摘　要

语用失误是语言学中的一个重要研究课题。自从英国学者 Jenny Thomas 在 1983 年首次提出"语用失误"这个术语以来，国内外学者和研究者从不同角度对其进行了研究。他们的发现为后来的研究奠定了深厚的基础。尽管他们取得了很大成就，但也有一些不足之处。例如大部分研究都是从说话人角度进行的，而往往忽视听话人的因素；大部分考查学生在言语交际中的失误，忽视了非言语交际中可能存在的失误，且大部分实证研究仅仅局限于调查非英语专业学生的语用失误，对英语专业的学生调查的很少。

本研究采用问卷的方式调查了 137 名山东师范大学和 94 名山东中医药大学的共 231 名英语专业学生在言语和非言语交际中存在的语用失误，调查结果显示，英语专业学生在言语和非言语两种交际中都会产生语用失误，而且学生的平均语用失误率较高，语用能力普遍偏低，同时也验证了语言能力强的语言学习者拥有较强的语用能力，然后作者从顺应的角度以交际语境为视角解释语用失误，旨在揭示：语用失误产生的主要原因，是说话人或听话人在交际过程中忽视了对交际语境各因素的动态顺应，也就是说，语用失误是由于说话人或听话人忽视了对心理世界，社交世界，物理世界以及语言本身的顺应而造成的。最后作者从语言使用者和外语教学角度提出了减少或避免语用失误的措施。

基于定性和定量研究，本文在理论和实践上对英语教学和跨文化交际产生了一定的启示，将有助于改善外语教学和日常交际。

本文除了引言和结论部分外，共分五章，第一章主要对国内外学者在语用失误方面所做的研究进行综述，并指出本研究的必要性。第二章是理论基础，对顺应理论做了总体描述并且解释了为何顺应理论比大多数传统理论更适于分析语用失误。在第三章作者描述了本次研究的调查问题、调查的对象、所采用的方法、数据的收集和分析。在第四章作者根据顺应理论，以交际语境为视角，分别从对语言使用者心理世界、社交世界、物理世界以及语言本身的顺应四个方面对语用失误产生的原因进行了详细的讨论。在第五章，作者从语言使用者和外语教学的

角度提出了减少和避免语用失误的措施。希望能通过在日常实践中贯彻这些原则来促进英语专业本科学生的英语语用能力的提高。

关键词：语用失误；顺应理论；交际语境

分类号：H 319

Abstract

Pragmatic failure remains a significant research topic. Since Jenny Thomas (1983) first put forward the term "pragmatic failure", scholars both at home and abroad have conducted researches into this area from different angles and their findings have laid foundation for further researches. In spite of the achievements, there are still several disadvantages in their studies. For example, most researches are conducted from the perspective of the speaker, without taking the hearer into consideration; the previous investigations mainly focus on the pragmatic failure in verbal communication and overlook that at the level of nonverbal communication; most empirical studies are confined to the survey of pragmatic failure committed by non-English majors without touching upon English majors.

Therefore, the present study, conducted at two universities in Jinan, mainly examines the English majors' pragmatic failure in both verbal and nonverbal communication through questionnaire. There are altogether 231 subjects in this research including 137 English majors from Shandong Normal University and 94 from Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. The results indicate that the average pragmatic competence of the subjects is still at a poor level. They commit pragmatic failure not only in verbal communication but also in nonverbal communication. Meanwhile, it proves our hypothesis that the pragmatic competence is in parallel with their language proficiency. Then based on the Adaptation Theory, this thesis aims to illustrate the main cause of pragmatic failure is that in the course of communication either the speaker or the hearer fails to adapt language or behavior to the communicative context, i.e. the language users, the mental world, the social world and the physical world.

