Research on the Construction of Transformation Paths of Ethics of Communication in the International Transmission of Chinese Culture

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Abstract: Economic globalization has given rise to deepening cross- cultural dialogue and the gradual blurring of language and cultural boundaries, posing unprecedented challenges for cross-cultural communication. Cultural identity attaches importance to the competition of cultural influence on the basis of cultural differences, whereas intercultural identity lays emphasis on mutual learning among civilizations based on the unity in cultural diversification. Therefore, the ethics of communication in the international transmission of Chinese culture should change from cultural identity to intercultural one. This paper proposes five rational paths for the transformation of ethics of communication, namely, getting rid of ethnocentrism, expanding and deepening interculturality, delving into commonalities, developing a dynamic and open cultural outlook, and promoting polyphonic communication beyond national narratives.

Keywords: Cultural identity, Intercultural identity, Ethics of Communication, Mutual learning

1. Introduction

The deepening of economic globalization, rapid advancements in technology, frequent population movements have brought about increasingly cultural exchanges around the world and gradually fading boundaries of language and culture. Cultural borrowing, hybridization, fusion, and mutual penetration have played an essential and inseparable role in people's lives. The conflicts and contradictions due to cultural differences, however, have become increasingly prominent [1], such as conflicts between Eastern and Western cultures as well as those between "dominant cultures" and "minority cultures". Some countries overemphasize the advantages of their own culture, resulting in a narrow path of cultural identity.

Under such circumstances, the application of intercultural identity is of critical importance. With its inclusion and openness, intercultural identity, an extension and renewal of cultural identity, helps achieve deep communication across cultural boundaries. It is high time to construct intercultural identity, on both theoretical and practical levels, through bettering ourselves, getting rid of ethnocentrism, and being equipped with an attitude of equality, openness, and inclusivity in the international transmission of Chinese culture.

It is also globally urgent to probe into rational framework of ethics of communication that transcends traditional cultural boundaries for cross-cultural communication. The transition of ethics of communication in the international transmission of Chinese culture from cultural identity to intercultural identity conforms to the needs and trend of our times. The ethics of communication in the international transmission of Chinese culture should transition from influence competition on the basis of cultural differences to a mutual learning based on unity in diversity [2].

2. Definition of Ethics of Communication

Ethics of Communication, a concept of translatology, was first proposed by Finnish scholar Andrew Chesterman [3]. According to this theory, translation is a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communicative activity. Translators (translation version) bridge communication between the original author (original text) and the reader. On the one hand, translation can be regarded as a conversion between two languages; on the other hand, it, at times, results in an exchange and collision between two different cultures. Therefore, in order to achieve harmonious dialogue between two cultures,

translators should fully take the reaction of the target language readers into the consideration.

Meanwhile, the concept of "intercultural space" also places emphasis on the reciprocal effect of cultural communication in translation [4]. Similarly, Fan Hong and Cui Hexuan believe that in the international transmission of culture, communication ethics highlights the handling process of cultural differences in cross-cultural communication as well as attitudes towards the status and relationships of different cultures [2]. In a word, from the perspective of communication ethics, translation activities focus on achieving better understanding through equal communication with readers, which emphasizes equality and communication.

3. Reasons for the Transformation of Ethics of Communication in the International Transmission of Chinese Culture

The following will explore the reasons for the transformation of Ethics of Communication in the international transmission of Chinese culture from cultural identity and Clash of Civilizations, as well as intercultural identity and civilizational exchange.

3.1 Cultural identity and Clash of Civilizations

3.1.1 Cultural identity

Generally, "identity" refers to the confirmation, acceptance, or approval of common or identical things. Such commonality can only be mutually confirmed in the relationship among people [5]. In fact, identity itself is two-way and interactive. Cultural identity is the core of various other types of identities, such as ethnic identity, social identity, self-identity, and racial identity. In the early 1990s, the academic community began to attach attention to the issue of cultural identity.

