworth Publishing House, 1972.

bersome. And, if we are unaware of the significant role culture plays in communication, we may place the blame for communication failure on those "other people." This is unfortunate because our problem is really culture and the difficulty of communicating across cultural boundaries. Here I will discuss the effect culture has on communication in attempting to point out and help us understand the problems inherent in intercultural communication.

Culture, Communication, and Social Perception

When I use the word "culture," I am referring to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes, religions, concepts of self, the universe, and self-universe relationships, hierarchies of status, role expectations, spatial relations, and time concepts acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Culture manifests itself both in patterns of language and thought and in forms of activity and behavior. 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 technical 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 is very complex, varying along many dimensions. Any attempt to factor out the dimensions and to provide a scale for their measurement is far beyond the scope of this article. But, if we think of cultural differences varying along a minimal-maximal dimension (see Figure 1), the amount of difference between two cultural groups depends on the social uniqueness of the two groups. Al-

though this is a crude scale, it does permit us to examine an inter-cultural communication act and to understand the effect of cultural difference. To illustrate how the dimension helps us, let us look at the examples of cultural difference positioned along the scale.

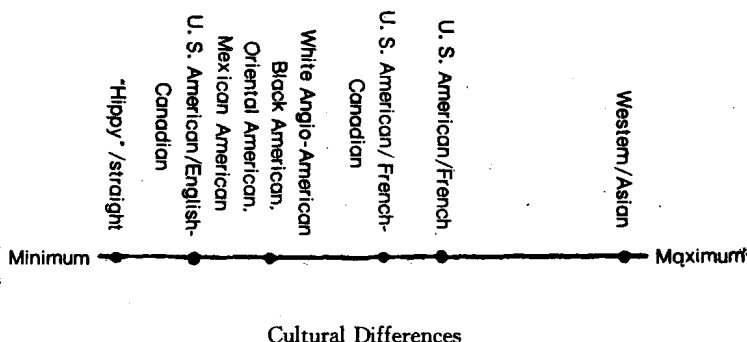


Figure 1 Arrangement of compared cultures along a scale of minimum to maximum cultural difference.

The first example is maximal—differences between Asian and Western cultures. Here we find the greatest number of cultural factors subject to variation; and we find the least commonality. Physical appearance, religion, philosophy, social attitudes, language, heritage, and basic conceptualizations of self and the universe are among the cultural factors that differ sharply.

An example nearer the center of the scale is the difference between American culture and French culture. Less variation is found; physical characteristics are similar, and the English language is in part derived from the French language and its ancestor languages. The roots of both French and American philosophy lie in ancient Greece, and most Americans and French share the Christian

religion.

Examples near the minimal end of the scale are characterized in two ways. First are the variations found between members of separate but similar cultures—for instance, between U.S. Americans and Canadians. The difference is less than that found between American and French cultures but greater than that generally found within a single culture. Even in this case we are not totally accurate, because we must distinguish between English-Canadian and French-Canadian cultures (note the differences on the scale). Second, minimal differences may be seen in the variance between sub-groups of the same general culture—for instance, the ethno-racial-cultural differences that exist between Black-Americans, Anglo-Americans, and Mexican-Americans residing in separate parts of the same city. Similarly, socio-cultural differences can be found between members of the John Birch Society¹ and the long-haired residents of Haight-Ashbury, the Sunset Strip, or Greenwich Village².

In both categorizations, members of each cultural group share much more in common than in the prior examples. To some extent they may speak the same language, share the same general religion, attend the same schools, and inhabit the same geographical area. Yet, these groups of people are culturally different; they do not share the same experiences, nor do they share the same perceptions. They do not see the world in the same way. Their life styles are vastly different, and their beliefs, values, and attitudes are far from being the same.

Social perception, which is the process by which we attach meaning to the social objects and events we encounter in our environment, is an extremely important aspect of any communication

act. It is the means by which we assign meanings to the messages we receive. Social perception becomes even more important when considering intercultural communication, because culture conditions and structures our perceptual processes in such a way that we develop culturally determined perceptual sets. These sets not only influence which stimuli reach our awareness, but more importantly they have a great influence on the judgmental aspect of perception—the attachment of meaning to these stimuli. It is my contention that *intercultural communication can best be understood as cultural variance in the perception of social objects and events. The barriers to communication caused by this perceptual variance can best be lowered by a knowledge and understanding of cultural factors that are subject to variance, coupled with an honest and sincere desire to communicate successfully across cultural boundaries.*

The ultimate aim of social perception is to give us an accurate account of the social aspects of our environment. Unfortunately, this often is *not* the result because various cultural elements prejudice the meanings we attach to social stimuli. A social object or event perceived simultaneously by members of different cultures may be and often is interpreted quite differently by each member. For example, Bagby (1), in investigating perceptual predominance in binocular rivalry³ cross-culturally, found culture influenced the outcome of the perceptual process. Matching twelve Mexican children with twelve U.S. American children, Bagby flashed a series of stereograms in which one eye was exposed to a scene of a bullfight and the other eye exposed to a scene of a baseball game. Under these conditions, Bagby found the viewers predominantly reported the scene appropriate to their culture: Mexican children tended to see the bullfight and American children tended to see the baseball

game, although they were simultaneously exposed to both scenes. Even physical objects are subject to multiple interpretations cross-culturally. For instance, the star constellation we refer to as the "Big Dipper" is often called the "Big Bear" or the "Big Plow" in parts of Northern Europe.