Besides an introduction and conclusion, this thesis consists of five chapters. The introduction provides a brief description of the background, the purpose, the significance and the layout of the thesis. Chapter One is literature review, which briefly goes over previous and current studies related to the present research and the

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topic of this thesis. Chapter Two is theoretical consideration. This part gives a brief description of the Adaptation Theory and explains why the Adaptation Theory is more appropriate than most of the traditional theories for pragmatic failure analysis. Chapter Three is about the methodology by which the investigation is conducted. In this part, the research questions, subjects, instruments, data collection, data analysis have been presented. Chapter Four is an adaptation-theoretic study of pragmatic failure. This section deals with the analysis and detailed discussion of the causes of pragmatic failure from the perspective of adaptation theory. Chapter Five is implications and suggestions. Based on the previous discussion, this part mainly puts forward some suggestions for avoiding pragmatic failure. At last, come the conclusion and limitations.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative study, this study also suggests some pedagogical implication for English teaching and cross-cultural communication.

Key Words: pragmatic failure; Adaptation Theory; communicative context
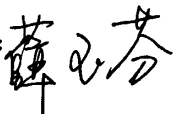**Category Number: H319**

Abbreviations

CP   Cooperative principle

FLT   Foreign language teaching

H   Hearer

L1   First language

L2   Second language

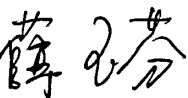PP   Politeness principle

S   Speaker

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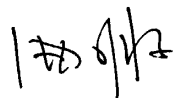
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Introduction

Research Background

With the rapid development of science and technology as well as the accelerative trend of globalization, the future demands talents' professional knowledge and intercultural communicative competence which is a must in the international markets.

The goal of English teaching is to cultivate learners' communicative competence. Communicative competence is the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom (Richards, Platt & Platt, 2002). The results offer an insight in cultural and pragmatic teaching to cultivate students' pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence is defined as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and understand language in context" (Thomas, 1983). It is an important component of communicative competence which concerned with the ability to apply the knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language. The traditional language teaching and learning focus on grammatical rules. That results in learners' inefficiency to correctly interpret the pragmatic implication under a different cultural background, thus causes pragmatic failure proposed by Thomas in 1983. Following Thomas's (1983) investigation of nonnative speakers' pragmatic failure, scholars in China, such as He Ziran (1986), Wang Dexing (1990), Hong Gang (1991) and others have done much concerning the pragmatic competence of English language learners in China. One common conclusion they come to is that the learners' general pragmatic competence is of poor level.

In spite of the fact that a number of investigations have been carried out to examine Chinese English learners' pragmatic failure, there are still some identifiable

gaps. Firstly, according to Li Yuansheng (2004), pragmatic failure also occurs at the level of nonverbal communication. However, there are few studies that have ever investigated learners' pragmatic failure in nonverbal communication. Secondly, few researchers have involved English majors in their investigation, who have learned some courses on intercultural communication.

Research Purpose

The main purpose of this study is: firstly to examine the English majors' pragmatic failure in both verbal and nonverbal communication and their pragmatic competence by means of questionnaire; secondly, to analyze the factors that cause the pragmatic failure from learner's perspectives based on adaptation theory and thirdly to propose some ways to improve their pragmatic competence accordingly.

Research Significance

The study offers some potential contributions to the research on cultivation of Chinese English learners' pragmatic competence. Firstly, the investigation expands the study of pragmatic failure from verbal communication to nonverbal communication which is usually ignored in the investigation in the field of pragmatic failure. Secondly, this study investigates English majors' pragmatic failure which is seldom mentioned by previous researchers. The results offer an insight in cultural and pragmatic teaching to cultivate students' pragmatic competence. Thirdly, the author tries to analyze pragmatic failure from the perspective of Adaptation Theory with gradients of communicative context—the mental world, social world, physical world and linguistic reality.

Layout of the Thesis

Apart from this introduction and conclusion, this thesis consists of the following

five chapters.

The introduction provides a brief description of the background, the purpose, the significance and the layout of the thesis.

Chapter One is literature review, which briefly goes over previous and current studies related to the present research and the topic of this thesis.

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Chapter Five is implications and suggestions. Based on the previous discussion, this part mainly puts forward some suggestion for avoiding pragmatic failure.

At last, come the conclusion and limitations.

