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# 跨文化交际学理论与实践研究

## Intercultural Communication from Theory to Practice

主 编 陈治安 李力 刘承宇

重庆大学出版社

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# 跨文化交际学理论与实践研究

*I*ntercultural *C*ommunication: *F*rom *T*heory to *P*ractice

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## 内 容 提 要

《跨文化交际学理论与实践研究》结合中国英语教学的实际,从理论和实践两个方面对跨文化交际学进行了拓展。本书从社会文化的角度分析了语境对话得体性的制约、跨文化交际失误的类型和成因,对比分析了中、英文化在思维模式、礼貌和面子观念以及拒绝言语行为的表达式等方面的差异,在调查分析我国高校外语教学中的跨文化交际模式和文化教学现状的基础上,探讨了如何运用交际策略培养学生的跨文化交际能力、提高英语写作能力等问题。本书适合高等院校语言文学专业教师、研究生及其他语言工作者。

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# PREFACE

Intercultural communication as a type of human activities is not new. As is known to all, wandering nomads, tourists, businessmen, religious missionaries, and conquering warriors have encountered people different from themselves since the beginning of time. And what happened on the Silk Road is an outstanding example of communication across cultures. What is new, however, is the systematic study of this type of human activity.

## **Intercultural Communication: A New Discipline**

Intercultural communication as an independent discipline has a very short history. The study of it first emerged in the United States since the World War II moved the U. S. toward the global awareness and interaction. The term “across cultures” was first mentioned in R. Lado’s work, *Linguistics across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers* ( 1957 ). The concept “ intercultural communication” was first proposed by E. T. Hall in *The Silent Language* (1959), in which Hall offered several key concepts to explain the nature of intercultural communication, such as monochronic and polychronic time, high and low context, etc. *The Silent Language* gave us the first comprehensive analysis of the relationship between communication and culture, and brought us to the focus on the communicative process influenced by cultural factors. Hall ’ s conceptualization of the process of intercultural communication and his contributions to the field laid the foundation for the later research. Since then, the government officials, diplomats, businessmen, immigrants,

missionaries and international students were trained in the framework of intercultural communication in the 1960s.

The 1970s witnessed the rapid development of the study of intercultural communication. Specialized societies and courses were established, and specialized journals and works were published in the 1970s. In 1970, Intercultural Communication Association acknowledged that intercultural communication was a branch of communication and thus Intercultural Communication Division was set up (in the 1980s it became Intercultural Communication and Development Division). The first Conference on Intercultural Communication was held in Tokyo in 1972. In 1974, Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR) was founded in Maryland, U. S. A. and its first conference was held there. Most universities offered the course Intercultural Communication and some of them conferred M. A. and Ph. D. in intercultural communication. By the second half of the 1970s, some specialized journals began to appear, e. g. *The International and Intercultural Communication Annals* (originally edited by Casmir, in 1974, 1975, 1976), *The International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (a quarterly journal specializing in intercultural communication and adaptation, beginning in 1977). Moreover, some important academic works came out, such as Samovar and Porter's edited book of readings *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (1972, which was reedited several times after then), L. S. Harms' *Intercultural Communication* (1973), J. C. Condon and F. Yousef's *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* (1975), Ruhly's *Orientations to Intercultural Communication* (1976), K. Sitaram and R. Cogdell's *Foundations of Intercultural Communication* (1976), C. Dodd's *Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Communication* (1977), M. Prosser's *Cultural Dialogue* (1977), E. T. Hall's *Beyond Culture* (1977), etc. All these achievements in the 1970s indicated the maturity of the study of intercultural communication study. Its theoretical

construction and practical research continued in the 1980s, 1990s and in the new century. More and more academic journals, annuals, monographs and collections have been published to reflect the recent development of the discipline. Moreover, intercultural communication is characterized by its multi-disciplines and cross-disciplines. It derives its insight from such disciplines as anthropology, history, sociology, socio-psychology, communication, linguistics, and pedagogy; in turn, the study of intercultural communication gives impetus to these subjects. The historiographic review of the study shows the complexity of intercultural communication and predicates its promising future.

