

How the Diversity of Values Matters in Intercultural Communication

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Abstract—Communication is one of the most common features of human beings that is different from other animals. People of different countries connect with each other through languages and other ways of communication tools. People's values diversity really matters a lot in intercultural communication and sometimes may keep them apart because of misunderstanding if they don't know how to deal with it properly and efficiently. Values are, according to Rokeach, "a learned organization of rules for making choices and for resolving conflicts." (Rokeach, 1973, 161). It is inevitable that values diversity has impact on different fields of human society. It may cause communication problems in intercultural communication. How to improve intercultural communication? How to deal with and solve the problems in intercultural communication and avoid misunderstanding? In this article, the causes and approaches of improving intercultural communication will be further discussed. Values diversity really matters in intercultural communication.

Index Terms—values, values diversity, intercultural communication, cultural shock

I. INTRODUCTION

As is known to us all, cultural and communication, although two different concepts, are directly linked. They are so inextricably bound that some anthropologists believe the terms are virtually synonymous. To live in societies and to maintain their culture they have to communicate. (adt.lib.swin.edu.au 2014) Culture is learned, acted out, transmitted, and preserved through communication. Although the concepts of communication and culture work in tandem, we separate them for purposes of our understanding. We begin by examining communication because to understand intercultural interaction, we must recognize the role of communication. Communication refers our ability to share our ideas and feelings and it is the basis of all human contact. Whether we live in cities or in villages, we all participate in the same activity when we communicate. The results and the methods may be different, but the process is the same. Humans on earth communicate so that we can share our realities with each other. We study the intercultural communication with an analysis of human communication and we will be better able to improve our own communication behavior and more fully appreciate that of others.

Think for a moment of all the bodily activity that accompanies even the simple act of saying "hello" to a friend. From the stimulation of your nerve endings, to the secretion of chemicals in your brain, to the moving of your lips to produce sound, many of components are in operation. Smith's say (1966): "Human communication is a subtle and ingenious set of process. It is always think with a thousand ingredients---signals, codes, meanings---no matter how simple the message or transaction." (dSPACE 2013) clearly described the complexity of human communication. Communication becomes even more complex when we add cultural dimension. Although all cultures use symbols to share their realities, the specific realities and the symbols employed are often quite different. In one culture, you just smile to express greeting in a casual manner, and in another cultural situation, people may bow formally in silence. Some just embrace to greet friends.

In order to deal with the problems caused by the complexity of communication, most researchers focus on those aspects that are related to their special interests. For instances, neurologists look at what the brain and the nervous system do. Psychologists are apt to examine issues related to perception, and linguists inspect the language people use. Each of these disciplines carves out a kind of territory called human communication.

It is well-known that values diversity is one of the most common features of humans which has an effect on intercultural communication. With the development of transportation and economy, we can reach anywhere in the world in a matter of hours, and the globalization making today's contracts far more commonplace than in any other period of the world's history. It is obvious that international contact become more and more common place. People's cognition structure consists of many values, which are arranged into a hierarchical order that is highly organized and according to Rokeach: "exists along a continuum of relative importance." Values can be classified as primary, secondly and tertiary. Primary values are the most important: they specify what is worth the sacrifice of human life. In the United States, democracy and the protection of oneself and close relationship among family members, for example. In the United States, if you ask people which is more important, work or family? Ninety nine Americans should answer with the question like this: family. The last one should be considered as a workaholic. After 7 o'clock and the weekend is belongs to personal time.

If at that time, the boss let the employees do work, he should be very sorry to their employees and ask them to go

home as soon as possible when they finished their work.

But in china, in our companies, all of us thought that the benefits of the enterprises are the first .The managers thought that every time belongs to the companies. The managers have the rights to let their employees do more work for them. .And all of us thought it is natural things. Secondary ,values are also quite important .In the United States the securing of material possessions is also very important .In the United States, it is reasonable to pursue the wealthy so long as not hurt the others .They thought that pursue the wealthy can also make the other happy. But in china, they think justice is against benefit .We Chinese think money is vulgar. Tertiary values are at the bottom of hierarchy. In the United states, they thought it is independent .There is a news from china news net (2004-9-27).A girl named Jane lived in American for several years ,when she came back she found that she can not be used to living china. One day, her good friend invites her to go shopping together, but her friend has something to do first, Jane thought if she has no time, the dates can be canceled. But Jane’s boyfriend said that she didn’t treat friendship more seriously. Jane shocked, because she thought everybody should be independent, even though our friend has something to do, it is natural to esteem to theirs

