Analysis of the Reasons and Solutions to the Failure of Intercultural Communication

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Abstract: The cultural exchanges in the world has a long history. With the rapid development, communication between people, groups and countries is becoming more and more frequent. The phenomena of North-South dialogue, transnational corporations and studying abroad are no longer strange to people. Under the impetus of this trend, people in different regions have a strong desire to communicate with each other. They hope to learn from each other, communicate with each other and seek common development. With the deepening of globalization and frequent international exchanges, more and more people pay attention to the effectiveness of intercultural communication. With the further development of intercultural communication, barriers to intercultural communication have also emerged and have greatly affected the effectiveness of intercultural communication. By analyzing and comparing the differences between Chinese and western modes of communication and thinking, this paper analyses the reasons and solutions to the failure of intercultural communication, so that it can improve the effectiveness of intercultural communication

1. Introduction

There are many influences of cultural differences in intercultural communication of Chinese culture and western culture, and it seriously affects the course of communication. Therefore, it is necessary for us to find the in-depth reason and make some plans on how to improve the ability of intercultural communication. In intercultural communication, there are many embodiment of cultural differences, like communication differences and differences of thinking mode.

2. An Overview of Intercultural Communication and Cultural Differences

2.1 Concept of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is a discipline that studies communication across different cultures and social groups, or how culture affects communication.[2] It is used to describe the wide range of communication processes and problems that naturally appear within an organization or social context made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Intercultural communication refers to communicative activities based on different cultures and linguistic backgrounds and is a kind of communicative action with a common language. Its essence and connotation are to strengthen the integration of differences between language and culture and aiming at continuously enhancing communication and cooperation between the two sides. Intercultural communication is sometimes used with cross-cultural communication. In this sense it seeks to understand how people from different countries communicate and perceive the world around them.The study of intercultural communication requires intercultural understanding, which is defined as an ability to understand and value cultural differences.

2.2 The Embodiment of Cultural Differences

2.2.1 Communication Differences

Language is the carrier of culture as well as the portrayal of culture. Language is rich in cultural connotations and the difference between language expression and communication is an important factor leading to intercultural communication barriers.

Because of the interference of mother tongue, learners often encounter Chinglish in the process of learning English. It is incomprehensible to the people of the English-speaking countries that Chinglish is a malformed English of the rules and habits of the Chinese language. For example, in the early English instructions of bird's nest honey cream loquat, the dried orange peel was translated into "Chen's Skin" and dried ginger was translated into "Fuck the Ginger". In the translation of common language, Chinese style English is often found, such as "If you want money, I have no; if you want life, I have one."

In language habits, there are also great differences between China and the West. In English-speaking countries, people often call other people's names directly. But if it happens in China, it would be considered impolite to call the names of elders or teachers. When expressing congratulations and accepting praise, people in western and Chinese countries have different ways of expression. For example, if Americans are praised, they usually answer "Thank you", while Chinese are very modest and answer "Nali-Nali". The difference between Chinese and western language communication is not only the way of speaking, but also the difference in pragmatic meaning. In Chinese, dogs are often used to express derogatory words, such as "walking dog" while dogs in west often use to express good meaning words, such as "You are really a lucky dog." It can be seen that in intercultural communication activities, language cannot exist in isolation without its cultural connotations.

2.2.2 Differences of Thinking Mode

The way of thinking is the bridge of communication between culture and language. In the way of thinking, the most obvious characteristic of thinking between the Chinese and western culture is that the Chinese are tactful and the way of thinking is meaningful, while the westerners are direct and intuitionistic. .[1]There are different ways of writing letters between China and the West. Westerners express their wishes in a more direct way, directly put their requirements in the front and then will speak some blessing words. The Chinese will be very tactful and demanding. Generally speaking, at the end of the letter is the real question. Different ways of writing reflect different ways of thinking.

3. Reasons for Intercultural Communication Failure

3.1 Language Barriers

In terms of the first reason, language barriers that communicators are not acquainted with play vital roles in communication. Because of the interference of mother tongue, learners often encounter Chinglish in the process of learning English. It is incomprehensible to the people of the English-speaking countries that Chinglish is a malformed English of the rules and habits of the Chinese language..[2]

Some people who study abroad are not very good at learning English. When they go abroad, they have to talk in English in their study, work or life. As it known, "language ability determines the efficiency of learning and communication", thus English language ability determines the efficiency of our work..[3] When people find out what they have learned cannot express their needs well, they will have problems in communication with others. In this way, the frequency of communication will naturally decrease. As time goes on, it will be easy to lose self-confidence.

3.2 Cultural Stereotype

Another important reason that hindered communication is stereotype in the native people's mind. Stereotype is a product of limitation, laziness and misperception in most situations and stereotypes will have negative effects in intercultural communication.

