

中澳跨文化交际语篇分析

A Study of Intercultural Discourse between

Mainland Chinese Speakers of English and Anglo-Australians

冷慧/著

辽宁师范大学出版社

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Leng Hui

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前 言

改革开放以来,我国和世界各地其他国家之间的交往与日俱增。跨文化交际这一学科也随之在许多研究领域得到越来越多的关注。这些领域包括“跨文化交际学”、“英语教学”、“国际贸易”等。本书以认知科学为切入点,从文化语言学的角度来探讨中国人与澳大利亚人之间用英语进行交流时的语篇特点。

认知科学中的“图式”概念是本书的基本框架,在此基础上,本书结合文化语言学的研究成果,利用“文化图式”的理论,找出中国人与澳大利亚人进行英语交流时所依赖的认知基础。第一章是全书的铺垫,介绍了在当今全球一体化的背景下,研究中澳跨文化交际的必要性。许多生活在澳大利亚的大陆华人,由于对澳大利亚文化的陌生和中澳文化差异的茫然,遭到澳洲人的误解、偏见、歧视,以至于游离于主流社会的边缘。由此可见,系统地研究中澳跨文化交际势在必行,将积极促进多元文化的发展和多民族人民的和谐相处。

第二章为文献回顾篇,对四种以华人为素材的跨文化交际的研究方法进行评述。这四种方法为:互动社会语言学法、跨文化言语行为法、自然语义元语言法和语篇法。本章客观地显示出这四种方法的优势和不足,指出没有认知科学理论基础的跨文化交际研究,其方法仅仅停留在研究语言 and 文化的显性关系上,而没有深入、系统地研究语言和文化之间的界面——思维的隐性力量。

第三章为理论框架篇,着重论述了奠定全书理论基础的核心概念。(一)“图式”和“文化图式”:本章阐述了图式作为人类主要思维工具之一,其理论产生的认知科学基础和与其他学科交叉发展的研究成果,剖析了图式与其他相似概念如“框架”、“脚本”、“心智模式”等的异同。图式常常被打上本民族的文化烙印,形成“文化图式”。(二)“认知意象”:意象是心理表征,具有认知性。认知意象是直接感性经验在大脑中经过高度抽象后而形成的兼具图像性和抽象性的图式。认知意象对自然、社会、人类自身等经验进行认知加工,形成概念类比。特定的认知意象产生特定的语言表达,不仅词语意义多是相对于认知意象而言,语言结构(即广义上的语法)大多也是由认知意象所规定的。(三)“语篇情节”和“汉语语篇情节”:投射到人们交流过程中的认知意象起勾勒语篇轮廓的作用,从而形成“语篇情节”。多数认知意象是由社会、文化和个人经验构建而成,因此具有文化相对性。彰显中国文化图式并体现中国文化特性的认知意象在中国人的跨文化交际语篇中构建为“汉语语篇情节”。汉语语篇情节在本书所分析的语料中不仅呈现

出“凸显性”和“反复性”的特点,还是研究中澳跨文化交际语篇的认知依据。本章还梳理了构建文化图式的人类学、文化语言学、认知心理学等学科的基本原理。本章集中体现出本书的人文性、认知性、意象性和篇章性的特点。

第四章为研究方法篇,真实地记录了作者多年来搜集大量研究素材的全过程及客观准确分析跨文化语篇素材的各个步骤。本书采用“会话民俗学”的研究传统,搜集到38对中国人与澳大利亚人之间的自然对话,累计长达50多个小时。为了挖掘出根植于研究对象心智世界的中国文化图式,作者采用多种方法接触生活在澳大利亚的大陆华人,对他们进行走访、专访、笔头采访等,以获得文化知情人的第一手回馈资料。所有语料的录音和分析皆由本书作者通过近四年的时间独立完成,并由精通中澳文化的学者共同核对、检验。