Intercultural communication, as you may suspect, is not a new concept. In ancient times, the recognition of alien differences lacked accompanying cultural knowledge and often elicited the human propensity to respond malevolently to those differences. This notion was expressed over two thousand years ago by the Greek playwright Aeschylus,“ Everyone’s quick to blame the alien.” This statement is still a powerful element in today’s social and political rhetoric. For example, it is common in today’s society to hear that all of the social and economic problems in the United States are caused by immigrants. Despite the persistence of this concept, today’s intercultural encounters differ from earlier meetings. (www.lunwen daixie.com 2013) They are rich and because of the interconnectedness of the world, more significant. Today, the web linking us together becomes vivid when we see a newspaper headline that tells us “America Once Again into Africa...etc,” Additionally, the emergence of the information age has allowed us the opportunity to expand our knowledge so that the recognition of cultural differences need not result in hostile encounters. Think of the message sent to the world when U.S. And Russian astronauts--- whose countries a decade ago were archenemies--- began to participate in joint space ventures. (yy.lw61.com 2013)

The above instances emphasize the changes that have taken place throughout the world and at home. Many of us will be able to verify the instances to document these alterations in intercultural contact, for some of us have had firsthand experiences with people whose cultures are different from our own. Our rational for looking at these changes is from three aspects. First of all, as the familiar gives way to a new and different world, the entire human race is affected. Secondly, many of the events that have brought diverse groups together have been too subtle to detect and have taken place over a long period. Hence, we believe that many of them may have been overlooked. Thirdly, by demonstrating both the quantity and quality of these changes, we might be better able to arouse our interests in intercultural communication. We begin by looking at the quantity and quality of intercultural contacts, both abroad and at home, and their implications to the study of intercultural communication. (www.englishlover.net 2012)

II. DIVERSE CULTURAL PATTERNS

It is known that culture serves the basic need of laying out a predictable world in which each of us is firmly grounded and thus enables us to make sense of our surroundings. As the English writer Fuller wrote two hundred years ago,“ Culture makes all things easy.” Culture makes “things easy” for the reasons as following: Culture helps facilitate the transition from the womb to this new life by providing meaning to events, objects, and people--- thus making the world a less mysterious and frightening place. And culture makes life less confusing because most of culture is automatic and subconscious. Culture is ubiquitous, multidimensional, complex, and all -pervasive.

Culture is both vague and specific; it is both all of an individual and but part of an individual. Each human being is unique, and each is shaped by countless factors. At any given moment, our ways of behavior are the products of millions of years of evolution; our genetic makeup; the social groups we have been in; our gender, age, race, and individual background, political affiliation, perceptions of others, and current circumstances; and many other factors. We must keep in mind that we are, at our basic core, individuals, and therefore, the values and behaviors of a particular culture may not be values and behaviors of all the individuals within that culture. Roman playwright Terrence noted, “As many men, so many minds; every one his own way.” Culture offers us a common frame of reference, we are not captives of our culture. We are, instead, thinking individuals with the rationality and potential to engage in free choice. Because we can continuously learn, we can develop the philosophic perspectives necessary for intercultural communication, apply them to the process of interacting with culturally diverse peoples, and appropriately modify our learn to value discrete groups of people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, country of origin, gender, , or sexual preference. (bbs.gter.net 2014)

In cultures that tend toward individualism, an “I” consciousness prevails Larry (A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Lisa A. Stefani, 1998, p68): competition rather than cooperation is encouraged; personal goals take precedence over group goals; people tend not to be emotionally dependent on organizations and institutions; Individuals have the right to their private property, thoughts, and opinions. These cultures pay more attention to individuals’ initiative and achievements, and they value individual decision making.

Collectivism is featured by a rigid social framework that distinguishes between in-groups and out-groups. People rely

on their in-groups to care about them, and in exchange for that they believe they own absolute loyalty to the group

In collective societies such as those in Colombia, Taiwan, China and Peru, (A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Lisa A. Stefani, 1998, p68), people are born into extended families or clans that support and protect them in exchange for their loyalty. A “we” consciousness prevails: identity is based on the social system; the individual is emotionally dependent on organizations institutions; the culture emphasizes belonging to organizations; organizations invade private life and the clans to which individuals belong; and individuals trust group decisions. Collective behavior, like so many aspect of culture, has deep historical roost (www.benkelunwen.com 2014).