Stereotypes assumes that the specific cultural information is applicable to all members of a particular cultural group that is to say that each member of the group has the same quality. This stereotyped preview is used for a long time for each member or individual of the group, regardless of any body difference.[4] For example, an American wants to invite a Chinese girl to swim together.

The Chinese girl said, "I am not very good at swimming." As soon as Chinese heard it, they knew that it was a euphemistic refusal. But the American would only reply according to the literal meaning, "that is right, I can teach you!" The Chinese will not refuse people's request directly. Chinese always says, "It is a bit difficult." But Americans will understand that although it is difficult but still feasible. Americans will not understand why Chinese disagree and they will understand the Chinese character as dishonest. Therefore, it is very important to correctly perceive the culture of others, so as to avoid embarrassing situations.

3.3 Personality Factors

China is in a relatively inferior position in the modern history compared with the west, which leads to the feeling that the westerners are higher than Chinese. Therefore, Chinese will not be confident in the face of the westerners. westerners like to highlight themselves in their daily work and study than Chinese. Westerners advocate personal heroism and pay attention to personal contributions and achievements, while Chinese are told by the elders that the collective honor is higher than the personal honor. This is the reason why Chinese do not highlight themselves in intercultural communication.The most important point is that Chinese oral English and listening are generally weak. For example, Indians in Europe are sometimes more popular than Chinese, but most of the time their ability is not as good as Chinese. Because the Indians with English as their native language have no problem in daily communication..[4]

In a word, in view of personality factors, Chinese always lack confidence. Besides, they are not so capable of communicating with others and overcoming difficulties. Although it is admitted that everyone was responsible and willing to make contributions, Chinese are unwanted due to their language barriers and low efficiency.

4. Solutions to Communicative Failure

4.1 Improving Comprehensive Language Ability

On intercultural communication, there is a bad need for us to overcome language barriers since "language ability determines the efficiency of learning and communication". In order to better improve intercultural communicative competence, communicators must integrate the theoretical knowledge and spoken language ability together to enhance the integration between the two. They should strengthen the understanding and mastery of nonlanguage communicative competence, such as language grammar knowledge and language development history. Also, communicators need to continue to strengthen language skills, including the language ability of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating..[5]

4.2 Respecting and Recognizing Cultural Difference

In the face of all kinds of people with different cultural backgrounds, communicators must respect and understand the differences, including cultural, diet, customs and so on. Additionally, they'd better overcome psychological barriers and fully understand differences between different cultures. Overcoming psychological barriers is an indispensable factor in intercultural communication.[5] They need to enhance understanding among different cultures and learn to stand in a position and consider others' problems, which can effectively eliminate obstacles and misunderstanding caused by intercultural communication.[6] They should constantly strengthen the cognition between different cultures and try to adapt to the patterns produced by different cultures.[7]Communicators should seek common ground while reserving differences and strive for the most effective exchanges.

4.3 Having a Positive Attitude and Full of Confidence

Attitude is an important factor affecting intercultural communication.[8] Communicators ought to keep an optimistic attitude and enhance self-confidence to deal with setbacks which meet in intercultural communication. What's more, they should keep an open and inclusive mind in intercultural communication. They can achieve effective intercultural communication by seeking

the common ground while reserving differences. Different cultures have their own important significance.[8] The cultural environment is different, and all cultures are not good or bad. Communicators should abandon the dross, master the essence, and find out the commonalities of different cultures. Only in this way can they promote active exchanges between China and different countries, learn from each other, and make progress with each other, so as to increase the distance between countries and people. Communicators should full of confidence in intercultural communication. A confident person can positively realize and express his self-value and demonstrate his ability. In this way, people will truly understand their abilities, discard inherent prejudices and get along with communicators.

5. Conclusion

In intercultural communication, the cultural differences between China and the West are very obvious. Under the influence of positive globalization, the two have different cultural values. In the exchange of economy, culture and society, it is unavoidable to produce certain cultural conflicts and cultural barriers. Therefore, in intercultural communication, it is a long way to narrow the differences between Chinese and western society and culture. Communicators should look at the differences between the two and carry out a cultural comparison and analysis. Mahatma Gandhi once thoroughly clarified the correct attitude in intercultural communication: "I don't want my house on all sides of the wall or the windows are blocked. I hope the culture of all sides can be blown into my room by the free wind, but I will never let my legs be blown by the wind." Learn from the positive part of western culture and find out a suiTable communication mode combined with the actual situation. Only in this way can communicators avoid communication barriers or misunderstandings caused by differences in customs and cultures, so that communication can be effectively carried out.

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