In terms of its connotation, cultural identity, a kind of social identity established on the basis of conscious and specific culture, refers to people's confirmation of common culture [6]. The "Chinese Culture Dictionary" defines "cultural identity" as a "positive cultural value judgment", which means the recognition, acceptance, and belonging to a certain culture. For instance, people use common cultural symbols, share common cultural concepts, and have similar ways of thinking and behavioral norms, and even recognize or accept each other's culture. Collier, M. J. & Thomas, M. consider cultural identity as social members' possession of a common symbolic system, framework of meanings, and behavioral norms, as well as their sense of belongings to their cultural group [7]. In general, cultural identity is a matter of individual identity and identity recognition as well as the confirmation of common culture. People identifying with a culture often implies that they don't identify with or accept other cultures.

When it comes to the role of cultural identity, it has many positive effects. First of all, culture and cultural identity are the foundation of nations. Ernest Gellner pointed out that people sharing the same culture have consistent thoughts, behaviors, and means of communication, namely, they belong to the same ethnic group [8].

Secondly, cultural identity is conducive to the development of culture. Cultural identity, to a large extent, determines the development of culture. Only when people unanimously identify with a certain culture, believe in its value and development prospect, will it be preserved, developed, and improved.

Thirdly, along with ethnic identity and national identity, cultural identity plays a positive role in multiple identities [9]. Cultural identity is an intermediate form that integrates national identity and ethnic identity [10]. Similarly, Han Zhen pointed out that cultural identity overlaps with ethnic identity and national identity [11].

3.1.2 Clash of Civilizations

With the deepening of globalization and global cultural exchanges, the attitudes towards foreign cultures have become a popular issue. Wang Tianlin and Wu Zhong thought that economic globalization inevitably promotes cultural globalization [12]. The latter does not mean the formation of "the values of universal standards", but refers to mutual respect and exchange between different nations and ethnic cultures, achieving the vision of the famous saying: "Countries treasure their own distinct heritages, appreciate other cultures and promote shared prosperity." However, if one overemphasizes power struggles based on cultural differences, it will inevitably give arise to conflicts.

With the influence of globalization, cultures in different regions are colliding and impacting each

other. In 1993, Samuel Huntington proposed the theory of "Clash of Civilizations", arguing that mutual exchanges between different civilizations will inevitably bring about conflicts and collisions, because excessive identification with one's own culture will exacerbate cultural conflicts. For instance, nationalism tendency certainly impedes the international transmission of cultures, because culturally inclined nationalist groups have a sense of superiority over other cultures. Therefore, it is urgent to seek a more reasonable ethics of communication for the guidance in the international transmission of various cultures.

3.2 Intercultural identity and civilizational exchange

3.2.1 Intercultural identity

In the process of globalization, different cultures permeate and blend with each other, with the gradual blurring of the original cultural boundaries, which promotes intercultural identity highlighting cross-cultural dialogue and exchange beyond the perspective of traditional cultural identity. Intercultural identity is based on the unity of diversity, emphasizing the commonalities between different cultures. Therefore, the premise of its emergence is to abandon ethnocentrism, fully respect cultural differences, and carry out equal treatment of other cultures.

Regarding intercultural identity, in existence, the construction paths were put forward by Peter S. Adler, Muneo J. Yoshikawa and Young Yun Kim respectively.

Peter S. Adler, a thought-provoking scholar in this field, believes that in order to construct intercultural identity, one must get rid of the constraints of specific ethnic and collective identities, and becomes a cosmopolitan who transcends cultural groups, moving freely among different cultures, and becoming a "citizen of the world." [13] According to this view, intercultural identity has nothing to do with cultural identity. In fact, intercultural identity is an extension and deepening of cultural identity.

Similarly, Muneo J. Yoshikawa believes that through shaping cultural intermediaries and the construction of collaborative identity, one can construct intercultural identity, moving freely between "the self" and "others". The findings of Peter S. Adler and Muneo J. Yoshikawa share the following commonalities. First, both "citizen of the world" and cultural intermediary emphasize that individuals with intercultural identity can freely cross cultural boundaries and become men of in-betweenness. Second, both construction ways of identity have their biases and limitations. The construction of social identity is built on the identification with a specific cultural group, and their construction of identification overlooked the necessity of cultural inheritance and the strong desire of individuals for social belongings.

