

The Influence of Cultural Differences Between High and Low Contexts on Oral English Communication

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Abstract: This paper aims to explore how cultural differences between high and low contexts affect oral English communication. The theory of high and low context culture, originally proposed by anthropologist Edward Hall, describes the differences in the degree to which different cultures rely on context when communicating. In high-context cultures, the transmission of information depends on non-verbal factors such as body language and environmental context, while in low-context cultures, the direct expression of information is more important. This difference is particularly important in cross-cultural communication, especially in the use of English, which is widely used in international communication. Understanding these cultural differences is crucial to improving the efficiency and accuracy of cross-cultural communication, especially in today's increasingly globalized world. Therefore, through theoretical analysis and practical cases, this paper will discuss in detail the specific impact of cultural differences between high and low contexts on oral English communication and how to communicate effectively under different cultural backgrounds. Through this research, the aim is to provide insights and strategies for the practice of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: High and low context; Cultural difference; Oral English communication; Cross-cultural communication

In the context of globalization, people from different cultural backgrounds communicate and interact more and more frequently, especially in the occasions where English is used as the common language. Due to cultural differences, there may be significant differences in the ways of communication and interpretation between the two parties. Among these differences, the concept of high-low context culture is particularly key. The theory of high-low context culture reveals the degree of people's dependence on context in communication and its manifestations in different cultures, thus becoming an important research direction in the field of cross-cultural communication. In high-context cultures, communication often relies on non-verbal elements such as environmental context, body language, and implied social norms, while in low-context cultures, it relies more on direct verbal expression. This difference is particularly prominent in cross-cultural communication using English, because English, as an international language, is widely used in people with different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, in-depth research on how cultural differences between high and low contexts affect oral English communication is of great significance for improving the effect of cross-cultural communication. Understanding and adapting to these differences can not only avoid communication misunderstandings, but also promote effective communication between people with different cultural backgrounds. With the deepening of international exchanges and the integration of global economy and culture, research in this field is of great value to promote global cooperation and understanding.

1. Theoretical basis of high-low context culture

1.1 Origin and development of high-low context culture theory

The theory of high-context culture was proposed by American anthropologist Edward Hall in the 1960s to explore how cultural differences affect communication patterns. Hall's theory focuses on how cultural context determines the degree of dependence on context in the transmission of information. High-context culture emphasizes the importance of non-verbal information, tends to use obscure and implicit communication methods, and emphasizes the role of social relations and environmental background in communication. Low-context culture, on the other hand, focuses on direct, explicit verbal expression, in which information is transmitted primarily through the language itself, rather than relying on context or non-verbal cues. Hall's theory provides an important