

# Coach Across Cultures

(悦读文化)

罗海燕 编著



同济大学出版社  
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## 内 容 提 要

本书为跨文化交际课程教学用书。目的是培养学生对跨文化的学习和思考能力,提高学生的英语交流水平。主要包括:跨文化的知识和理论;从外国人视角审视中国文化及中外文化的差异;掌握跨文化交际所需要的能力。本书读者对象主要为本科英语专业学生,也可以作为非英语专业大学生的阅读课本。



# 前言

## Preface

在国际经济合作中,外来文化与本土文化的冲撞和具有不同文化背景的个体之间的文化冲突是一个不容忽视的负面因素。国际化人才跨文化交际能力的培养是高等教育面对国际化人才培养迫切需要解决的难题。了解、学习、提高跨文化交际的能力,将有助于学习者全面提升职场上的能力。文化的视野,不再停留在过去的吃穿住行等方面的差异,而应着重于建立完整的跨文化思想体系,全面了解跨文化交际产生的原因、影响、特点和交际方法。

本书有针对性地筛选了一些英文第一手材料,系统地拓宽学生在跨文化领域学习中的视野,并通过一些小组讨论和社会调查,培养学生跨文化的思维习惯,为职场需要提供文化交际方面的培训。

与一般的英语教材不同的是,本书没有大量的人为设计的读后练习,也没有常见教材的固定模式,而着重于指导学生如何寻找适合自己的学习技能,同时提供必要的阅读内容,充分发挥教师课堂上自由的拓展

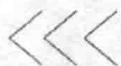
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本书强调四个方面的学习：基本理论指导；文化学习拓展；交际能力辅助训练；休闲时文阅读。本书选文文化视野宽，趣味性强。尤其注重文化和社会的变迁，以及其与科技发展的关系。既可以满足教师的课堂教学需要，也可以有利于培养学生对跨文化领域的学习兴趣。

同济大学浙江学院

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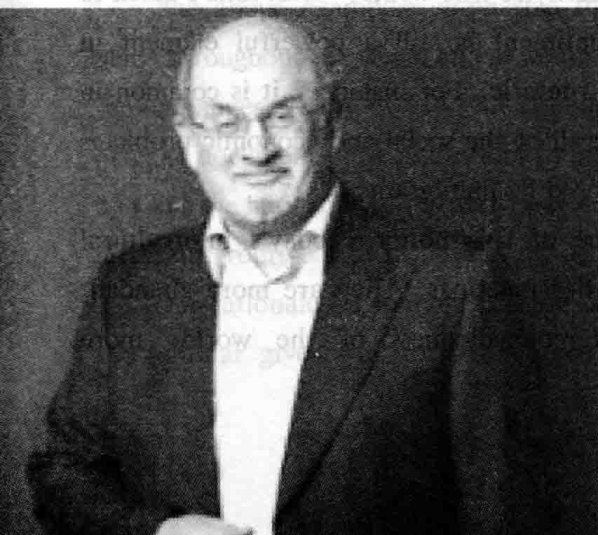
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# Chapter

# 1

## **Importance of Intercultural Communication**





*Confucian saying:*

Human beings draw close to one another by their common nature, but habits and customs keep them apart.

*John F. Kennedy:*

Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this plane.

## 1-1

### **Brief Introduction**

Intercultural communication, as you might suspect, is not new. Wandering nomads, religious missionaries, and conquering warriors have encountered people different from themselves since the beginning of time. Those meetings were frequently confusing and quite often hostile. In ancient times, the recognition of alien differences lacked accompanying cultural knowledge and often elicited the human propensity to respond malevolently to those differences. This notion was expressed over two thousand years ago by the Greek playwright Aeschylus who wrote, "Everyone's quick to blame the alien." This sentiment is still a powerful element in today's social and political rhetoric. For instance, it is common in today's society to hear that all of the social and economic problems in the United States are caused by immigrants.

