

Cross-cultural Communication Based on Wittgenstein's Life Form

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Abstract. "Life form", "language games" and "family resemblance" are three important concepts in Wittgenstein's later philosophy research, marking the philosophy of language from theory to practice. In global village, no one is completely able to avoid the influence from life form, and no one can be really far away from cross-cultural communication. As a new emerging country, China is playing a more and more important role in international affairs. Finding out cross-cultural communicative strategies based on communicative philosophical ideas will help Chinese people with effective communication in the world stage.

Wittgenstein (1889-1951) lived in the European continent about 40 years, accepting the scientific tradition of Russell, et al. He lived in the UK about 20 years, getting the influence of the Anglo-American culture, but also accepting Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, the people of this ideology. Therefore, his philosophy both contain the ingredients of scientism, with humanism ingredients. Many philosophical researchers called him one of the traditional fusion of modern Western philosophy. Wittgenstein finished his "Tractatus" early in 1919, which made him famous overnight. The book was spoke highly by Russell, Moore and the logical positivists. In this early study, the concept of "logical form" occupies an important position. In his view, the language has been able to performance precisely because the language and reality have a common form of logic. Of logical positivism, this view has undergone a profound impact, and thus he was seen as an important representative of analytic philosophy. 1920s, young British philosopher Ramsay and Italian economist Sraffa expressed sharp criticism to this book. It was these fierce opposition that prompted Wittgenstein's philosophy was transformed from a focus on language logic research to the empirical study of the language. In later stage, the concept of "life form" instead of the status of the concept of "logical form". Wittgenstein has been de-emphasizing language and it is a common form of logic, instead emphasizing that language is part of the forms of life. Wittgenstein's purpose in doing so is to make the language out of the use of the metaphysical, which combined with the living reality of the world and people's actual lifestyle. Late Wittgenstein's view of language is a direct result of the generation of the ordinary language school.

The Comprehending of "Life Form"

The so-called life form refers to the overall or partial people's thinking way and acting way under the specific historical background, and based on historical customs, habits, institution and tradition" (Han Linhe, 1996:107). This concept is a core concept of the later Wittgenstein philosophy, which is one of the most difficult concept. Wittgenstein did not clearly defined this concept, but wrote many discussion about life form. He treated people's expectation, intention, meaning, understanding, feeling and other mental activity as forms of life, hence they become forms of life due to living together and using language in living. This concept was mentioned five times in Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations".

The "Life Form" and Language Learning

Comprehending Wittgenstein's life form mentioned in "Philosophical Investigations", we can conclude that: "life form" and the language activities or language applications are closely linked (Chen Jiaming, 1997:65).

During the process of acquisition of native language, Wittgenstein's thought is that word's

meaning is its usage like the rules of a game (Fan Lianyi, 2008:6). "Imagining a language is imagining a form of life" (ibid., 12). The language is closely linked with forms of life. "Here, the intention of the term" language game "is to highlight the fact that the language to tell is an activity, or a part of a life form" (ibid., 17). Therefore, in a sense, the late Wittgenstein's philosophy can be understood as : a discussion of the language acquisition process from the philosophical perspective (Fan Lianyi, 2008:5).

From the language acquisition process, the language is regarded as a game, and the rules of the game is the use of language in everyday life. Language is from life, expressed by rules, and significant by use. In the language game, the children gradually learned the rules of the game, namely the use of language, and the meaning of the word which is the word usage in language game. The children themselves are clearly aware of the importance of the language of this new tool for their spiritual development, but he was not satisfied at simply accepting guidance, but to actively participate in the process of speech acquisition. Wittgenstein said that the language to speak is the part of some behavior or a part of some form of life . "The things we have to accept, the stuff given to us, is in the life form" (ibid., 345). Correct understanding of Wittgenstein these descriptions should be: language as an integral part of the "life form" is what we have to accept. We should learn the language in the use of language, learning the language in the "language game", rather than set aside the use of language to seek the meaning of words alone.

When we learn a foreign language, you can still feel the kind of experience of childhood to learn their mother tongue. Just getting some new words or memorizing a set of abstract grammar rules in mind is not enough. The psychological mechanisms and state that children first began to form an objective concept of the world, it no longer exists for adults. In a sense, speech activity determines all human activities. Our perception, intuitive feelings and concepts, and our mother tongue vocabulary and verbal forms are tightly integrated together. Wanting to unlock the link between words and things is very difficult. However, when we start learning a new language, second language or third language, we have these two closely linked factors separated from the efforts to overcome the negative transfer of mother tongue, which means an important step in the process of language learning. "When we comprehend the charm of a foreign language, we always feel that way: it seems to enter a new world, a world of its own rational structure. It's like a major discovery voyage in a foreign country. One of the biggest harvest is having learned a new perspective to look at our own mother tongue "(Ernst Cassirer, 2001:210). Goethe said: "Who does not know foreign languages, who also do not understand the native language."

Language Learning and Cross-cultural Communication

The philosophy of language task is to show people the actual scene, a word used in this sense. The language game is a description of the actual usage of the word, hence Wittgenstein said that language and language activities is the most important form of life. He claimed that some topics in the philosophy is redundant, and we have to do is to investigate the actual usage of these words. Wittgenstein using "game" figuratively refers to the language just wants to show: the meaning of language is demonstrated through specific activities scenarios, and it is not the results of the analysis.