There are many variables in the communication process whose values are determined, at least in part, by culture. These variables have the ability to influence our perceptions and to affect the meaning we assign to communicative acts. In the following sections, I will discuss eight such variables: (1) attitudes, (2) social organization, (3) patterns of thought, (4) roles and role prescriptions, (5) language, (6) use and organization of space, (7) time conceptualization, and (8) nonverbal expression. The isolation of these variables is somewhat arbitrary and artificial because they overlap and interact with one another. For instance, a person's concept of the universe is in part derived from his culturally influenced thinking and reasoning habits and patterns; it is also a function of his attitudes. Yet, because of the interactive effect, attitudes are a function of a person's views of the universe as well as his beliefs, values, perceptions, stereotypes, and thought patterns. Thus, although we will utilize the eight categories as a convenient means of division, do not assume these factors exist or exert influence in isolation. In reality, they all work with and against one another in affecting our intercultural communicative behaviors.

Attitudes

Attitudes are psychological states that predispose us to act in certain ways when we encounter various social events or objects in

our environment. Not only do attitudes influence our overt behaviors, they also cause us to distort our perceptions; that is, to interpret events so they are in accord with our predispositions. We, therefore, often tend to see things as we *want* them to be rather than as they *are*. Attitudes that affect intercultural communication the most can be categorized as ethnocentrism, world view, absolute values, stereotypes, and prejudices.

ETHNOCENTRISM A major source of cultural variance in attitudes is *ethnocentrism*, which is a tendency to view people unconsciously by using our own group and our own customs as the standard for all judgments. We place ourselves, our racial, ethnic, or social group, at the center of the universe and rate all others accordingly. The greater their similarity to us, the nearer to us we place them; the greater the dissimilarity, the farther away they are. We place one group above another, one segment of society above another, one nation-state above another. We tend to see our own groups, our own country, our own culture as the best, as the most moral. This view also demands our first loyalty and, carried to extremes, produces a "my country first—right or wrong" attitude.

Political and nationalistic ethnocentric attitudes are a chief barrier to intercultural communication. When we identify with specific political units—cities, counties, states, nations—we restrict our area of moral obligation. Our ability to accept cultural differences is affected by this restriction. When a boundary, even a state or local line, is present, our allegiance to one group restricts our ability to accept another or to view them favorably. This boundary may be something as definite as a political division or as arbitrary as a railroad track or river.

Another and sometimes more potent source of ethnocentric

attitudes is religion. Many of our religious denominations emphasize the rightness of their way as distinguished from that of others. Some of us even become dogmatic in our views and see anyone else as an "infidel." This type of religious fervor has led sociologist Talcott Parsons to observe:

Ethnocentrism is accentuated by this religious dogmatism because it interferes with the understanding of other cultural groups... So far as one cultural group differs from another, it tends to be held as suspect. This dogmatism often extends beyond matters of religion to include extreme hostility to other aspects of culture (12, p. 500).

Our problem lies in the fact that we have a carryover from religion to other aspects of culture. Not only do we sometimes feel hostility toward another culture's religion, but that hostility also affects our perception of customs, modes of dress, food, art, traditions, and racial characteristics. In an extreme case, how can two people interact successfully if one believes the other to be guilty of deicide? Or, in a lesser extreme, how can we successfully communicate interculturally if we perceive another's cultural customs as foolish if not utterly ridiculous?

When ethnocentrism interferes with our social perception, the effectiveness of intercultural communication is reduced because we are unable to view aspects of another culture that differ from our own in an objective manner. The degree to which these attitudes reduce our communication effectiveness cannot be predicted because of the variety of circumstances under which they can be present. However, we do know that ethnocentrism is strongest in moral and religious contexts, where emotionalism may overshadow rationality

and cause hostility to a degree that communication ceases. And, finally, at the extreme, ethnocentrism robs us of the willingness and desire to communicate interculturally.

WORLD VIEW The way we view our world is a function of our culture, and it affects our social perception. As Americans, we tend to have a man-centered view. The world is a vast space on which we may carry out our desires. We build what we wish, we control nature as we can, and, when we are displeased, we tear it all down and start again.

In other cultures the man-cosmos relationship is viewed differently. An Oriental world view is apt to be one of balanced relationships in which man shares a place with heaven and earth. Each thing that man does has some effect on the balance of that relationship. Consequently, he must act carefully so as not to upset the balance because it is the nature of the cosmos to tend toward harmony.

Our world view gives us a perspective from which we shape and form our attitudes. As we encounter people with differing world views, our communicative behavior is hampered because we view events differently; we use frames of reference that may seem vague or obscure to others, just as theirs may seem to us. Our perceptions become clouded and our attitudes interfere with our ability to share perceptions with others.

ABSOLUTE VALUES Closely related to and often derived from ethnocentrism and world view are absolute values. Or perhaps systems of absolute values lead to ethnocentrism and world view. The antecedent-consequent relationship is not really clear. Anyway, absolute values are culturally derived notions we have of right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, true and false, positive