

# The Culture Conflict Between China and the West—— Differences of Intercourse Action

**Jie Gong**

Wuxi Vocational and Technical College Foreign Language Department Jiangsu Wuxi 214000

---

**Abstract:** Recently, with the development of Chinese economy, we have contacted with the west world more often. As result, culture conflict surely appears. This paper aims to discuss culture differences in many different aspects and the methods to deal with.

**Keywords:** Trans-culture communication; Culture difference; Culture conflict

---

As the development of the world, the relationship between China and the west become more and more intimate. Besides, after China succeed in entering the World Trade Organization, China has really entered into the world, the relationship of economy between China and the west also become more and more intimate. That brings so many chances to contact and communicate between China and the west. Therefore, many things and westerner pouring in China, such as, custom, culture, festival, etc., which may help us apprehend the western society in some measure. But due to the different cultures and countries, different thinking ways, living habits and actions, culture conflict turns up all the time.

## 1. The kinds of culture conflict

The kinds of culture conflict are many and varied. Now, I'd like to enumerate some culture differences of intercourse action. Maybe my enumerations are not very thorough.

### 1.1 Conflict of polite formulas

There is also some conflict of polite formulas. During the trans-culture communication, Chinese regard humility as a virtue. For example, when a person said, "You are very beautiful!" Most Chinese will say, "Oh, no, no, I'm not beautiful, just so so." On the contrary, the westerners will say, "Thank you." Owing to the differences of culture between China and the west, maybe we think that the westerners are too confident and modest. But hearing the above words, the westerners may think that Chinese are not honest.

### 1.2 Conflict of privacy

Through talking with foreigner at the first time, we can easily find that foreigner would like to talk about weather, clothes, etc. rather than talk about some personal things or privacy, such as, marriage, age, earnings, etc. Because the westerners pay much attention to their privacy, strive for individual freedom and don't like others to ask many personal things of themselves even interrupt them. If somebody ask them for age, marriage conditions, earnings, etc. they think these actions encroach on their privacy. However, Chinese are glad to know others' sour, sweet, bitter, hot-joys and sorrow of life and other party also would like to tell frankly. Chinese think that everyone belongs to a collectivity; they must be united and helpful with each other. So in some measure, they are pleased to tell their privacy to others. Therefore, there is some culture conflict of privacy between China and the west.

### 1.3 Conflict of eating customs

There is some conflict of eating customs between China and the west. As in any country, eating at a restaurant can be a memorable occasion. Eating is definitely one of the great cultural experiences in any country and much can be learned from it. There are several significant differences in restaurant dining between western countries and China. Variations that can cause confusion range from the actual way the table is set to the way in which the food is arranged and eaten. Even some native western people feel uncomfortable at a formal dinner engagement, fearing that they may make a social gaff. For example, a particularly noticeable difference is that in a western restaurant, the food comes at different intervals, not all at once. The order of the course

is entrée, main course, dessert and coffee or tea. Another significant difference is that there is time in between each course. This rests the stomach, allows for good conversation and allows the chef to prepare fresh food. Each course should be enjoyed for the delicacy of flavor or richness of taste. However, in China, there is no such procedure. People often eat together with high spirits. Sometimes, there is short of some graceful atmosphere. Besides, in the west, there are three stages for drinking at a meal. The first is before the meal, which could be a cocktail or an aperitif. The second "stages" is wine with the meal. The third "stage" is reserved for the final stage of the meal. That is also more sophisticated than China. Of course, there are many occasions when a person may wish to make a toast. One of the significant differences is that for a western formal toast, the person or persons being toasted do not actually drink, but remain seated while others drink to them. Another difference is that a toast, formal or informal is given from where a person sits. That is, the person making a toast does not go to the people being toasted. On the contrary, Chinese would like to make a toast with going up to the person being toasted. And the person being toasted should actually drink. Furthermore the westerners use knives and forks, while Chinese use chopsticks. Sometimes Chinese use their chopsticks to share foods to others, maybe they would like to show hospitality and zealous. But on the opinion of the westerners, this manner is unsanitary. During the dinner, the westerners often say, "Please help yourselves!" They respect individual authority and privacy, so they seldom foist others and give others so much freedom. As Chinese, if we don't take full knowledge of these culture differences, some culture conflict must be existed through trans-culture communication.