Chapter One Literature Review

A competent language user should speak fluently, correctly and appropriately. He or she should have a good mastery of grammar as well as the ability to produce and understand utterances appropriate to the context. He or she should know how to speak appropriately at a certain circumstance and how to correctly interpret and respond to what other people say. If he or she fails to do so, pragmatic failure may arise. Since Thomas (1983) first proposed the notion of "pragmatic failure", many linguists and scholars have studied this phenomenon from different angles. Then what is pragmatic failure? Which angle do they take? How about their limitations? The following account will center round these questions in detail.

1.1 Previous Researches on Pragmatic Failure

1.1.1 Definition and Types of Pragmatic Failure

Thomas (2003:683) points out that pragmatic failure has occurred on any occasion on which H perceives the force of S's utterance as other than S intended she/he should perceive it. For example, pragmatic failure will occur, if:

a. H perceived the force of S's utterance stronger or weaker than S intended she/he should perceive it;

b. H perceives as an order an utterance which S intends she/he would perceive as a request;

c. H perceives S's utterance as ambivalent where S intended no ambivalence;

d. S expects H to be able to infer the force of her/his utterance, but is relying on a system of knowledge or beliefs which S and H do not in facts share.

Pragmatic failure is more likely to occur in cross-cultural interactions and it also occurs between native speakers. Based on the nature of the failures, Thomas classified two categories of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic failure and sociolinguistic failure. In the following sections, the two types of pragmatic failure will be discussed

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in detail respectively.

Pragmalinguistic failure, which occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by S onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2 (Thomas, 2003:693). In other words, at the level of explicit, referential meanings, there can be inappropriate transfer of speech act realization strategies or of expressions from the L1 into the L2 that can be interpreted differently. This is termed pragmalinguistic failure, which is concerned with differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic meaning or force (Lo Castro, 2003:230).

According to Thomas, pragmalinguistic failure can be divided into two levels. The first level of pragmalinguistic failure means that H would fail to perceive S's communicative intent if from the range of possible senses and references the hearer chose that/those which the speaker had not intended. The second level of pragmalinguistic failure means that H would fail to perceive S's communicative intent if the hearer failed to perceive the intended illocutionary force of the speaker's utterance (Thomas, 2003:681). In other words, the first level of pragmalinguistic failure occurs when the speaker uses inappropriate expressions or ambiguous words, which make the hearer misunderstand the speaker's utterance meanings and particular references in certain conditions. The second level of pragmalinguistic failure occurs when the hearer misunderstands the illocutionary force of the speaker's utterances or the speaker does not express his or her illocutionary force clearly. These two levels of pragmalinguistic failure are related to language itself. On the one hand, the speaker holds the view that the hearer could understand the utterances adequately; on the other hand, the hearer unluckily misunderstands the speaker's intentions and makes the wrong pragmatic inference (He Ziran & Ran Yongping, 2002:349).

Thomas (2003:693) uses the term "sociopragmatic failure" to refer to the social conditions placed on language in use. Sociopragmatic failure is misinterpretation at the level of implicit social meaning (LoCastro, 2003:230). It usually occurs when communicators do not know the differences between cultures and thus do not choose

the appropriate language (Chen Zhian et al., 2005:6). Different cultures tend to have different ways of thinking, rules of speaking, social values, beliefs, cultural patterns, world views, histories, etc. The diversity in cultures is expressed in cross-cultural communication and is not always well interpreted. In this case, sociopragmatic failure is much more difficult to deal with, since it involves the language users' systems of beliefs as much as their knowledge of the language.

However, no absolute distinction can be drawn between the two. They form a continuum and there is certainly a grey area in the middle where it is not possible to separate them with any degree of certainty. But for researchers and language teachers, the distinction is essential, since language learners may well equate sociolinguistic decision with value judgments, and they need to tread softly in this potentially explosive area. Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure reflect two fundamentally different types of decision-making. The first one is language-specific, simply a question of highly conventionalized usage. Therefore, it can be taught as part of grammar and corrected quite straightforwardly. The second one is in part culture-specific, which involves the learner's system of values and as much as their knowledge of the language.