The language of communication is a complex language games requiring communicating parties to follow certain rules of the game to express their views and exchange feelings to achieve the purpose of communication. Language is the carrier of culture, and culture relies on language to spread. Therefore, the use of language must be subject to cultural constraints. With economic globalization, political globalization, cultural globalization and the development of science and technology, there will be the increasing number of the opportunity to interact from different cultures, different nationalities, different countries, and different communities. People often will have different understanding for the same language activity because of different "forms of life, even have ambiguity or misunderstandings. Thus cross-cultural communication emerged. Intercultural communication involves many disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies, and communication studies.

Exchanges between different cultures is inevitable, and cross-cultural communication activities will be ever more vivid, more real. In the real scenario, the situation will be more complex, even if you have mastered one or more foreign language, you can easily understand each other's language, can you understand the connotation of the other words? Can you accurately judge his implication? During cross-cultural communication, how to avoid a misunderstanding or ambiguity, then exchange the two sides to reach understanding and consensus? Wittgenstein has given a clear answer: "People said things are true or false; people agree the language used, which is not consensus on the views, but the consistent life form"(*ibid.*132). He believes that people of different cultures, different nations, different tribes speak different languages, but they will still be able to communicate through an interpreter. This is because the different languages are rooted in the different forms of life, and there are many similarities in different forms of life, which is common human behavior.

The Rules Which People Should Follow When They Communicate Inter-culturally

China's participation in the process of globalization is an independent nation-state re-construction of their cultural identity, re-shaping its national image and re-establishment its international position. In increasingly frequent and close cross-cultural communication, especially business communication in the context of economic globalization, we are often very easy to make over-reaction and evaluation of self and others' behavior or characteristics, resulting in communicative obstacles and misunderstandings. Therefore, in cross-cultural exchanges of this complex "life forms" a positive and flexible usage of various game strategies is essential.

First is the cultural sensitivity. Since culture is a colored glasses worn by the individual in the process of socialization, we often take it for granted that our own culture or our group culture, even our own words and behaviors are reasonable and proper. We will not go into the cultural factors behind. But if we live in a new environment or a completely different culture, the differences from the surrounding environment, from people around us will naturally appear, and cultural factors also become important issues from the background to the foreground. Therefore, in cross-cultural business communication, cultural sensitivity is essential. First of all, recognition of cultural differences is an objective fact, and we should actively find out a concrete manifestation of the cultural differences. Secondly, we should change the appreciation of this difference to proactive responding to the cultural diversity. Finally, we should treat cultural differences as a resource to solve problems encountered in communication.

Second is the cultural empathy. Culture empathy has three levels: first level is during cross-cultural communication, to understand each other's feelings, as well as the cultural roots behind the feelings; the second level is to be aware of our emotional changes caused by our own cultural difference; the third level is able to analyze the causes of the emotions and feelings and have emotional self-management competence to resolve conflicts based on cultural contradictions, and ultimately achieve effective communication.

Third is the cultural inclusiveness. Different nationalities, different regions have different cultures, and each culture has its own characteristics and advantages; so far worldwide, there is no perfect culture. The charm of world culture is its colorful splendor layered. Chinese culture is a collectivist culture, emphasizing the harmony and wisdom of the group, but not conducive to individuality and innovation ability. The United States culture belongs to the culture of individualism, emphasis on individual ability and success, but it often consumes too much tension within the group and collective strength. Russian culture belongs to the progress of tribalism culture, emphasizing the understanding of reality, and being less susceptible to outside influences, but it is often opinionated and lack the spirit of self-criticism. Therefore, we must not use our own cultural standards to measure any other national culture good or bad, and we should have the tolerant attitude and magnanimity to learn from the different cultures.

Fourth is the excellent cross-cultural communicative skill (cross-cultural communicative competence). When being exposed to the real cross-cultural communication environment, we should proactively communicate with the local people to establish good interactive relationship in

order to integrate into a new environment and local culture. Active use of a variety of communication skills, active listening, feedback, questions, and nonverbal communication skills will help us deeper into local society. “The growing trend of globalization of the economy is an urgent need for us to cultivate a large number of skilled persons who should master foreign languages, be proficient of business knowledge, be familiar with international business environment, and be good at cross-cultural communication”(Li Yabo, 2009:139).

Fifth is the outstanding foreign language competence. Foreign language competence refers to the language ability of the host country. Language is the carrier of culture, and culture relies on language to spread. There is no doubt that mastering foreign languages and understanding of the host country’s culture is an important part of the cross-cultural communication skills.

Conclusion

Language Learning is a social phenomenon and a human living phenomenon, so language activities and forms of life are closely linked. The aim of this paper is to call for the language learner in new situations and circumstances should learn a language in a complex and diverse forms of life, and master foreign language in using language. Only with outstanding foreign language skills and the flexibility to cross-cultural communication strategies, it is possible for us to absorb nutrients from different cultures, and combine it with traditional Chinese culture to finally form the sole forms of life with Chinese characteristics. Today's era of cultural identity in developing countries should have two parallel lines. It is necessary to identify with Western advanced forms of life, advanced science and technology and advanced culture to make up for their own weakness of local cultural traditions, and have to agree with the good part of local traditional culture to maintain and carry forward the national characteristics. In 21st century Chinese people should have unprecedented tolerance and wisdom to participate in the globalization process, and make a significant contribution to the healthy development of all mankind civilization.

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