III. CULTURE VALUES ARE DERIVED FROM THE LARGER PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES THAT ARE PART OF CULTURE’S MILIEU. (LARRY A. SAMOVAR, RICHARD E. PORTER, LISA A. STEFANI, 1998, P60)

1. Culture values are transmitted by a variety of sources: power distance, stereotype and culture shock. In the oriental, power distance is also associated with 'the family culture' (Trompenaars, 1993,p139). In this kind of corporate culture the manager is like the "caring father" who knows better than his subordinates what should be done and what is suitable for them. The subordinates always esteem the managers. Because of the managers age and experience. That is usually how employees get their promotion. There are both positive and negative parts in the family cultures. I feel it is an easy managing system. But sometime it is hard to get young creative employees work well cause of the hierarchy. As Trompenaars (1993, p 142) told us "family culture at their least effective drain the energies and loyalties of subordinates to buoy up the leader." So in family culture, the power distance can be viewed as the subordinates respect the superiors. That is the corporate culture in orient. Let us take a look at the western way. It is not a whole converse phenomenon. There is 'the Eiffel Tower culture' (Trompenaars, 1997, p166) in the international management. (www.k2k.net 2013) In china, we think that managers have power to decide the work time. So it is natural to do work beyond the work time. But in America, most of them think everyone is equal, so if he works for his boss beyond the work time, it means he himself is kind.

2. Stereotypes were ways of constructing our social status into firm and simple categories that we once stand for the whole gathering of people. Stereotypes tend to interfere intercultural communication in that they stress and enforce beliefs until they often take for “fact”. How do we acquire stereotypes? First, people learn stereotypes from their parents, relatives, and friends. When I was very young, my parents and my teacher always taught us that we can not emphasize the money .Because money maybe lead the people in the wrong way .And we always think that being rich is not always a good thing. They sometimes do not earn the money in an honor way. But in America, they think earn more money also can make others happy! There is a stereotype issue.

3.Thirdly,it refers to culture shock .Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse .These signs or cues include the thousand and one way in which we orient ourselves to situation of daily life: how to give orders ,how to make purchases. (Managing Cultural Differences, 2011) Now these are which may be words gestures ,facial expressions, customs or norms are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept .All of us depend for our peace of mind and efficiency on hundreds of these cues, most of which we are not conscious by aware , (www.docstoc.com 2013) this lack of common experiences and familiar surrounding creates varying degrees of consequences .Just like the news which I mentioned. The girl studied in the United States and accept culture which she lived .When she came back to china, she found she can not suit for her mother land culture, it means culture shock. This factor will be influenced the relationship.

IV. WAYS TO IMPROVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION.

1. Firstly, how do we require stereotype? People learn stereotype from their parents, relations and friends. Individuals who hear their parents say “It is too bad that all those Jews are in control of film industry” are learning stereotypes. It requires us to learn more knowledge to improve our ideas. Do not only believe what our parents say. Second, stereotypes develop through limited personal contact .If we meet a person from Brazil who is very wealthy, and from their meeting we conclude that all people from Brazil are wealthy, we are acquiring a stereotypes from limited data .If we want to reduce the time of failure, we should touch more Brazil people and learn new things from different people, then make a conclusion. But it is a good progress to you. Finally, many stereotypes are provided by the mass media. Television has been guilty of providing distorted images of many ethic groups .From now on, I think there is another meaning underlines in newspaper or on TV. Chinese always work very hard. I remembered that one time when I went to school by train, I bought a berth ticket, when passengers were ready to get off the train, most of them did not put the quilt in order, except a man who was from American .I was puzzled, and asked why he did so. I thought these things can be left to service on railway. But he said that it stands for his country, most of them should be tidy and diligent.

2. Secondly, know yourself is very helpful for improving intercultural communication. For as simplistic as it sounds, what you bring to the communication event greatly influences the success or failure of the event. Although the idea of knowing yourself is common, it is nevertheless crucial to improving intercultural communication. There are some aspects to know yourself as more as possible .To begin with, know your culture. The first step toward introspection should begin with our own culture, regardless of what that culture might be. Remember, we are products of our culture

–and that culture helps control communication. Once I master enough cultural knowledge of our own. I should explain why I do so .That is a very efficient way to persuade others. we can detect the ways in which these attitudes influence communication. Finally, know your communication style –the manner which you present yourself to others. Many communication scholars have attempted to isolate the characters that compose a communication personality. awareness is the first step to meaningful action. Furthermore, communication style is meant the topic people prefer to discuss their favorite forms of international –ritual, repartee, argument, self-disclosure –and the depth of involvement they demand of each other. It includes the extent to which they are tuned to the same ways –voiced, physical –for transmitting information, and the degree to which they have the same level of meaning ,that is ,to the factual or emotional of information .