Qian Guanlian defines pragmatic failure as follows: "Pragmatic failure refers to the breakdowns occurring in the process of communication when the speaker uses utterances that are correct in sign relations, but violate human relation norms or social norms unconsciously, or misfit the time and the space, or ignore the hearer" (Zhang Guo, 2004:60). Therefore, he holds the view that pragmatic failure is not the problem at the level of syntax, i.e. the performance error, but is the problem caused by the speaker who violates human relation norms or social norms, uses inappropriate expressions, or ignores the hearer (ibid.).

Qian Guanlian divides pragmatic failure into intralingual pragmatic failure and interlingual pragmatic failure (Zhang Guo, 2004:60). The former refers to pragmatic failure that occurs in communication within one culture, while the latter refers to pragmatic failure that occurs in cross-cultural communication (Li Guizhi & Zhang Guo, 2003:91).

Chen Zhian et al (2005: 4-5) regard pragmatic failure as the communication failure resulting from inappropriate utterances linguistically and culturally. When pragmatic failure occurs, the speaker fails to achieve his or her goal, and mismatch between the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation occurs. Apart from Thomas' classification of pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure, Chen Zhian et al. (ibid.:5) tentatively add a third category labeled as pragmabehavioral failure, by which they refer to the pragmatic failure committed by people's culturally conventionalized behavior, not by their utterance. Nonverbal behavior goes along with verbal behavior and cannot be separated from pragmatic principles and socio-cultural knowledge, so they add this third category of pragmatic failure. Riley is also concerned with defining the scope of communicative behavior amenable to pragmatic failure, insisting that both verbal and nonverbal phenomena be included (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 2003:730). In daily interaction, people communicate both verbally and nonverbally. Although much of nonverbal communication is universal, many of our nonverbal actions are altered by culture. Appropriate use of the nonverbal elements may help communication, while inappropriate use may cause pragmatic failure.

Therefore, for the convenience of study, in the present thesis pragmatic failure means any misunderstanding either resulting from the speaker's inappropriate production of utterances or the hearer's misinterpretation of the utterances both in verbal and non-verbal communication. It may be violation of interpersonal, social norms, value systems, or his/her expressions are not suitable for the specific time, place or the interlocutors. As a result, the speaker does not achieve his/her intention or the hearer fails to realize the real intention of the speaker. The communication is not satisfactory, even breaks down or ends in failure.

1.1.2 Researches on Pragmatic Failure from Different Angles

At present, researches on pragmatic failure carried out both at home and abroad are mainly conducted from the cross-cultural angle. Many researchers in China have

done a lot of contrastive studies on the difference between Chinese culture and Western culture so as to prove that cultural discrepancy is the root cause of pragmatic failure. Meanwhile, there are other research angles. For instance, some researchers study pragmatic failure from the cognitive approach, some from the perspective of second language acquisition, some from the angle of foreign language teaching, and so on.

Research from the Angle of Cognition

Cognitive linguistics is a new branch of linguistic study. Many linguistic phenomena can be studied from the cognitive perspective. So far, not many scholars have tried to account for pragmatic failure from this perspective. The Chinese scholar, Sun Ya (2001) has studied pragmatic failure from the perspective of cognition. He (ibid.: 59) remarks that as linguistic communication is based on cognition, a cognitive approach can be adopted towards the analysis of pragmatic failure. Human beings need to map their perception of persons, objects and events in the real world on to mental representations, which take the forms of image, concept and script. The variations in the profile of the image, the overextending of concept, the wrong selection of script, or the differences in the cultural assumptions of the script will lead to intralingual or interlingual pragmatic failure.

Li Na (2005), another Chinese scholar, has used the Schema Theory to study pragmatic failure. The Schema theory, first proposed by R.C. Anderson, argues that people's knowledge is organized into mental units called "schemata". People's knowledge is stored in long-term memory in the form of schema, which contains various fields of knowledge. The totality of schema is a person's whole knowledge. When people learn, they build knowledge; they are either creating new schemata, or linking together preexisting schemata in new ways. Schema is the base of cognition.

Research from the Angle of Second Language Acquisition

In addition to the perspective mentioned above, some linguists investigate the causes of pragmatic failure from the angle of second language acquisition.

