Intercultural Communication and The Conflict between Chinese and Western cultures

【 Abstract 】 In the Cross-cultural communication between China and the West, cultural conflicts are common, seriously affecting the smooth communication, so it is necessary for us to find out the deep-rooted reasons, and take certain measures to cultivate the ability of cross-cultural communication, to avoid cultural conflicts.

【 Key words 】 intercultural communication, cultural difference, cultural conflict

With China's opening to the outside world degree of gradually thorough, the people and things of western society more and more into our field of vision, in this case, the multinational domain, cross-national, cross-cultural economic and social interaction will be increasing, it provides us with many opportunities for contact and communication with western, this to deepen our understanding of western society is a good thing, However, this is not a simple thing, because we are facing from a strange culture and country, the way of thinking, living habits and behavior of people who are completely different from us, in the process of communicating with them, there will inevitably be cultural conflicts.

### Cultural conflicts often occur in cross-cultural communication between China and the West

There are many kinds of cultural conflicts that may occur in Chinese and Western cross-cultural communication.

Here we cannot describe one by one and can only list several common ones.

###  Privacy Conflicts

Chinese people have a weak concept of privacy.

They believe that individuals should belong to the collective and care for each other with solidarity and friendship. Therefore, Chinese people are always willing to know the ups and downs of others, and the other party is also willing to tell the truth.

Westerners, on the other hand, attach great importance to personal privacy and personal space. They are not willing to mention their own affairs to others, let alone let others interfere. For example, When Chinese people meet for the first time, they often ask each other about their age, marital status, children, occupation and even income.

In the eyes of Chinese people, this is a kind of politeness, but in the eyes of Westerners, these questions invade their privacy.

###  Conflict in time view

Westerners' concept of time and money are linked together.

The idea that time is money is deeply rooted, so they cherish time very much. They often make careful arrangements and plans for time in life and develop the good habit of keeping appointments on time.

In the West, to visit someone, you must give advance notice or appointment, and state the purpose, time and place of the visit.

On the other hand, Chinese people are a country with multidirectional time habits and have a great deal of randomness in the use of time. Generally, they do not follow the plan as strictly as westerners, and westerners often feel uncomfortable with it.

### Conflict in formality

Chinese people pay attention to modesty. When communicating with others, they emphasize "humbling oneself and respecting others", which is regarded as a virtue. It is a polite phenomenon with Chinese cultural characteristics. When others praise us, we tend to disparage ourselves to show our modesty and courtesy. Western countries do not have such cultural habits, when they receive praise, they will always be happy to say "Thankyou" to accept. Due to the cultural differences between China and the West, we think westerners are overconfident and unmodest. When westerners hear Chinese people deny others' praise for them, or hear them deny their own achievements, or even write themselves down, they are very surprised and think Chinese people are dishonest.

1.4 Conflicts in catering customs

The Chinese nation has a fine tradition of hospitality. At social occasions and banquet, enthusiastic Chinese people often toast each other's cigarettes and wine. Chinese banquet guests, even if the delicious food filled with a table, the host is always used to say a few "duoduoinclusive" and other polite words. The host will sometimes use chopsticks to put food in the guests' bowls and persuade them to eat more food and drink more. In western countries, people respect their personal rights and privacy, so they don't force others to do things. When having a meal, will never force toward you in the bowl to clip dish, oneself want to eat what eat, they also won't persuade a guest to drink with various means, won't insist you get drunk so far.

2. On the causes of cultural conflict

There are various reasons for cultural conflicts between China and The West. The fundamental reason is that China and The West have different cultures and historical backgrounds, which will inevitably bring about differences in people's thoughts and behaviors, and even conflicts. Here we will look at the main reasons in detail.

2.1 Differences in thinking patterns

Culture will affect people's views and understanding of external things. Different countries have different cultures, so there are bound to be differences in thinking mode, which is especially obvious between eastern and western cultures. The thinking mode of western culture emphasizes logic and analysis, while the thinking mode of eastern culture shows intuitive integrity, which is also the characteristic of Chinese traditional culture thinking. Due to the influence of such traditional culture, Chinese people tend to attach special importance to intuition and pay attention to the experience and feeling in the process of cognition. In communication, they often use this experience and feeling to "measure others by oneself". Compared with the thinking mode of westerners, this thinking mode of Chinese has obvious generality and fuzziness. As time goes by, it will form a thinking pattern, which can be interpreted as the classification and perception process of identifying and simplifying external things. In essence, stereotypes tend to ignore individual differences and exaggerate cognitive attitudes related to another social group, often with emotional overtones and fixed beliefs. Among all the stereotypes, some are correct, while others are wrong, which will directly affect cross-cultural communication and cause communication mistakes.

2.2 Codes of conduct vary

The specific meaning of code of conduct refers to the moral standards and code of conduct accepted by the society. Simply speaking, it is a kind of standard that tells people what they should do and what they should not do. When people from different cultural backgrounds communicate, they often use their own social norms of behavior to judge the rationality of each other's behavior. Due to the differences in the norms of behavior between the two parties, misunderstandings, unpleasant and even worse results will often occur. For example, Chinese people pat their children on the head as a gesture of friendship, while in western countries, it is very disrespectful to children, and parents will be very angry about it. Therefore, correctly identifying and applying norms of conduct in intercultural communication is an important factor to ensure the smooth progress of intercultural communication. To ensure the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication, it is necessary to understand the norms of behavior of the other party, especially what behaviors are forbidden. The best way is to follow the principle of "do as the Romans do".

