

Intercultural communication



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Intercultural Communication Negative cultural transfer in communication has become one among the various areas of interest of scholars recently. As globalization promotes awareness of other culture and understanding amidst the differences, it is at the same time necessary to consider the different factors affecting communication in order to completely utilize its function towards the attainment of its goals.

Oftentimes, speakers of different cultures become unconscious of their cultural differences especially when they are both engaged in a conversation. As a result, negative cultural transfer in communication occurs. This happens when cultural differences interfere in the interpretation of the message, wherein difficulties may arise, as well as misunderstandings and hatred.

Surface-structure cultural transfer comes in either the language form or the speech act. The language form involves understanding of the different lexical culture, such a vacant words, words with strong cultural connotation, idioms, proverbs and polite formulas. Since native speakers acquire them unconsciously, second language learners learn them according to their own cultural background. On the other hand, speech act may only be avoided if the people involved in the communication process should take time in analyzing first the culture of the speaker in which the speech is delivered. The negative transfer of deep-structure culture, on the other hand, occurs in situations where individuals have varying cultural values, thought patterns, religious beliefs and ethics. In Wei's study of Chinese and the American intercultural communication, culture plays a big factor in the negative transfer of ideas. China, as a country driven by collectivism, puts emphasis on the views, needs and goals of the in-group (relatives, clans, organizations)

rather than oneself; social norms and duty defined by the in-group rather than behavior to get pleasure; beliefs shared with the in-group rather than beliefs that distinguish self from in-group; great readiness to cooperate with in-group members. In contrast, American culture is deeply rooted in individualism, thus the interpretation of these two cultures vary. In addition, Chinese associate and depend their decision according to their past experiences. They give emphasis on their past such that they believe that the past guides them for their actions in the present. However, Americans believe the other way. They give more emphasis on the future such that they give much attention to what would happen next rather than look at the past. Religious belief is yet another factor identified to be one of the factors contributing to the negative transfer in communication. The traditional Chinese culture is based on Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, among which Buddhism plays a leading role. American culture is based on many more coexisting religions, especially on the combination of ancient Greek culture with Christian culture. Another factor found by the study identified ethics to be affecting the negative cultural transfer in communication. While the Chinese accepts an intimate touch among people of the same sex, American may see this the other way. While in China they show respect to old people and providing for their parents, and showing filial obedience to parents, in the Western culture, it is the opposite. The elderly in the Western culture depend on their own pension or on the social welfare and children do not provide support for their parents financially. Americans do not see it as their responsibility to be obliged financially to their parents.

Based from the various examples and observations of the two cultures, it was found that culture strongly influences the language, culture and the

communicative behavior that occur between two different cultures which involve intercultural communication. Cultures determine the interpretation of the language in the exchange of words. Although there is an assimilation of cultures, the particularity that is deeply rooted in each individual reflects in his language and behavior.

Works Cited:

Xiaohong Wei. 2009. On Negative Cultural Transfer in Communication Between Chinese and Americans. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*. Retrieved from <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/> on December 14, 2009.