Transfer is the process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language. Transfer can be positive, when a first-language pattern identical

with a target-language pattern is transferred, or it can be negative, when a first-language pattern different from the target-language pattern is transferred (Ellis, 1999: 304-305). Because positive transfer usually leads to communicative success and therefore is less exciting to study. Most scholars are interested in the study of negative transfer and maintain that negative transfer is the primary cause of pragmatic failure.

In conformity with Dai Weidong, the negative effect of cultural transfer is one of the causes of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Everyone is born in a specific culture, so that culture may greatly influence him/her in many different respects. When someone acquires a second language, he/she will apply the linguistic rules of his/her mother tongue mechanically due to the influence of his/her native language and culture. Cultural transfer often results in communicative obstacles, misunderstanding and even hatred.

There may be two reasons why cultural transfer is taken as one of the obstacles to second language acquisition and cross-cultural communication: (1) culture is deep-rooted; (2) every culture is characterized by ethnocentrism. Culture is deep-rooted because most of its contents are in the taken-for-granted realm and below the conscious level. It is known that the content of a culture is consciously or unconsciously learned and transmitted from generation to generation. Besides, cultures are dynamic systems that do not exist in a vacuum, so they are subject to change. For instance, changes in dress, food, transportation, housing and the like are compatible with the existing value system. However, values associated with such things as ethics and morals, religious practices are so deeply embedded in a culture that they are handed down from generation to generation.

Research from the Angle of Foreign Language Teaching

In China many researchers (He Ziran, 1986; Hong Gang, 1991; Pu Xiaojun, 1991; Liao Qiaoyun, 2000) study pragmatic failure from the angle of foreign language teaching. Questionnaires are used to study the aspects in which Chinese students most probably make mistakes. He Ziran & Yan Zhuang made the first qualitative research on pragmatic failures, focusing on pragmatic differences. It took the theoretical framework of Thomas and analyzed the cross-cultural pragmatic differences in both

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pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects. He and Yan point out that pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge is the main cause of pragmatic failure for Chinese learners, so they suggest that cross-cultural pragmatic knowledge should be taught in class in some way or other. The study is of great practical values for English teachers and the questionnaire initiates a model of pragmatic investigation in China.

Hong Gang (1991) did a significant and influential research in 1991. Up till then, few scholars shed light on the study of relationship between linguistic competence and pragmatic competence. Hong's research, instead of simply studying pragmatic failure itself, ingeniously makes use of it to uncover the relationship between linguistic and pragmatic competence. His investigation shows that learners of high-level linguistic competence produce nearly as many pragmatic failures as those of low-level competence do. It demonstrates that good linguistic competence does not insure good pragmatic competence. He concludes that pragmatic knowledge needs to be taught in order to advance pragmatic competence, otherwise it will stay unchanged. Since then more and more researchers set about the pursuit of pragmatic competence with pragmatic failure as a focus of study.

The researchers have summarized three causes for the lack of pragmatic competence of Chinese students: improper teaching, course design, and non-authentic materials. Improper teaching always results in pragmatic failure. For example, many Chinese teachers are accustomed to applying the grammar-translation method to teaching, which will give the students the impression that words or terms in Chinese have the same meaning when translated into English, and vice versa. But unfortunately the fact is that equivalent words do not always mean the same in these languages. Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing (1989:15)give the following example: Rest room≠休息室 In English, "rest room" is a euphemistic term for bathroom or toilet located in public places such as cinemas, banks, department stores or other large buildings. It is equipped with toilets and washbasins, so it is convenient for the customers. It is quite different from the Chinese term "休息室", which refers to a room where people can take a rest. Too much emphasis on metalinguistic knowledge

and the overuse of complete sentence both contribute to pragmatic failure. Liao (2000) points out that most of the present courses about Britain and the USA and western culture and literature are introductory. The courses attach much attention to culture, and ignore the application in real communication.