第五、六、七章为语篇分析篇。这三章共同构成了本书的主体,也是本书对语篇分析和跨文化交际研究的贡献所在。这三章找出中国人与澳大利亚人进行英语交流时所依赖的认知基础,即“中国和谐图式”、“中国家庭图式”和“中国教育图式”。本章还总结出六个具有中国文化认知特点的认知意象,如“自己人意象”、“别人意象”、“弹性人际意象”、“阴—阳平衡意象”、“家庭等级意象”和“社会等级意象”,以及二十个汉语语篇情节,如“中国式问候情节”、“抹不开面子情节”、“不好意思情节”、“说话不见外情节”、“替他人着想情节”等。

第八章为本书的结论篇。(一)“中国和谐图式”、“中国家庭图式”和“中国教育图式”三足鼎立,共同构成中国文化图式。同时三个图式以中国家庭图式为核心,动态联结,三位一体。中国家庭和谐与国家和谐互为同构,通过教育图式得以实现。中国家庭图式是中国教育图式的动因之一,也是实现中国和谐图式的基础。(二)讲英语的中国人,其语篇特点不仅体现出中国文化性,还体现出认知意象性。汉语语篇情节内嵌于具有中国文化性的认知意象中,是中国文化图式的反映。(三)汉语语篇情节不仅影响讲英语的中国人同澳大利亚人交流时对英语的理解和使用,还是造成他们与澳方之间产生交际偏差的根源,也是导致一方或双方不快的原因。

本书的启示是:(一)在跨文化交际过程中,要解决由于文化背景不同而带来的误解、偏见,交流双方需要分析、了解不同文化背景背后的不同文化图式,找出其思维的认知基础。只有彼此深入理解和赏识对方的文化图式,交流双方才能真正进行协商,达成共识,才能最终进行顺畅的跨文化交际。(二)培养中国的双语人才,不仅要培养学生两种语言的使用能力或交际能力,更重要的是培养其跨文化交际能力。跨文化交际能力培养的基础在于使中国学生首先了解中国语言和中国文化的认知源泉,在学习西方语言和西方文化的同时,能对两种语言和两种

文化进行认知图式层面上的对比、分析。真正的双语人才不仅对语言差异有敏锐的直觉,还要对文化差异有理性的分析,并能与对方在认知图式的深度上进行沟通,从而达到消除误会、畅所欲言的交际佳境。

本书的语言通俗易懂、结构合理、条理清晰,有很强的可读性,可作为英语学术论文写作的样本。本书的部分内容在本科生、研究生中试用过,均取得了很好的教学效果。学生通过理论学习和案例分析,在提高跨文化意识和交际能力的同时,也加深了对博大精深的中国文化的理解。本书的读者为喜爱跨文化交际方面内容的高年级本科生、研究生、英语教师及广大从事跨文化交际工作的涉外人员。本书特别适合即将奔赴澳大利亚留学和工作的朋友们。

谨借本书出版的机会,向一直关心我、培养我、接纳我的辽宁师范大学——我挚爱的母校和现在的工作单位表示衷心的感谢!辽宁师范大学像一位仁慈、宽厚的母亲,二十多年来哺育着我、关注着我,给我天空,任我遨翔。在我近十年的新加坡和澳大利亚的留学生活中,辽宁师范大学从没有忘记我。是辽宁师范大学对我厚重的支持才使我从一名不谙时世、默默无闻的本科生成长为今天合格的人民教师和英语语言学博士。

如果说辽宁师范大学像我的母亲,那么外国语学院就是我的兄弟姐妹。外国语学院的领导、本科时教过我的老师、和我一起成长的同事、与我一起探索知识和分享学习快乐的学生们,他们都是我力量的源泉,都给过我完成本书的启迪和灵感。同时,感谢辽宁师范大学科研处和外国语学院对学术专著出版的支持和对本书出版的鼎力资助,也感谢辽宁师范大学出版社的默契配合和通力合作。特别感谢责任编辑刘长影女士,她细心阅读本书的每一章节,提出许多具有建设性的建议。