### **Intercultural Communication : Cultural Effects on Communication**

Intercultural communication study, as a field of systematic study of what really happens in intercultural interactions, is difficult to identify due to the indefiniteness of the two concepts: culture and communication. Saral ( 1977 ) explored several definitions of intercultural communication, noting that all depends upon the concepts of culture and communication. After a deep interpretation of the two concepts, L. A. Samovar, et al. ( 1998 ) gives a very general description of the term:

In its most general sense, intercultural communication occurs when a member of one culture produces a message for consumption by a member of another culture. More precisely, *intercultural communication is communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event ( original emphasis ).* ( L. A. Samovar, et al. , 1998:48 )

Due to the comprehensiveness of culture and the complexity of

communication, intercultural communication takes various forms, generally four forms being identified:

a) Interracial communication. It occurs when the communicators are from different races.

b) Interethnic communication. It occurs when the participants are of the same race but of different ethnic origin.

c) Intracultural communication. It is communication between members of the same culture.

d) International intercultural communication. It is the communication between people from different countries.

In order to understand the effects of culture on communication, researchers focus on the study of variables or elements of culture and communication. For instance, Prosser (1978) suggests four cultural components (cultural evolutionism, cultural functionalism, cultural history and cultural ecology) and four communicative components (communication messages, communication participants, linguistic and nonverbal codes, and channels or media). L. A. Samovar, et al. (1998) identifies four interacting elements: perception, verbal processes, non-verbal processes and contextual elements.

### **The Study of Intercultural Communication in China**

Xu Guozhang's article "Culturally-loaded words and English language teaching" issued in the journal *Contemporary Foreign Languages* (1980, No. 4) marked the birth of the intercultural communication study in China. He Daokuan for the first time introduced in detail the contents of the study, its theoretical bases and development abroad in his article "Introducing a new subject — intercultural communication" published in *Foreign Language and Literature Teaching* (1983, No. 2). From then on, more and more groups have taken interest in this field of study, such as philosophers,

folklorists, scholars of comparative literature, and foreign language teachers, the last one taking a big share. The academic research on this field in the past decades presents the following features:

a) The introduction and translation of foreign publications. Many foreign works were introduced in academic journals, some being translated and some published in English such as R. Scollon and S. W. Scollon's *International Communication: A Discourse Approach* (2000).

b) The theoretical construction and creation on the basis of introduction. Statistics show that in the past two decades more than 300 articles and 20 monographs came out. Here are some influential monographs: Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing's *Language and Culture* (1989), Gu Jiazuo's *Language and Culture* (1990), Guan Shijie's *Intercultural Communication* (1995), Hu Wengzhong's *Language and Communication* (1994) and *Intercultural Communication and English Learning* (1997), *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* (1999), Jia Yuxin's *Intercultural Communication* (1997), etc.. Moreover, the National Intercultural Communication Conference is held every other year since 1995.

c) Comprehensive application. The models and theories in intercultural communication study have been widely applied to the field of discourse analysis, lexical meaning analysis, pragmatic study, training of communicative competence, non-verbal communication and foreign language teaching and learning. Scholars in the field of foreign language teaching and research have made a bulk of efforts, the present collection being one, to explore the relation between language and culture.

The aforementioned achievements in China indicate that the study of intercultural communication comes into the stage of maturity. Along with China's entry of WTO, the study will be more promising and necessary.



## **Intercultural Communication: From Theory to Practice**

This volume consists of seven chapters, all contributing to the investigation of various aspects of intercultural communication and their application, especially, in foreign language teaching and learning. To provide some more details of the contribution, we try to give a brief synopsis of each chapter.