Non-authentic textbooks and teaching materials can also lead to pragmatic failure. Liao says that many textbooks fail to cover pragmatic and cultural knowledge. There are still a lot of dialogues designed for the practice of sentence patterns, seldom referring to the appropriate use of the sentences in certain circumstances explicitly. Some of the textbooks were written ten or more years ago. Ye Shaoning and Wu Geqi give many dialogues quoted from textbooks, which are designed to practice linguistic items or do not follow the foreign style of a conversation. The sentences may offend the westerners' privacy, such as age, marital status, religion and income. With these kinds of textbooks, learners could learn the correct language forms but could not realize that they are inappropriate and should be avoided when communicating with English native speakers. The non-authentic linguistic materials are harmful to the cultivation of learners' appropriateness in language use.

Research from the Angle of Cross-cultural Communication

It is generally agreed in the circle of linguists that most of the studies of pragmatic failure, especially the study of cross-cultural pragmatic failure, are made from the perspective of cross-cultural communication. Both foreign scholars (Helt, 1982; Seelye, 1993) and Chinese scholars (He Ziran, 1997; Qian Guanlian, 1997; Jia Yuxin, 1997) have made thorough investigation into pragmatic failure from the perspective of cross-cultural communication. Most of them insist that cross-cultural pragmatic failure is mainly caused by the cultural differences between different languages. It is the different ideologies, different styles of communication and different norms for non-verbal communication in these cultures that cause pragmatic failure.

In addition, different cultures may demonstrate different styles of communication. Therefore, when people from two different cultures communicate with one another, they have to adapt to each other's styles of communication, or pragmatic failure may

arise. Many researchers have found that the difference in styles of communication is another main source of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. For example, in English-speaking countries, for a casual conversation, it is impolite to ask someone about his/her age, income and marital status, while in China, it is a common practice to do so because the Chinese regard these topics as ordinary topics in everyday communication.

Besides verbal language there are great differences in cultural norms and practices of nonverbal behavior. Nonverbal communication refers to all intentional and unintentional stimuli between communicating parties, other than spoken word. These nonverbal processes are sometimes accounted for as much as 70% of the communication. Successful interaction in intercultural settings requires not only the understanding of verbal messages but of nonverbal messages as well. Characteristic to nonverbal communication is that it is less systematized than verbal communication; it is culture-bound and ambiguous.

Nonverbal communication can be divided to four categories: kinesics, paralanguage, chronemics and proxemics. Kinesics refers to the body movements in communication, which is also called body language. The four most common body activities are facial expressions, eye contact, hand gestures, and touch. Severe misunderstandings can occur if one does not know the rules of, for example, touching others or level of eye contact in another culture. Paralanguage comprises of all the sounds we produce with our voices that are not words. These include for instance laughter, tone and pace of voice and "empty" words such as 'um', 'uh' or 'You know'. Chronemics is the study of how we use time in communication. Hall's time orientations belong to this category, as well as our understanding of present, past and future. Proxemics refers to the study of how we use space in communication process. This space can mean anything from architecture and furniture to the distance between interactants in communication situations.

Nonverbal communication, as a part of communication, could not be got rid of. It enables others to gain insight into our thoughts and feelings; nonverbal messages can stand alone or they can tell us how other messages are to be interpreted correctly; it is

a way to learn about others' affective or emotional states by their actions; and it is usually responsible for the first impression in human interaction. It becomes more significant in intercultural communication when cultural differences are taken into consideration. The forefinger-to-thumb gesture can mean "OK" in the United States while it means zero or worthless in France. In Japan, the same gesture can mean "money", but it is a symbol many times more offensive than the raised middle finger in Brazil. A kiss on the cheek can be taken as a greeting in the western countries while it is embarrassing and inappropriate in China. Such differences can lead to misunderstandings between well-intentioned persons from different societies who do not realize that their behaviors are only arbitrary endowed with meaning and that the same behavior might denote something different to people from another society. So inappropriately produced or interpreted nonverbal behavior in intercultural communication will undoubtedly hinder communication, even cause conflicts. The inappropriately produced or interpreted nonverbal behavior in intercultural communication is intercultural pragmabehavioral failure (Li, 2004).

