

## **Cross-cultural Communication**

In Longman Modern English Dictionary, “culture” is defined as: “the social and religious structures and intellectual and artistic manifestations etc. that characterize a society.” Kluckhohn’s definition is: “culture is way of thinking, feeling, believing. It is the group’s knowledge stored up for future use.” Haviland defines it as “a set of rules or standards shared by members of a society which when acted upon by the members, produces behavior that falls within a range that members consider proper and acceptable.”

To summarize these definitions, we can say culture refers to the whole of material and spiritual wealth created and accumulated by human beings in the course of social development. Material culture is concrete, tangible and substantial, including cities, houses, organizations, etc. While spiritual culture is abstract, intangible and indiscernible, including values, beliefs and customs. Both material and spiritual culture play a major role in influencing people’s perceptions of reality, thought and behavior patterns.

### **1. Communication and Cross-cultural Communication**

According to Larry A Samovar: “Communication is a dynamic, systemic process in which meanings are created and reflected in human interaction with symbols.” “Communication—our ability to share our ideas and feelings—is the basis of all human contact.” People are

communicating everywhere all the time in various manners for different purposes. They communicate with friends and strangers, at work and at play, in public and in private. They get across to others with their knowledge and their ignorance, their anger and their pleasure, their needs and their intentions. In this paper, communication refers to any process that takes place whenever meaning is attached to messages including speaking, listening, reading, writing, translating, teaching, etc.

Cross-culture communication is communication between two or more speakers who do not share the same cultural background. It occurs when a message sender is a member of one culture and message receiver of another.

## 2. Language

Language is man's principal means of communication. Man uses the language to express his/her thoughts, feelings and perceptions and wants to share them with other people. In this way man integrates himself/herself into a human group, a member of human society.

In linguistic sense, "A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which the members of a speech community communicate, interact, and transmit their culture." According to LiYanfu, whatever the definition of language is, it must include directly, or by close implication,

All languages have their own systems of pronunciation, vocabulary,

and grammar: the reason why languages other than our own sound like gibberish is that we have not mastered the complexity of their system. However, mastering the linguistic rules will not always guarantee the success of communication. This is because language represents a kind of cultural phenomenon, and bears a cultural load and carries cultural information. To understand a language means to understand the cultural information it loads. In this sense, language is a subsystem of the culture system.

### 3 .The Relationship of Culture, Communication and Language

Culture and communication are directly linked. They are so inextricably bound that some anthropologists believe the terms are actually synonymous. Hall once said, Culture is communication and communication is culture. When people communicate, culture is learned, acted out, transmitted, and preserved through communication. If cultures differ, communication practices may also differ.

Language is the core of communication and help human beings to make contact with others. We employ language to let other human beings know how we experience the world and we think about world. By using the language, human beings are able to record the past, exercise some control over the present, and form images of the future. This capability identifies us as human.

The relationship between language and culture is intrinsic, because

the language of a society is one aspect of its culture and in turn culture has influenced on language. According to sociolinguists, language is the keystone of culture. On one hand, language is the chief means of learning a culture. People use it to express, share, and transmit their ideas and experiences. On the other hand, people become members of a particular community in process of learning and using the language of his community. Without language, culture would be impossible. According to anthropologists, culture comprises and shares language. Different historical and cultural backgrounds, natural conditions and environment will lead to distinct interpretations and reactions to language.

As cross-cultural contacts have been growing in both frequency and intensity with the process of globalization, the cultural interferences discussed in the study are likely to become “less vicious”. The unacceptable may become acceptable, the uninterpretable may become interpretable, and the untranslatable may translatable, Interference may even win acclaim when people decide to introduce some specific cultural, personal or linguistic values in their language, thus enrich their language and life as well Acculturation and assimilation of language are inexorable trend whether people like it or not. And it will be a worthwhile pursuit for scholars.

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