Young Yun Kim proposed a more reasonable construction path, namely, the communicators make systematic cultural adjustments, eliminate exclusionary identification, absorb new cultural elements, and integrate into the development process of the human community [14]. Her viewpoint acknowledges the innovation based on the original cultural tradition, but its shortcoming lies in constructing intercultural identity by eliminating cultural boundaries and differences, which will hinder the civilizational exchange of diverse cultures. The construction path of intercultural identity should be based on the research of the above scholars and combined with practical innovations.

3.2.2 Civilizational exchange

Culture has both national and global characters. Civilization is enriched through communication and mutual learning. Chinese civilization has been known for its openness and inclusiveness since ancient times. They are important principles that must be adhered to building modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

In order to promote the development of the society and build a community with a shared future for mankind, we must deeply grasp the richness of various civilizations, benefiting from the essence of all civilizations.

Intercultural identity emphasizes cross-cultural exchange, mutual learning of civilizations, and the establishment of cultural consensus. In this sense, it meets with the principles of civilizational exchange.

Therefore, based on the above analysis, the transition of ethics of communication in the international transmission of Chinese culture from cultural identity to intercultural identity is in consistent with the needs and development prospect of our times.

4. The Construction of Transformation Paths of Ethics of Communication in the International Transmission of Chinese Culture

The increasingly deepening global cultural exchanges have brought about the need for the transformation of ethical communication in the international transmission of Chinese culture. On the one hand, cultural identity based on cultural differences cannot promote the international transmission of Chinese culture.

Taking Confucius Institutes for example, from 2004 to 2020, China has established 550 Confucius Institutes in 162 countries and regions. Confucius Institutes around the world have carried out rich and colorful Chinese language teaching and cultural exchange activities, providing opportunities for people in various countries to learn Chinese and Chinese culture. However, since 2012, Confucius Institutes have encountered various obstacles overseas. For example, the United States announced that it would no longer issue visa renewals for Confucius Institute Chinese teachers. It is time to actively seek solutions to make the transmission of Chinese culture to the world more acceptable.

On the other hand, in an era of global cultural blending and exchange, it is urgent and meaningful to construct intercultural identity based on the unity of diversity and civilizational exchange. It is of great significance for Chinese culture to be better recognized and accepted by people around the world.

In the transition of ethics of communication from cultural identity to intercultural identity, communicators are supposed to change their traditional concepts. Constructivism in pragmatic philosophy, superior to universalism and relativism, provides a powerful theoretical basis. On the one hand, universalism emphasizes universal principles and norms over individuals, culture, and history [15]. This reflects social reality, but it is biased because culture doesn't have universal norms and principles. On the other hand, relativism believes that there is no standard applying to all cultures, because each culture is in possession of specific truths. This notion is also far from comprehensive. Different from universalism and relativism, constructivists believe that people should view the process of identity as a developing process changing according to the context, expand the connotation of culture from the perspective of critical thinking, and establish a shared and broader meaning framework [16].

Furthermore, constructivism suggests that cultural differences facilitate constructive dialogue and do not impede communication. Communicators should be persistently in pursuit of the objective of achieving human commonality. The following new paths of ethics of communication in the international transmission of Chinese culture are getting rid of ethnocentrism, expanding and deepening cultural interculturality, delving into commonalities, developing a dynamic and open cultural outlook, and fostering polyphonic communication beyond national narratives.

4.1 Getting rid of ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is one of the most significant features of cross-cultural communication [17]. Ethnocentric individuals believe that their own culture has superiority over other cultures. This emphasis on cultural differences and power competition, coupled with low tolerance of other cultures, can lead to conflicts and disharmony in cross-cultural communication, ending up with "civilizational superiority" or even "Clash of Civilizations", such as the occurrence of stigmatization during COVID-19 pandemic.

The accumulation of cross-cultural knowledge and experience gradually diminishes self-centeredness, and weakens ethnocentrism, gradually transforming into an ethno-relative cultural position [18]. In fact, respecting differences, fostering understanding, and communication can help communicators overcome cultural biases, eliminate misunderstandings and barriers. People can broaden their horizons, get away from cultural prejudices, thus developing comprehensive and objective knowledge frameworks. However, if there lacks contact and communication, people tend to adhere to conventions, have limitations in their thinking, and distinguish right from wrong according to their own value systems. They cannot evaluate others from objective and multi-dimensional perspectives, neither can they accept new cultures, and truly understand others.