In China, most scholars limit their research on pragmatic failure to the scope of interlingual pragmatic failure. Therefore, they attribute pragmatic failure to cultural differences (Zhang Guo, 2004:60). In cross-cultural communication, if people from one country do not have enough knowledge of the cultural tradition of the other country, and interpret the utterances from their own cultural background, then cultural conflicts will arise. And this may cause pragmatic failure. In China, He Ziran & Yan Zhuang (1990) first analyse the cross-cultural pragmatic difference in both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects. Their study has aroused many Chinese scholars' attention and interest. Then many researchers, such as Cao Chunchun (1998), Li Yuee & Fan Hongya (1998), He Ziran & Ran Yongping (2002), etc., have studied pragmatic failure from cultural differences and have done a number of cross-cultural comparative studies on aspects such as greeting, inviting, apologizing and so on.

While the study of nonverbal communication started from the 1990s. The earliest article introducing nonverbal communication was written by Yang Ping in 1995.He explored nonverbal behavior from the perspective of intercultural communication and

its characteristics under different cultural background. He also pointed out the value of nonverbal communication in intercultural communication and EFL teaching. In the 2000s, more scholars get engaged in this study (Li, 2004; Yuan, 2000; etc.) They mainly introduced the classification of nonverbal communication and emphasized its importance in EFL teaching and cultivation of students' communicative competence from theoretical point of view.

In short, cross-cultural pragmatic failure is mainly caused by the cultural differences between different languages. Differences in ideologies, styles of communication, norms for non-verbal communication and other cross-cultural factors may cause pragmatic failure. However, few empirical studies investigated students' understanding of nonverbal intercultural communication. This present study is not only to give a full account of functions of nonverbal communication, but also to illustrate that the inappropriate uses and interpretations can cause pragmabehavioral failure. Although students' pragmabehavioral failure is only examined through written test, the results can reflect their understandings and conceptions of nonverbal communication which should be their guide for behavior.

1.2 Weak Points of Past Studies

As is mentioned above, researchers have made numerous investigations into pragmatic failure. However, there still exist some weak points. Firstly, these scholars mostly followed Jenny Thomas's concept of pragmatic failure which is only confined to verbal communication. Li Yuansheng (2004) proposed that non-verbal communication, as one important means in communication, should also be taken into consideration in the study of pragmatic failure and he suggested a new term pragmabehavioral failure to represent pragmatic failure in non-verbal communication. But Li Yuansheng did not conduct any investigation of pragmabehavioral failure and few investigations of pragmatic failure have ever involved nonverbal communication. Secondly, although some scholars have pointed out the causes of pragmatic failure, there are few who have ever analyzed the cause from students' perspectives and ever

investigated if there is any improvement in the students' pragmatic competence after they have learned some courses concerning English culture, such as *Linguistics, An Outline Introduction to British and America* and *A History of British and American Literature*.

Thus, this study investigates English majors' pragmatic failure in nonverbal communication and makes a comparison with their pragmatic failure in verbal and non verbal communication .The thesis will take both the speaker and the hearer into account in the process of studying the causes of pragmatic failure based on the adaptation theory.

1.3 Summary

This chapter has made a review of the literature relevant to pragmatic failure. First of all, this chapter has introduced the definitions and classifications of pragmatic failure of the previous researchers. And then, it has discussed the past researches of pragmatic failure from the angle of cognition, second language acquisition, foreign language teaching and cross cultural communication respectively. At last, it has pointed out the weak points of the previous studies.

The present study plans to make a full-scale investigation of pragmatic failure, therefore, a theory which covers the whole range of social, cultural and cognitive aspects will be adopted in this thesis. The following chapter will introduce this theory and its application to the analysis of pragmatic failure.

Chapter Two Theoretical Consideration

As is discussed in the last chapter, pragmatic failure is a complex phenomenon involving social, cultural and cognitive factors and an appropriate theory should be adopted to analyze this phenomenon. Among various theories, the Adaptation Theory covers the whole range of social, cultural and cognitive aspects when investigating any given linguistic phenomenon. Therefore, this thesis intends to analyze pragmatic failure from the Adaptation perspective. For the convenience of study, this chapter will give a brief description of the Adaptation Theory.