Chapter One, “A Socio-cultural Insight into Cross-cultural Miscommunication”, attributes miscommunication to the unawareness of the cultural differences lying behind the communicators. Their unawareness brings about a) pragmalinguistic failure, b) socio-pragmatic failure, and c) pragma-behavioral failure. This chapter investigates the three types of pragmatic failure in terms of the interaction between culture and communication, and pragmatic principles (Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle) and culture, with the conclusion that socio-cultural differences are the main factors that give rise to cross-cultural miscommunication.

Chapter Two, “Communication Strategies and Intercultural Communicative Competence”, identifies the combination of communication strategies with the development of intercultural communicative competence. It is a combination of the theories of intercultural communication with language practicing. Developing learners’ intercultural communicative (ICC) competence has been one of the ultimate goals of foreign language teaching. However, the present way to develop the competence in language teaching is problematic due to the role the communicative strategies play in communication. Thus, this chapter makes a tentative and exploratory study of putting ICC competence development into communication strategy system, revealing that communication strategies trained in the classroom and the extra-curriculum activities make contribution to the

development of ICC competence.

Politeness is a universal phenomenon in human interaction. It is also one of pragmatic issues drawing increasing attention. The following two chapters focus on this issue in a contrastive way.

Chapter Three is an application of intercultural knowledge to the field of pragmatics. Refusals, as a type of linguistic phenomenon, drew little attention in the past. This chapter examines refusals within the framework of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory in a contrastive study. It discusses three types of directness levels (direct refusals, negated ability and indirect refusals) and four social factors influencing the implementation of refusals in both Chinese and American English (social distance, social power, difficulty of refusing and affect). The comparison comes to the conclusion that the two languages make full use of the three directness types, but they do so with varying frequency caused by the above factors.

Chapter Four, "A Comparative Analysis of Intercultural Pragmatics" addresses the intercultural differences between Chinese and American concepts of politeness and face. Within the contextual framework, this chapter introduces Leech's Politeness Theory, Brown and Levinson's Face-saving Theory and Gu Yueguo's Chinese Politeness Maxims, and the differences between them and their complementation; moreover, forty sub-strategies are introduced and eight linguistic behaviors including address forms, greetings, compliments, invitations, refusals, thankings, apologies, and leave-takings are analyzed.

Chapter Five, "Exploring the Mode of Intercultural Communication in FLT", provides a "Cooperation and Creation" mode of intercultural communication in FLT in China after examining the current mode of intercultural communication for China's FLT and the macro-environment (globalization) from an ontological perspective. The defects of and all the pressures upon the current mode of intercultural

communication in China's FLT are attributed to its monistic philosophy. However, intercultural communication, as suggested by practitioners in this field, should be based on pluralism, which is also the utmost characteristic of intercultural communication. Under such philosophical background, this chapter proposes the Cooperation and Creation mode of intercultural communication in FLT. Finally, three suggestions on how to take this proposed mode into application are given: our FLT classroom should be made multi-cultural, humanistic and contrastive.

Chapter Six, "Appropriateness and Context", examines the relation between context and appropriateness, and their application in English teaching. This chapter illustrates the interpretative and restrictive functions of context to show that successful and appropriate communication is guaranteed by context, which is related to "culture". Based on the study of appropriateness and context, it is suggested that great efforts should be made to enhance the students' awareness of context and intercultural communication.

The last chapter explores the influences of the Chinese thought patterns on non-English majors, English written discourses. Data analysis indicates that thought patterns are determinative in writing. This chapter makes a comparison between Chinese and English thought patterns and their expressions in written discourses. It analyzes the interference of Chinese thought patterns with writing, and the negative factors influencing the students' discourse structures. Finally more suggestions are provided.

The whole volume attaches great importance to intercultural communication in terms of its theory and practice. The study of intercultural communication, the present collection being one of the examples, will play a vital role in appropriate communication, successful language teaching and learning, and the training of the communicative competence.

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