For example, during the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, volunteers and staff devoted to communication with the participants, treating them equally and respecting their cultures, which not only conform to the spirit of peace, progress and unity of the Asian Games, but also transmit Chinese culture to the world.

4.2 Expanding and deepening cultural interculturality

The concept of "cultural interculturality" was first proposed by the German philosopher Habermas. It is defined as "an inherent connection in the interaction, mutual influence, and mutual reflection when a culture encounters other cultures, the premise of which is to acknowledge differences and respect others and the foundation of which is cultural dialogue and communication" [19]. Similarly, Dai Xiaodong believes that cultural interculturality expresses the complex interactive relationship between different cultures and the tacit understanding and consensus formed thereby" [1].

Cultural interculturality respects cultural differences and embraces diversity. Through deepening interculturality, mutual understanding, trust and consensus can be achieved. The Confucian concept of "harmony without uniformity" also emphasizes harmony on the basis of tolerance of differences, which is based on mutual understanding, tolerance, communication and trust. Both of them attach importance to respecting differences, mutual understanding, and communication and mutual trust.

Expanding and deepening cultural interculturality contributes to the international communication of Chinese culture. It helps communicators from different cultures eliminate the sense of strangeness, promote trust, facilitate dialogue and communication, and even reach consensus.

4.3 Delving into commonalities

Based on Theory of Constructivism, Dai Xiaodong proposed a path for constructing intercultural identity: the bidirectional expansion of cultural identity, namely, extending to uniqueness and universality respectively. The former refers to continuously absorbing subcultural groups, incorporating different individual characteristics and behavioral styles, and developing a more inclusive cultural identity. The latter places emphasis on deepening cultural interculturality and achieve consensus [20]. This model extends in two directions based on cultural identity, blurring traditional cultural boundaries through cultural blending, mixing, integration, and mutual learning.

Intercultural identity is defined as the process in which communicators, based on their own cultural traditions, explore, absorb and integrate other cultural elements as well as deepen communication and reach consensus, thus constructing a harmonious process of cross-cultural relations [1].

Cultural identity emphasizes competition based on cultural differences, whereas intercultural identity focuses on reaching consensus and finding the intrinsic connections and commonalities between cultures. In fact, the two are not completely contradictory, and any form of intercultural identity cannot be separated from the support of cultural identity [20]. Intercultural identity expands cultural interaction space. Communicators take in the essence of other cultures, and accumulate consensus through negotiation and agreement.

In fact, transcultural perspectives are consistent with intercultural identity in seeking cultural commonalities. Wolfgang Welsch's concept of transculturality refers to the dialogue between different cultural elements and the production of new cultural contents or forms, which is a new perspective of culture breaking through national borders and cultural differences, and focusing on the process of cultural blending and commonalities [21].

In the area of transcultural studies, Wang Jiawei proposed one of the innovative paths of "transcultural" blending, namely, the blending of universality and particularity in culture [22]. In practice, it is a way of transforming "uniqueness" of China into "universality" of the world, which helps transmit Chinese culture. It is also a new practical approach for exploring commonalities and constructing consensus. For example, cultural symbols, cultural ideas, and overseas cultural elements can be made good use of to arouse emotional resonance among foreign communicators.

4.3.1 Creating cultural symbols

Cultural symbols are supposed to be adopted to evoke communicators' emotional resonance in the international transmission of culture. For instance, "Bing Dwen Dwen", the mascot of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, combines the image of a panda with an ice crystal shell. The integration of Chinese cultural elements with the characteristics of the Winter Olympics, and the combination of the "uniqueness" of Chinese pandas with the "universality" of the spirit of ice and snow sports enjoy great popularity among audiences both at home and abroad. In addition, "Bing Dwen Dwen" is a symbol of diplomatic friendship, conveying unity and peace. By creating such symbol of empathy, Chinese culture is effectively communicated to people around the world.

Another case was in the opening ceremony performance entitled "National Style and Elegance" of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, the panoramic 3D image of the Gongchen Bridge is vividly displayed on the Grand Canal, presenting the prosperity of the Qiantang River and the charm of Jiangnan. Bridges have the connotation of friendship and communication, evoking emotional resonance from overseas audiences.