我在澳洲留学期间得到许许多多导师、同事和朋友的鼓励和支持。对他们、对我的家人和无数帮助过我的其他朋友,我将在书后用英文真诚地对他们表示感谢。

若书中存在遗漏和不妥之处,敬请各位专家和读者不吝指教。

冷慧

2007年11月于亲亲家园

Preface

This is an impressive piece of work that should be useful to anyone working in the field of intercultural communications. Ms. Leng Hui argues that intercultural miscommunications can be understood as mismatches in expectations embedded in cultural schemas, especially those schemas known as discourse scenarios. She tests her theory with data from conversations in English between Anglo-Australians and mainland Chinese. She provides an excellent review and discussion of the literature on schema theory in cognitive and cultural linguistics ... She shows that the discourse scenarios that help to explain her data instantiate cultural schemas such as harmony. Her method of recording conversations, followed up by interviews seems appropriate to the problem. Her method of analysis by detailed interpretation of excerpts from transcripts showing problems in communication is appropriate. I agree that a statistical approach would probably miss much of the important information, given her problem of discovering the role of cognition in miscommunication. Her interpretations are careful and insightful... Her findings should provide a basis for others to devise experimental approaches, such as systematically priming interlocutors with a range of scenarios. This could not be done without her laying the foundation of establishing the recurrent and salient discourse scenarios in each culture. The originality of this thesis lies in her application of the concept of discourse scenarios to actual instances of intercultural miscommunication. She shows good critical insight in her understanding of the theory and in her interpretation of the conversation transcripts. The data are substantial and, together with the method, show the ability to carry out independent research. I learned much from reading the thesis.

Gary B. Palmer
Professor Emeritus
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
USA
From Summary Report on Hui Leng's Thesis

Preface

Many years ago I had the privilege of teaching for a year in one of the major foreign language institutes in China. My students were studying for a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and had a superior level of competency in English. Nonetheless, what we said to one another at times communicated something other than what we intended. I well remember one student, who had received a poor mark in an assignment expressing his dismay. "But when you looked at my draft with me you said it was good," he protested. What he had missed was that this polite lead-in had been followed by a number of hints as to how it could have been made better. He had understood my literal meaning but not my intention. I hasten to add my student had a right to be aggrieved. I had used discourse conventions which I should have realized did not carry across cultures.

The work of Dr. Leng Hui which is represented in this book is highly relevant in the contemporary situation where Chinese people are increasingly involved in communication in English with people whose discourse is informed by different cultural expectations. Her work begins from the observation that "...people, despite using the same linguistic code, often encounter communication difficulties due to the different cultural systems involved in the process of intercultural communication." In responding to this problem, Dr. Leng takes an approach which will be new to many. Rather than looking at language in terms of structure she looks at it in terms of cultural imagery. Her work represents a significant addition to the growing literature on cultural linguistics and shows the fruitfulness of this area of research in confirming the existence of cultural schemas and demonstrating their relevance in everyday communication.

This book is grounded in the close analysis of the actual data of interactions between English speakers coming from the People's Republic of China and those of an Anglo-Australian cultural background. It abounds in enlightening insights and is sure to provoke readers to a re-examination of their own experiences of bewilderment or annoyance in intercultural communication such as the one I cited above. I trust her work will also contribute to the reduction of avoidable communication difficulties between English speakers of Chinese and other backgrounds.

Ian Malcolm
Emeritus Professor of Applied Linguistics
Edith Cowan University
Perth, Western Australia

Preface

When I came to China to teach at Liaoning Normal University, I had no idea as to the depth of Chinese tradition. I had the good fortune to meet Dr. Leng Hui, a colleague in School of Foreign Languages who had completed her doctorate in Cultural Linguistics with the research topic of "A Study of Intercultural Discourse between Mainland Chinese Speakers of English and Anglo-Australians". In reading this study, I became fascinated with the notion of schema as a means of understanding culture. I found that she expressed complex and convoluted concepts in a very simple, straight-forward fashion. I was mostly interested in her work because of its implications for ESL and EFL teaching as well as for comparisons between the Chinese and American education systems. Even though her study utilized Australians as native English speakers, I found no significant differences between the discourse of Australians with that of American native English speakers. Therefore, even though the same language may be spoken, the understanding or lack of understanding between communicants is often due to the cultural schemas identified by Dr. Leng.