2.3 Different value orientations

People's communicative ability is produced in the process of socialization and is bound to be linked with values. Every culture has its own unique value system, which helps people distinguish between beauty and ugliness, good and evil, which is people's philosophy of life, moral standards and norms of behavior. But it cannot exist without specific cultural and the judgment standard of each culture is different, the culture that is good, another culture might think is bad, but they are in their own cultural system has its rationality of the existence of, never can be understood as a kind of value standard is advanced, and the other a value standard lag behind. Take Chinese and Western culture as an example, in Chinese culture, people advocate modesty and politeness, pursue to be at ease, and do not like to be competitive. At the same time, the social atmosphere often bans individuals who are too prominent. As the saying goes, "Doing is superior to others, people will not do it". In Chinese culture, the collective orientation dominates, and the pursuit of personal development is regarded as a serious form of individualism, which is bound to be condemned. Western culture, on the other hand, highly advocates individualism. "settling for whatever one finds" is regarded as a manifestation of lack of enterprising spirit, a synonym for laziness and incompetence, which is rejected by society and individuals. The humanist thought is rooted in their hearts. People advocate independent thinking and judgment, and rely on their own ability to realize personal interests, and they believe that personal interests are Paramount

People's evaluation and interpretation of phenomena, things and behaviors are based on their own culture, which is also the case in cross-cultural communication. Therefore, communication barriers are often caused, and the root cause is the neglect of pragmatic transfer. Culture of different languages use different ways, a kind of cultural standard specification can only be explained according to its specific conditions in their own, and not as a specification to describe another culture, otherwise will inevitably lead to the failure of the cross-cultural communication, the deep reason is that people lack of sensitivity to the social language differences, pragmatic migration unconsciously, The consequences can sometimes be severe and even lead to huge financial losses. Chinese cashmere products are well evaluated in the world. A factory in the north of China once exported a high-end cashmere goat with shuangyang brand whose trademark was translated into English. The result was that Goats did not sell well because the word goat in English not only means "goat", but also means "goat". No matter how good and comfortable the cashmere quilt is, no young woman or housewife will want to put it on her bed.

3. How to cultivate intercultural communicative competence and avoid cultural conflicts in English Teaching

It can be seen from the above analysis that there are indeed many cultural conflicts in our communication with the West, which directly affect the effect of cross-cultural communication. In order to change this situation, it is necessary for us to cultivate students' intercultural communication ability in practical teaching. Specific measures are as follows:

3.1 Teachers should change their ideas

In China's current teaching system, foreign language teaching is mostly carried out in class, and teachers play an absolute leading role. If teachers only focus on grammar and vocabulary teaching, students will not be able to learn the practical use of language and acquire the ability of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, teachers must change their ideas and realize the harm of cultural conflict and the importance of cultivating students' intercultural communication ability. At the same time, teachers should strengthen their study and improve their comprehensive cultural quality. Only in this way, can they fully grasp the quantity and degree of English cultural knowledge education, as well as the specific steps and methods of teaching, so as to achieve the expected teaching objectives.

3.2 Improve the existing teaching methods

For a long time, college English teaching has been focused on the teaching of language knowledge, but ignored the cultivation of intercultural communication ability. In order to change this situation, we must improve teaching methods, control cultural teaching in classroom teaching both in quality and quantity, and make full use of modern teaching means (movies, projectors, Internet, etc.) to arouse students' enthusiasm for learning. In addition, some special lectures can be held to satisfy students' thirst for knowledge and cultivate talents with high intercultural communication ability. However, it is worth noting that when improving teaching methods, the new content must be closely related to the language knowledge learned by students and closely combined with the practice of language communication.

3.3 Pay attention to the cultivation of nonverbal communication skills

Nonverbal communication is also an important way of communication, refers to the specific context of situation or use nonverbal behavior process of information communication and understanding, they are not real language units, but sometimes in life and communication can express more strongly than words, the meaning of certain non-verbal behavior often represents a specific meaning, It must be taken seriously in intercultural communication. The connotation of non-language culture differs greatly between Chinese and Western cultures. For example, The Chinese believe that "silence is golden", that silence is rich in information, and even that "silence speaks louder at this time", while English speakers feel uncomfortable about this. When talking with westerners, the listener will stare at the other person's eyes for a long time to show his seriousness and respect to the speaker. However, in the eyes of Chinese people, this is impolite behavior, because Chinese people are not used to the other person staring at them for a long time.

3.4 Guide students to have extensive exposure to western cultural materials

In universities, the teaching of English class is very limited, but the students in their spare adequate time disposable, so you can't just rely on the teacher in the classroom teaching to train the ability of intercultural communication, teachers should guide students to use extra-curricular time reading extensively western English literary works, newspapers and magazines, and comment on current affairs and other materials, learn cultural knowledge, increase the cultural quality, Broaden the vision of western culture and improve the ability of cross-cultural communication. In addition, schools with foreign teachers should also give full play to the role of foreign teachers in the spread of Western culture, they are living cultural teaching materials, let students directly communicate with foreign teachers, listen to foreign teachers to make reports or lectures, their words and deeds will play a subtle role in students.

Reference []

[1] Xu Guo, Mei Lin, Cultural Differences and the Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence. Journal of Chongqing University (Social Science edition), vol. 8, no. 6, 2002, 121-123

[2] Gu Jianghe, A Brief discussion on the Comparison of Eastern and Western Cultures. Journal of Taiyuan Heavy Machinery Institute, vol.22, No.4, 2001, 279-282

[3] Hua Houkun, On College English Teaching in cross-cultural Context. Heilongjiang Higher Education Research, no.6, 2003, 153-154

[4] Wu Fengjing, "Conflict between Chinese and Western Customs and culture". Journal of Suihua Teachers college, no.1, 2003, 90-92

[5] Cheng Xiaoli, Reflections on English Intercultural Communication Teaching. Journal of Anhui Agricultural University (Social Science edition), no. 5, 2003, 105-107