3. Thirdly, develop empathy is an important role in the international communication. Empathy has recognized as important to both general communication competence and as a central characteristic of competent and effective intercultural communication .What is empathy mean? It means that we need to develop empathy –be able to see things from the point of view of the others .First ,we should pay attention to the others ,problems associated with concentration can be overcome if we work on staying focused on both the other person and how the topic go on. Second, you and your communication partner must be expressive. If you have no more to talk, the atmosphere will become stern. That may not reach the purpose of communication .Third, empathy can be enhanced through awareness of specific behaviors. In china, when old friends meet together again after a long time .They will not hug first .Maybe they will tease each other firstly. Then come to the topic which they really take care of .Finally, the empathy can be increased if you resist the tendency to interpret the order’s verbal and nonverbal actions from your culture’s orientation. For example, if we hate American we should not understand their action. We should wear the others shoes to walk then we can know why they do that.

4. Forthly, learn about cultural adaption. The adaption needs a long process. First, acquire knowledge about the host culture. when you read many books or watch TV or through other ways to get enough information to realize the host culture, you can realize the action which is taken by others .Just like the example which I mentioned above, .But when she came back she was not adapt the Chinese culture, it is also called culture shock, but it means verse culture shock. In other words, it means that when you leave your familiar environment for several years, you will be puzzled by the old one .So you should pay the attention to the

Cultural adaption .means you need to learn to be open and flexible. Openness does not mean you talk to every stranger you encounter ;rather it implies that you are willing to accept change and are not closed to new ideas .Flexibility means that you should adapt your communication style to each culture and situation that confronts you. Third, increase contact with the host culture. As you would suspect .direct contact with the host culture promotes successful adaption to a new culture. Just like Confucius said it far more eloquently: “The essence of knowledge is, having it, to apply it.” We also can say: “have accurate knowledge and apply it.”

V. CONCLUSION

Culture, as we have presented the concept, is a complete pattern of living. I t is elaborate, multidimensional, and all-pervasive. Aspects of culture are acted out each time members of different cultures come together to share ideas and information. Because documenting all of these variables would be an impossible task, we have selected those cultural elements that we believe have the greatest impact on intercultural communication. These elements work in combination. They are like the components of a stereo or computer system: each one is related to and needs the others. Most communication scholars grant that perceptions are part of every communication and have evolved a fairly consistent taxonomy for perceptual variables that influence intercultural communication. All human beings also use nonverbal symbols to share their thoughts and feelings. Although the process of using action to communicate is universal, the meanings for those actions often shift from culture to culture. Therefore, nonverbal communication becomes another element one must understand if one is going to interact with people from different cultures. (www.academypublisher.com 2014) All communicative interaction takes place within some physical context, context influences how we send and respond to messages. In most cases, the setting in which we find ourselves resonates with cultural overtones. Unless both sides intercultural communication are aware of how their cultures affect the context, they may encounter some surprising communication difficulties. Our perceptions of the world are representations we make from both the nerve impulses that reach our brains and our unique set of experiences supplied to us as members of a particular culture. There is significant diversity within cultures just as there is diversity among cultures and we know that culture really affects perception and communication and also strongly influences our subjective reality and that there are direct links among culture, perception, and behavior. Behavior -- how we react to our perceptions of the universe is largely a result of our learning and cultural conditioning.

Although every citizen has his or her different cultural value, and value is the deepest part of culture, the core of the intercultural communication. Through intercultural communication, people from varied cultures and values can enhance their relations and communication because of the common human nature and the connections to the nature and deal with the conflicts and misunderstand caused by varied cultures and values. In this article, we mainly talk about the culture values diversity such as values on work, on wealthy and on personal friendship. There are three causes caused this: power distance, stereotype and culture shock. and discuss further on some ways to improve intercultural

communication. Different values do matter in intercultural communication. We cannot change the culture differences. To avoid misunderstanding, culture shocks, and prejudices, we should try our best to understand the different values, adapt themselves to fit into the communication environment, and make an effort to communicate with different countries people!

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