The greatest thing about Leng's work is that she makes her research so interesting to read. She covers not only cultural linguistics, but also history, anthropology, philosophy, and language. As a person who is a practitioner instead of a linguist, I find the text to be very understandable and the examples are plentiful and very thought provoking.

Dr. Leng's lively writing style draws example after example of discourse that gives credence and rationale for such verbal characteristics as "Not taking 'no' for an answer."; "Saying 'yes' when one really meant 'no'."; modestly denying praises given; thinking for other people, and so on.

One of the most interesting sections of the book is the concept of expectations and how the Chinese mother was disappointed that the Australian teacher did not act in a more "parent-like" manner in supporting high goals and achievement for the student but instead expressed the view that the boy should satisfy his own desires. The development and analysis of the schema make me want to know more; especially whether or not there are schemas in American discourse that might reflect similar patterns of behavior.

Finally, one cannot read her work without feeling a little envious of the rich culture and tradition of China that cherishes harmony, family, and education to such a high degree. For example,

The Chinese *jiaoshu yuren* 'teaching books and cultivating people' conceptualisation functions like a blueprint, governing nationwide educational activities and influencing teaching agendas. The people-

cultivation aspect of Chinese education gives rise to the culturally-constructed understanding that Chinese teachers are indispensable moral cultivators and moral models in the process of transmitting knowledge. This cultural understanding leads to another cultural phenomenon of Chinese parents and students paying high respect to teachers.

In America, the lack of respect students and parents have toward teachers is a significant problem. Perhaps we Westerners can learn from Dr. Leng's work and take steps to inculcate a similar happening of "parents and students paying high respect to teachers".

Stephen Keith
Retired Director of Student Programs
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

1.1 Background of the study

“Intercultural communication has since long [sic] become an everyday experience for more and more people in the world” (Knapp, Enninger and Knapp-Potthoff, 1987: v). People from different cultural backgrounds are propelled by various reasons to engage in communication of different degrees of intimacy, depending on whether their contact is fleeting or deepening. In fact, increasing heterogeneity of interacting parties and overt barriers of negotiation observed in today’s world reinforce Tannen’s (1986: 43) claim that “the fate of the earth depends on cross-cultural communication”.

Culture, in this study, is regarded as a complex knowledge system. This view is in line with Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff (1987: 4) who maintain that culture is “a more abstract shared knowledge of members of social communities, frequently on the level of the geographical and political unit of a nation”. They also relate the shared knowledge to:

the world views, value orientations, norms, manners and customs, orientations towards social and interpersonal relations, preferred styles of thinking and arguing etc. that are taken for granted by the members of a social community and that more generally explain the occurrence of and give meaning to these surface phenomena. (Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff, 1987: 4)

The view of culture as a knowledge system does not preclude the legitimacy of other views of culture. It is understood that *culture* is in itself a super-general term. The over 200 definitions observed by Kroeber and Kluckhohn in 1952 (cited in Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff, 1987: 4) might be regarded as a culture of ‘culture definitions’. The opposing view to that of culture as a knowledge system may be related to the argument that no matter how small the social community in which a culture is nurtured, different people, due to biological and cognitive differences, can never share exactly the same amount of knowledge with the same degree of

profundity. The counter-argument in this study is that individual discrepancies in knowledge, nevertheless, should not lead to cultural cynicism or cultural nihilism. As Schifffrin (1994: 139) contends, "not every aspect of culture—not every part of our cognitive 'blue-print'—needs to be shared (i.e. known) by all members".