Despite the persistence of this notion, today's intercultural encounters differ from earlier meetings. They are more abundant and, because of the interconnectedness of the world, more

significant. We can now board a plane and fly anywhere in the world in a matter of hours, and the reality of a global economy makes today's contacts far more commonplace than in any other period of the world's history. For example, in just single year, 1994 to 1995, multinational companies boosted their international investments 40 percent to a record \$ 315 billion. Reflect for a moment that the Slurpees we drink now come from over a thousand 7-Elevens owned by the Japanese. The web linking us together becomes vivid when we see a newspaper headline that tells us "Americans Once Again into Africa... And Staying a Lot Longer in Bosnia." Additionally, the emergence of the information age has allowed us the opportunity to expand our knowledge so that the recognition of cultural differences need not result in hostile encounters. Think of the message sent to the world when U.S. and Russian astronauts—whose countries a decade ago were archenemies—began to participate in joint space ventures. Ironic and humorous as it might have seemed, it reflected a new world order.

The above examples emphasize the changes that have taken place throughout the world and at home. In this chapter, we explore these changes. Many of you will be able to verify the examples we offer to document these alterations in intercultural contact, for some of you have had firsthand experiences with people whose cultures are different from your own.

Our rationale for looking at these changes is threefold. First, as the familiar gives way to a new and different world, the entire

human race is affected. Second, many of the events that have brought diverse groups together have been too subtle to detect and have taken place over a long period. Hence, we believe that many of them may have been overlooked. Finally, by demonstrating both the quantity and quality of these changes, we might be better able to arouse your interest in intercultural communication. We begin by looking at the quantity and quality of intercultural contacts, both abroad and at home, and their implications to the study of intercultural communication. Next, we alert you to some of the problems inherent in the study of intercultural communication. Finally, we offer a brief preview of the remaining chapters so that you know what lies ahead.

### 1-1-1



## ***The Quantity and Quality of Intercultural Contacts***

We are beginning to realize that a symbiotic relationship ties all people together. No nation, group, or culture can remain aloof or autonomous. If you touch one part of the world, you touch all parts. Three international developments have made intercultural contact more axiomatic and pervasive: (1) new technology and information systems, (2) changes in the world's population, and (3) a shift in the world's economic arena.

### 1-1-2



## ***New Technology and Information Systems***

Technology has accelerated intercultural contact by spurring



development in two areas of human endeavor: *transportation systems and communication system*. Trips once taking days are now measured in hours. Supersonic transports can place a tourist anywhere in the world within hours. In fact, today tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world. At one time, only wealthy Americans could afford to visit foreign lands, but now people from every country in the world use air travel as a means of discovering other cultures.

Vacationing tourists are not the only ones enjoying the increased mobility brought about by technical advances in transportation systems. Business executives and government officials can now attend a breakfast meeting in San Francisco and a dinner conference in Paris—during the same day. One result of these expanded travel opportunities is that people are encountering cultures that sometimes seem bizarre and even mysterious. Sources of differences now go far beyond eating utensils, traditional attire, and mode of travel. People are exposed to cultural idiosyncrasies in the perception of time and space, the treatment of women and the elderly, the ways and means of conducting business, and even the discovery and meaning of truth.

Other developments in transportation technology are on the horizon—developments that will further increase cultural contact. Aerospace divisions of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas have experimental machines designed to power themselves vertically into Earth's orbit and then return to land in the same position. These developments put us on the verge of being able to build inexpensive,

reliable, and dependable single-stage-to-orbit space ships. And if these vehicles live up to their promises, we will be able to reuse suborbital rockets as well as orbital vehicles for travel. This means that travel time measured in hours today may some day be measured in minutes; instead of taking twelve or more hours to fly from Los Angeles to Beijing, we may be able to do so in ninety minutes. With increased ease of mobility, we will likely encounter new cultures at a greater rate than before.

New and advanced communication systems have also encouraged and facilitated cultural interaction during the past decade. Communication satellites, sophisticated television transmission equipment, and digital switching networks now allow people throughout the world to share information and ideas at the same time. The world now has 1.2 billion television sets and 180 million personal computers. Capital Cities/ABC announced in 1995 their plans to launch a national 24-hour news channel to compete with CNN. Currently, CNN is available in 210 countries, and 28.5 million households new it in an average week. The new ABC channel is expected to be available in 90 countries with 63 million households viewing it in an average week. The power these television networks have on intercultural communication is significant. As *U. S. News and World Report* noted, "Television's impact on the world community cannot be overstated."

