

Chinese and Western Values and Practical Choice of Cross-cultural Communication

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Abstract. The practice of cross-cultural communication involves superficial verbal communication, custom tolerance, and cultural fusion; in the process of serving the same communicative purpose, differences may arise in cross-cultural communication due to different values, which bring certain difficulties to those who just got involved in cross-cultural communication. To promote cultural communication and development between China and the west, and enhance the efficiency of Chinese students in western culture study, this paper aims to discuss various relationships in practical choice of cross-cultural communication from the perspective of Chinese and western values, and put forward a few strategic suggestions.

Introduction

China and the west are two regions with totally different historical development courses. Through a long period of development of political system, economy, morality, science and technology, and culture, both China and the west had formed their own relatively stable cultural orientations, and Chinese and western people live and communicate in different ways, which form barriers for cross-cultural communication. With the constant advance of globalization, cross-cultural communication becomes more and more necessary. As far as China is concerned, students studying abroad becomes more and more popular, which promotes the research and development of cross-cultural communication^[1-2]. In my opinion, in the practical choice of cross-cultural communication, the influence of value should dominate, and how the differences between Chinese and western values are understood more clearly and comprehensively becomes the key to improving the efficiency of cross-cultural communication. In view of this, I made analyses from the aspects of the necessity of research, differences of values and strategy based on literature review and in combination with practical experience, with a hope to share and discuss with the experts and scholars.

Necessity of Researching Chinese and Western Values and Practical Choice of Cross-cultural Communication

Inevitable Requirements for Talent Training under the Context of Globalization

The current era is a time of knowledge-based economy and knowledge-based economy is the product of globalization; the economic form in which knowledge holds the dominant production position, exchange and fusion become more necessary, and higher requirements are made to the training of modern talents^[3]. Firstly, under the tendency of globalization, the linguistic universality has become the fundamental research direction. More and more people devote themselves to study of foreign languages, to lay a foundation for various cross-cultural communications. Besides, the multilingual talent training mode also becomes the key point of teaching and research of many universities. Secondly, the cross-cultural communication requires a good knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of both sides, which is of positive significance to improving the efficiency of cross-cultural communication, and expanding the field and scale of Chinese and western communication. Furthermore, from the perspective of the talent market, modern talents must have a relatively mature second language system or learning system, so as to adapt to the constantly expanding and

diversifying business development models. All in all, the globalization requires people to join in the cross-cultural communication development tide. Thus, it is imperative to learn Chinese and western values and research the relationships in exchange practice.

Presence of Large Linguistic, Cultural and Value Differences between China and the West

To promote the cross-cultural communication to rapidly develop, the differences between China and the west must be fully understood. In my opinion, analysis from the aspects of language, culture and value is a viable way to summarize the differences. Firstly, language, as the symbol of the formation of cultures, is of distinctive regional characteristics; the languages of China and the west differ greatly from each other^[4]. Language differ from each other in respect of superficial linguistic form, expressing habit, and meaning; the linguistic form, including language structure, lexical representation, etc., can be acquired through learning and practice; the expressing habit and meaning require the learners to keep long-time culture contact or be highly capable of comprehending language culture, such as artistic conceptions of language in different expression forms. China and the west greatly differ from each other in respect of language. For example, the western languages tend to be straightforward, while Chinese expression reserved. Besides, the western syntactic structure also largely differs from Chinese syntactic structure. Secondly, in the aspect of culture, having gone through totally different development courses for a long time, China greatly differs from the west in respect of cultural system, covering political structure, economic level, economic model, scientific development level, cultural form and living habit, etc. People must be aware of these differences in the process of cross-cultural communication, so as to evade disagreement or conflict, and seek common points while reserving difference. In addition, in respect of value, as a belief of behavioral pattern and existential state of relatively fixed model sought by individuals and groups, values are the cultural core, and the inexorable outcome of the cultural development of a region. Values cover people's thinking habit, living style, view of life, philosophical view, and other objective aspects, which will dominate the efficiency and depth of cross-cultural communication. All in all, the differences of language, culture and value are of great significance to cross-cultural communication between China and the west, which should be widely concerned in related research fields.

Obstacles in Cross-cultural Communication

Cross-cultural communication relates to various exchanges based on language, culture and value, in which individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds try to exchange information to realize the same topic and goal, so as to seek diversified interests^[5]. The research on Chinese and western values and practical choice of cross-cultural communication mainly aim to clear obstacles for the communicators with different cultural backgrounds, to promote the two cultures to further develop and accelerate the globalization development. However, there are obstacles in cross-cultural communication between China and the west, because both have their own huge complicated cultural system. Though it seems that the universality of the use of language had been basically addressed through long-time development of English education, it didn't offer an effective support to deep cross-cultural communication. This is mainly because there are large differences of expressing habit and aim of languages. If the differences last for a long time, the desirability of strengthening communication will be directly reduced, and the cultural globalization and fusion also will be impeded. Besides, cross-cultural communication also is affected by race, region, age, and personal background. There are obstacles.