Within the cognitive study of linguistic meanings there are two trends of thought emphasising either the 'centripetal' or the 'centrifugal' properties of culture (Quinn, 1997: 137). The centripetal trend places primary attention on the 'sharedness' of culture, whereas the centrifugal trend emphasizes the 'non-sharedness' of culture. Instead of taking sides with either trend, this study, like many other research studies, acknowledges the legitimacy of both trends of thought, viewing culture as a dynamic and *more or less* shared system of conceptualisations (Strauss and Quinn, 1997: 4). Individual discrepancies are accounted for in this study as evidence of the distributed representation of cultural knowledge (Sharifian, 2003).

Acknowledging the legitimacy of discrepancies within the cultural knowledge of members of a community, this study, again like many other research studies, relies on a certain degree of abstraction and idealisation. For instance, Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff (1987: 5) observe that "the description and definition of a particular culture require abstraction and idealisation". This indeed leads to the dilemma facing most, if not all, cultural studies. On the one hand, the purpose of analysing intercultural communication is to discuss and discover cultural differences so as to promote effective communication or mitigate communication difficulties. On the other hand, due to the generalisation inherent in any scientific research, which occurs even if controlled to the maximum degree possible, the analysis of intercultural communication is likely to lead to another generalisation, unless the analysis is judicious. This research dilemma has also been observed by Gao (1995: 35). The solution to the dilemma, as is maintained in this study, is, rather than to deny and avoid the minimum degree of idealisation necessary for conducting research, to limit the generalisation by providing detailed accounts of background variables. In this way, readers can make their own informed decisions regarding the degree of relevance of the data analysis.

Despite the diversity of opinion in cultural studies, it is maintained in this study that the distinctiveness of one culture relative to another surfaces when the lack of it, or the breaching of it, causes intercultural difficulties of different degrees and in various forms. In this case, it seems that real life experience of in-depth intercultural communication, rather than temporary contact only, is of vital importance for the appreciation of the distinctiveness

of culture. Nonetheless, it is equally misleading to think that the lack of 'sharedness' of culture is perilous. A proper range of cultural differences in intercultural communication leads to the profound understanding of varieties and supplements of cultural systems which may be negotiated on the basis of willingness when the intercultural communication difficulties appear.

It is maintained here that the culturally-bound, although not necessarily culturally-determined, conceptual systems (which are represented both explicitly and implicitly), together with different linguistic structures and paralinguistic features, are the major factors influencing effective intercultural communication. A significantly large amount of literature on intercultural communication from such fields as anthropology, psychology, sociology and social psychology bears out the argument that people, despite using the same linguistic code, often encounter communication difficulties due to the different cultural systems involved in the process of intercultural communication.

In the general field of intercultural communication, studies have revealed that Chinese cultural values and norms greatly influence the effects of intercultural communication (both spoken and written) between Chinese speakers of English and native English speakers (e.g. Chen, 1990; Gao, 1999; Gao, 1998; Gu, 1985, 1990; Lu, 2001; Ma, 1997; Pan, 1994; Scollon and Scollon, 1995 [2001]; Shih, 1986; Spencer-Oatey, Ng, and Li, 2000; Spencer-Oatey and Xing, 2000; Wierzbicka, 1996; Xu, 1987; Young, 1982; 1994; Zhu 2000). These studies investigate Chinese speakers of English in many parts of the world. These scholars recognise that the concept of 'face', as well as its sub-concepts of 'saving face' and 'losing face' in particular, is directly responsible for the reported indirect, circular way of speaking in most speech acts such as giving/responding to compliments, making/rejecting requests and asking for/giving a favour. They also contend that the Chinese cultural knowledge that "an individual's social behaviour ought to live up to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement" (Gu, 1990: 245) gives rise to the addressee-oriented model of Chinese politeness (Pan, 1994). Besides, the Chinese norm of avoiding confrontations leads to the seeking of convergence (Young, 1982; 1994) when argumentation is involved.

Moreover, culture-loaded vocabulary (Xu, 1987), culture-specific topic-comment information structure (Young, 1982; 1994), culturally-nurtured speech acts and Chinese patterns of thought (Kaplan, 1966) have been claimed to cause misunderstanding and miscommunication between Chinese and native English speakers. For instance, when giving an explanation for their own points of view, Chinese are seen by native English speakers as