## **2. The reasons to the culture conflict**

Above all, we can make sure that culture conflict between China and the west do exist. The reasons for culture conflict are many and varied.

### **2.1 The differences of thinking model**

Thinking model between China and the west are different. Culture can influence on the opinion and reorganization about the outside world of people. And different countries have different culture. This is very obvious on culture between China and the west. The thinking model of the west lays stress on logic and analysis, but the thinking model of China mainly depends on intuition, this is also the character of traditional culture in China. Because of the traditional culture, Chinese often pay much attention to intuition and attach importance to experience and feeling. During the communication, they often take advantage of this experience and feeling to judge others by him. Compared with the thinking model of the westerners, the thinking model of Chinese is general and indistinct. As time passes, this causes a kind of fixed pattern of thinking, which may distinguish and simplify the process of classifying and being aware of the outside world. In nature, fixed pattern of thinking frequently ignores the differences between individual, has personal emotion and accompanies standing doctrine. Through all of the fixed patterns, some are right, but some are wrong. That can affect the trans-culture communication and result in actual error.

### **2.2 The differences of language**

There's no doubt that the language between China and the west is different. On the grounds of different language and the culture, the using regulation of language is different. A kind of culture standard can only be explained by its given conditions, while can not be used to describe another culture, otherwise it must bring out the failure of trans-culture communication. Its deeper reason depends on that people are short of sensibility about the diversity of social language. They can explain something using their own language unconsciously. The result of which is very serious, even generate great economic expense. Our country's cashmere products gain great evaluation all over the world. So a company exported a kind of high-grade cashmere quilt, whose brand was "Goats". As a result, these products didn't sell well. The reason is that goat means not only a kind of sheep, but also wolf. With this brand, although the products had superior quality, most people were not willing to buy them.

### **2.3 The differences of the orientation of value**

The orientation of value between China and the west is different. In the culture of China, people hold modest and courtesy in esteem, pursue feeling at home wherever they are, and dislike competing for first place. Besides, the orientation of collectivity occupies the leading position; seeking for individual development is regarded as severe individualism and will be condemned. However, the western culture advocates individualism, "feel at home where one is" means somebody is lazy, incapable and short of enterprise. So because of the differences, there may be some culture conflict through trans-culture communication.

## **3. Methods**

In a word, many culture conflicts do exist during our communication with the westerners. The conflicts affect the result of trans-culture communication directly. For the sake of changing this condition, we should take some effective measures.

The methods of communication are many and varied. We should pay attention to bring up the abilities of communication out of just using language. Sometimes, some special things can not be expressed by language, but could be conveyed by movements. For example, the westerners would like to look attentively at other party through talking. They think this action is polite and respectful. However Chinese are not accustomed to that. If somebody looks attentively at himself all the time, he will feel ill at ease and think this action is not polite. So, in order to avoid some conflict that happened because people misunderstand both sides' actions. It is necessary to improve our abilities of communication besides only using language.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, culture conflict especially the differences of intercourse action between China and the west exist all the time. As long as we try our best to take knowledge of all kinds of culture, we may reduce the frequency of culture conflict.

#### **References:**

- [1] A Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Western Cultures from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication -- A Case study of the film Sun Tzu from America [J]. Li Jinhua. Campus English. 2018(31)
- [2] The formation and Development of Shaanxi Food Culture -- Taking Shaanxi Food as an example [J]. Wang Yingquan. Journal of Shaanxi Socialist College. 2017(03)
- [3] Cultural conflict and integration [J]. Zhao Meihua. Reading and Writing (Educational Journal). 2016(10)
- [4] Discussion on the differences between Chinese and American food culture [J]. Guo Shuli, Hu Yahui, Jiang Sijin. Good Friends and Inspiration. 2016(11)
- [5] The Cultural Differences between China and America from the perspective of Sun Tzu from America [J]. Wang Fang. Film Literature. 2013(22)
- [6] A Study on the Language Style of British and American Literature from the Perspective of Cultural Differences [J]. Sun Yamin. Young Writers. 2020(27)