Analysis of Differences between Chinese and Western Values

Differences in Language Communication Habits

Interpersonal communication and exchange are subject to the influence of rules and habits, and verbal communication habits in different regions under the influence of different customs tend to be different. The differences between Chinese and western verbal communication habits have existed for a long time. Chinese people tend to be euphemistic in expressing feelings and emotions and hospitality etiquette, while westerners tend to be frank and straightforward. Take the example of dinners and banquets. Chinese hosts will prepare a full table of meals to show their hospitality, and be modest in taking care of the guests. On the contrary, westerners would like to show their hospitality by serving their specialty dishes and inviting the guests to have a taste and appreciation rather than by serving a large number of dishes. Besides, in respect of expression of feelings and emotions, Chinese people also differ from the westerners. For example, when being complimented, a Chinese person will be modest by saying: "it is just so-so, and I am overpraised.", while a westerner will say thank you to accept the compliment. These differences of verbal communication habits were caused by different customs and cultures, forming the beauty of rich and diversified linguistic cultures, and bringing huge chance for the integration and fusion of different cultures in different regions. Hence, the differences should be regarded in such a way that common points are sought while differences are kept.

Differences in View of Life and Value

Value refers to relatively stable way of being and behavior tendency formed by individuals under the influence of experience, culture and other factors in life. The differences in view of life and value between Chinese people and westerners can be analyzed from the correlations between dependence and independence, between collectivity and individuals, between privacy and intimacy, between universality and individuality, and between harmonization and competition. Firstly, Chinese people stress the establishment of relationship network, because they believe an individual cannot survive without the social relations; while westerners believe that an individual can show their value via independence, lay little stress on interpersonal relationship, and even on parenthood, and never assume unnecessary responsibilities and obligations in communication with friends. On this basis, an extension can be made to the differences in the development outcomes of "collectivity and individuals" between Chinese people and westerners. Most Chinese people emphasize collectivism, regard collective interests more important than personal interests, and realize personal interests in reliance upon collective interests; but westerners place personal interests above all other interests. In respect of communication relationship, Chinese people emphasize mutual trust and intimacy between people; but westerners would like to preserve privacy and space in an intimate relationship. The differences in this aspect greatly puzzle communicators, so that they often find it hard to reach an agreement. With regard to correlation between universality and individuality, Chinese people greatly differ from westerners in respect of school uniform. Chinese people tend to integrate and unite, while westerners tend to break with convention and create a new style, and emphasize personality. Besides, from the angle of correlation between harmonization and competition, harmonization is widely praised in China, while westerners believe progress is brought by competition, and only competition can create a bright future. To sum up, the differences in value form various obstacles in cross-cultural communication between China and the west, and provide an effective ground for people's practical choice.

Differences in Way of Thinking

The way of thinking refers to the structure and way of thinking, covering emotional trend, flow, and evaluation channels. The way of thinking of individuals is complicated, because it is mainly influenced by cultural background, living habit, educational background, and family environment. The way of thinking can be categorized into image thinking and abstract thinking, comprehensive

thinking and analytical thinking, unified thinking and antagonistic thinking, etc. Image thinking refers to the way of mental organization based on the memory image, of superficiality to some extent; abstract thinking refers to reasoning and judgment on theoretical basis, of certain logicity. Both image thinking and abstract thinking are basic constitution contents of the way of thinking, of which the proportion determines the characteristic of the way of thinking of individuals. Chinese people tend to adopt image thinking, and are liable to make judgment based on personal feelings; while westerners lay emphasis on rational advanced abstract thinking, and are used to making judgment in a logic way. In respect of comprehensive thinking and analytical thinking, most Chinese people tend to evaluate the comprehensive properties of things, and adopt comprehensive thinking inspired by the traditional idea of dialectical unity, of integrity; while westerners tend to analyze things from the aspects of attributes and characteristics. The differences in this aspect are reflected by the theory of traditional Chinese medicine and the anatomy. In respect of unified thinking and antagonistic thinking, most Chinese people tend to consider unity, unification and harmonization to be positive and right elements, and emphasize consistency in the development process of things, and collective interests in people's behaviors and activities, which also are the characteristics of the theory of socialism; while westerners tend to emphasize individuals, advocate freedom, deny any unreasonable sacrifice of personal interests, and consider the supreme rights rest with individuals, of contrariety. Chinese people emphasize that every coin has two sides, and believe the both sides of conflict can convert to each other conditionally; while westerners emphasize antagonistic analysis, and consider cause and effect exist separately, and it is unnecessary to make conversion between cause and effect. It is thus clear that the differences in the way of thinking also pose obstacles in cross-cultural communication between China and the west.

How to improve cross-cultural communication ability based on Chinese and western values?

According to the foregoing paragraphs, Chinese and western values profoundly impact cross-cultural communication activities. About this, I, based on real differences, put forward the following suggestions.

- a) To improve our knowledge, so as to know both sides. Learning is the base for cross-cultural communication. Individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds must know about the cultures of each other for purpose of communication. Therefore, before having cross-cultural communication activities, we should learn the culture, language, and regional background of the other side, and introduce them our cultural features, and taboos, to avoid unnecessary conflicts in cultural communication.
- b) To keep personality and mutually respect. In cross-cultural communication, we don't have to echo the cultural trend of the other side, but respect their cultural characteristics based on self-esteem. For example, we can introduce the way of greeting of Chinese to westerners, or westerners can explain their basic principles of appointment time to Chinese. The selection of communication practice should depend on the cultural background of the other side.
- c) To ask questions, and show respect. If the cultural background of the other side is uncertain, respect should be showed, and inquiring tone of should be taken as a sign of respect; negotiations should be carried out based on our cultural habits, so as to evade conflict and fulfill unification.

Conclusion

To sum up, Chinese and western values greatly impact cross-cultural communication, but people usually ignore this in practice process. This is adverse to the development of cross-cultural study, and has a negative influence on the quality and efficiency of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, more attention should be paid to values, and values should be put into the learning of language culture, to truly improve the comprehensive ability of cross-cultural communication.

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