4.3.2 Conveying cultural ideas

Cultural ideas are also supposed to be created to facilitate the transmission of Chinese culture. Taking the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou as an example. It perfectly matched the ecological concept of "green mountains and clear waters are invaluable assets". In the performance, dancers danced with the stars, showing a picture of ecological civilization where humans are in harmony with nature. The Chinese ecological concept of "green mountains and clear waters are as valuable as mountains of gold and silver" is perfectly in consistent with the environmental protection concept overseas. It is a good example of transforming China's "uniqueness" into "universality" and promoting international communication of Chinese culture in a better way.

Furthermore, other themes common to human society such as harmony, innovation, equality, social responsibility, cultural diversity and so on can arouse emotional resonance among overseas audiences.

4.3.3 Making use of overseas cultural elements

Overseas cultural elements can be taken advantage of to help the transmission of Chinese culture. For instance, the program "Jiangnan on the Tip of the Toes" combines Chinese national style with ballet, integrating the culture of Suzhou and Hangzhou with ballet art, bringing excellent visual enjoyment and receiving great popularity among audiences. The integration of two cultural elements is more attractive, which promote the exchange of culture and values and also help accumulate cultural interactivity and achieve consensus.

4.4 Developing a dynamic and open cultural outlook

In cross-cultural communication, cultural differences could be bridged but would not disappear. Cultural differences are elements promoting exchanges rather than barriers to communication. Adopting cultural identity in the international transmission of Chinese culture is a mistaken path, for it puts emphasis on competition instead of cooperation. For instance, if we struggle to persuade those international students in China to assimilate and identify with Chinese culture, it may exacerbate conflicts caused by cultural differences. Therefore, developing a dynamic and open cultural outlook, through enlarging the connotations of cultural identity and extending to uniqueness and universality, is of particular importance. Under the guidance of this new cultural perspective, people from different cultural backgrounds are more tolerant, which is conducive to mutual communication.

Culture is fluid, dynamic and evolving. In cultural dissemination, the outlook of intercultural identity is a better one, for it guides people to learn and integrate other cultural elements with an open attitude and perspective. Under the guidance of this outlook, people respect differences, value communication and civilizational mutual learning, explore commonalities between Chinese culture and other cultures, as well as deepen cultural interculturality.

Constructivists believe that all cultural values and norms are socially constructed, and the construction of intercultural identity should be open and changed over time. Communicators should get away from rigid cultural thinking, devote themselves to mutual learning, communicating, and exploring.

4.5 Fostering Polyphonic Communication beyond National Narratives

The weak effect of "nation-state" narrative logic and the development of Internet technology help individuals become powerful subjects of non-national narratives in international communication practices. For instance, Li Ziqi's short videos presents Chinese agricultural culture, food culture, traditional clothing culture, and Chinese filial piety culture. Compared with some mainstream official media, her videos are more grounded with vivid images, beautiful scenery and diligence that resonate with overseas audiences.

5. Conclusion

Guided by constructivist theory, the transformation of ethics of communication from cultural identity to intercultural identity in the international communication of Chinese culture meets the needs of the times. Cultural identity focuses on power competition and cultural differences provoke misunderstandings or even resentments among communicators. Therefore, intercultural identity is supposed to be established on the basis of respecting differences, exploring commonalities and promoting civilizational mutual learning, which can help communicators broaden their perspectives.

However, the construction of intercultural identity cannot be separated from cultural identity. Intercultural identity must be based on cultural identity and stretching to two opposite dimensions. On the one hand, continuously absorbing and integrating the unique cultures of subcultural groups tend to make cultural identity itself more inclusive and diverse; on the other hand, exploring human commonalities, reaching consensus, promoting understanding, communication, and cooperation can deepen cultural interculturality.

It is urgent for cultural identity to be transformed to intercultural identity with the help of the following five paths, namely, getting rid of ethnocentrism, expanding and deepening cultural interculturality, exploring commonalities, developing a dynamic and open cultural outlook, and promoting polyphonic communication beyond national narratives. International transmission of Chinese culture can be smoothly achieved by consistently seeking the limitations of cultural identity, finding out the reasons for "Clash of Civilizations," and conducting inclusive and mutually beneficial dialogues based on strengthened communication and understanding.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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