The development of communication satellites has also led to the expansion of the World Wide Web and the Internet computer network. A recent article in *Newsweek* made the same point: "The

information revolution began in the United States, and the Internet is gradually spreading it around the world.” In the last two years, the Internet has more than tripled in size. Half the computers on the Internet are in the United States, and the rest of the subscribers are spread out among connected networks in 100 countries—some 22 countries joined the Internet in 1995. Computer education for children is on the rise worldwide. “Children are being educated in ways never conceived. They are linked across the globe through computer literacy. Some will grow up never knowing a time when they did not use the computer.” As a result of these computer links, many children may relate more to their global peers than to their local counterparts.

In addition, a well-organized international film industry has evolved that lets societies share cultural experiences with one another as films are produced and shown around the world. Many countries also participate in numerous international film festivals each year including such popular and well-known competitions as Cannes and the Hawaii International Film Festival.

### 1-1-3



### *The New Population*

The second impetus to international communication has been the rapid increase in the world's population. In 1965, there were 3.3 billion people in the world; by 1995, there were 5.7 billion people. This means that last year alone, the world's population grew by 100 million people—the largest increase ever. Worldwide, this



means a net population increase of 3 per second, 10,600 per hour, and 254,000 per day. By the time you eat dinner tonight, 240,000 babies will have been born. Because population increases threaten the health of the planet, nations have begun to examine issues such as finite natural resources, pollution, and international conflict.

**1-1-4**



### ***Finite Natural Resources***

Over the next half century, it is predicted that water, our most precious natural resource, will replace oil as the prime trigger for international conflict. "At least 170 million people living in cities worldwide lack access to clean water for drinking, cooking, and washing; in rural areas, the number exceeds 855 million." Nations are also beginning to confront each other over the dwindling supply of fish in the world's oceans. The decrease in food sources, in part brought about by the world's burgeoning population, is another example of how limited resources produce intercultural friction. As the historian Linden notes, "As the global population climbs by nearly 100 million a year, starker limits appear on the horizon, and the potential for strife and disorder rises. "Negotiating these "limits" and avoiding "strife and disorder" are among the goal of intercultural communication. When we consider that 1 billion people worldwide lack sufficient food to meet energy and protein requirements for a productive and healthy life, it is easy to see how food insecurities could pit nation against nation. Finite natural resources provide yet another reason for people to come together for



international understanding.

**1-1-5**



### **Pollution**

The media are replete with examples of environmental issues, such as pollution, that affect all cultures. For example, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) announced in September 1995 that the Antarctic ozone hole is already twice the size it was last year—now at 3.9 million square miles, it is as big as Europe and still growing. It has become clear that pollution does not observe geographic and cultural boundaries. This and other environmental issues such as destruction of rainforests, pollution of oceans and rivers, extermination of valuable plants and animals, the greenhouse effect, dumping of toxic wastes, and lax enforcement of regulations for nuclear plants affect the entire planet. Nations are beginning to realize that we must work together to solve these problems or face common disaster.

**1-1-6**



### **International Conflict**

As the population of the world has increased, it has become more difficult to remain detached and isolated from global tensions and conflicts. Recent events have given credence to the axiom that hostility anywhere has the potential to become hostility everywhere. As a recent article in *U. S. News and World Report* pointed out, "Flare-ups in Zaire are dangerous because they could spill over into



any of nine neighbors.” The article reminds us that the United States, although thousands of miles away, is also a “neighbor.” Peacekeeping in Bosnia, “ethnic cleansing” in Macedonia and Kosovo, tensions between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights, and conflict between China and its “province in rebellion,” Taiwan, represent the potential for worldwide military involvement. Further, continued threats by Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Africa’s famines and civil disorder, the movement of North Korea’s military into the Demilitarized Zone, continued conflict in Russia as it attempts to adjust to a market economy, increased terrorism, the civil, religious, and tribal wars in third world countries all present possibilities for global conflict.

Abroad bombs are planted in the Paris Metro, and poison gas in the Tokyo subway. These are the urban equivalents of the guns and machetes of tribal warfare in the deserts and jungles. And at home [in the United States], what an irony that fertilizer, which is supposed to promote life, is turned into an explosive instrument of death.

Nuclear capability also presents unlimited potential for global conflict. *Newsweek* issued a special report in July 1995 called “Nuclear Nations”: “With a leaky nuclear Russia and renegade states in search of the bomb, the risks may be greater today than ever before.” Global tensions prompted President Clinton in October 1995 to address the largest gathering of world leaders in history and call for an international war on crime. This conference represents yet another example of how events in one part of the

