

MASTER'S THESIS

Intercultural communication: exploring first encounters between Hong Kong Chinese and North Americans

Chan, Lai Yee

Date of Award:
2003

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**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION:
EXPLORING FIRST ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN
HONG KONG CHINESE AND NORTH AMERICANS**

**CHAN LAI YEE, EMILY
STUDENT NO. 01405705**

A Dissertation Submitted In Partial Fulfilment Of The

MASTER OF ARTS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2003

Abstract

This study attempts to explore cultural influences on English communication in the first encounters between Hong Kong Chinese and North Americans. As language and culture are inextricably tied together in intercultural communication, we will also include a brief overview of the influences of language on communication, which is to provide supplementary information to help us achieve a comprehensive analysis of the role of culture on communication.

Hong Kong Chinese and North Americans are considered to be representing two distinctive cultural types. When members of these two cultures are interacting, Hong Kong Chinese bring a collectivistic, high-context mindset, and North Americans bring an individualistic, low-context orientation. As they are operating on entirely different communicative practices, it is predicted that they would manifest very different communication styles. It is expected that the participant observations of their intercultural communication can provide insights into how people from extremely different cultures use communication strategies to negotiate meanings and enhance their interactions. Besides, the instances of miscommunication inspire us to seek solutions to resolve or prevent such communication problems.

Finally, we will discuss the implications for teaching and learning English language in Hong Kong, and we will make suggestions for improvements in our English teaching curricula.

探索香港華人與北美洲人跨文化溝通所產生的難題

論文提要

本論文旨在探索文化差異在跨文化溝通中所扮演的角色，而研究的對象是香港華人與北美洲人。本論文以他們初次見面時溝通的模式作為研究資料。他們使用的溝通語言為英語。在跨文化的溝通中，語言和文化有著微妙的關係，兩者是不可分割的。因此，在探討文化差異對跨文化溝通的影響時，我們亦加插了語言能力對跨文化溝通影響，作為輔助資料，務使我們的分析更加詳盡和全面。

香港華人和北美洲人分別代表兩種不同的文化類別。香港華人屬於較容易受到群體和環境因素影響的文化類型，而北美洲人則屬於比較重視個人價值取向的文化類型。由於兩者的價值取向和說話方式的分別，因而產生不同的溝通模式。筆者在實際的溝通環境中，參與和觀察這兩種文化背景差異甚大的群體之間的對話，看他們如何以各種溝通技巧，促進彼此間的交流。此外，在跨文化對話者溝通時，要徹底地了解對方所說措詞的含意，對話者需要在適當的時候，對某些可能引起誤會的字句加以解釋。了解跨文化溝通所引致的問題，將有助我們找出解決溝通問題的方法。

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