2.1 General Introduction to Adaptation Theory

Traditional pragmatists view pragmatics as a separate branch of linguistics, like phonology, phonetics, semantics, syntax and discourse analysis do. It has its own research items such as presupposition, deixis, and speech act theory and so on. Though specific, those separate researches couldn't encompass the thorough characteristics of pragmatic studies.

This problem was not solved until Belgium pragmatist Jef Verschueren proposed the Adaptation Theory and a pragmatic perspective in 1999. In his book *Understanding Pragmatics*, Verschueren postulates that pragmatics is a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior. In reviewing some common topics in pragmatics, Verschueren comments on the limitations of the component view of pragmatics as studying the same linguistic phenomenon from different perspectives rather than studying different linguistic phenomena from a unified perspective.

At the same time, he realizes that none of the factors of cognition, society and culture can be ignored when the full complexity of linguistic behavior is scrutinized. With such insights, he advocates that pragmatics ought to be a general functional

perspective instead of a component of linguistic theory, involving all sorts of cognitive, social and cultural variables whenever a linguistic phenomenon is approached from this perspective.

2.1.1 Key Notions of Adaptation Theory

A functional perspective on language use is to understand the functioning of language in its full complexity. Some key notions of this perspective on language will be discussed in the following subsections.

2.1.1.1 Making Linguistic Choices

Verschueren's theory is enlightened from Darwin's evolutionary theory. Darwin in his book of 1859 *Origin of Species* argued the evolution of organism would experience three periods of variation species, survival adaptation and species evolution. Among them, the survival adaptation is common to species with a result survival of the fittest. The evolutionary epistemology extends the biological theory and especially its natural selection paradigm, to all aspects of behavior an socio-culture, including language, learning and science. Evolutionary epistemology views organisms as engaged in continuous problem-solving, positing behavioral an socio-cultural adaptations as the product of "epistemic" processes, and interpreting human evolutionary in general as a growth of knowledge. Applied to language, the viability of such functional explanations may depend on a distinction between natural selection mechanism in evolution and reinforcement mechanisms, the latter being closer to what seems to happen in the shaping of languages and, by extension, in the functioning of language. (Verschueren, 2000:264).

Based on this, Verschueren believed that language also shared the characteristics of natural selection. He considered that languages consisted of the continuous making of linguistic choices, consciously or unconsciously, for language-internal (i.e. structural) and/or language-external reasons (2000:55-56). Language-internal denotes

the linguistic property of language, such as phonetics, semantics, and syntax while language-external involves the cultural, social parameters. This idea, which is the fundamental concept underlying the Theory of Adaptation, can be more specifically stated as follows:

First, choices are made at every possible level of structure, from phonetic to lexical and semantic, from code switch to discourse. And more often than that, choice-making at different levels is simultaneous.

Second, speakers' choices concentrate on strategies as well as on forms.

Third, choices are made with various degrees of consciousness.

Fourth, choices are made both in producing and in interpreting utterances, and both types of choice-making are of equal importance for the communication process.

Fifth, a language user has no freedom of choice between choosing and not choosing. Once language is used, the user has to make the continuous choices to meet certain communicative needs.

Sixth, choices are not equivalent: some are preferred while others are less preferred, with regard to different social and cultural constraints.

Seventh, the actual choices may evoke their non-selected alternatives. (2000:56-58)

Verschueren holds that unlike other tools of human evolution, language is not a 'thing' which leads an independent and unchanging life once it has been 'made'. It requires constant adaptations to different purposes and circumstances of use. A theory of language use is to be able to account for this 'making of choice'. Three key notions —variability, negotiability and adaptability are needed in order to understand this process of making choices.

2.1.1.2 Variability, Negotiability and Adaptability

Verschueren (2000:58) identifies at least three hierarchically related key notions necessary for the understanding of the process of making choices as the base-line description of language use, namely, variability, negotiability and adaptability.

Variability is defined as "the property of language which defines the range of possibilities from which choices can be made"(Verschueren, 2000:59).In other words, the range of possible choices itself is of diversity and not fixed once and for all; rather, it is constantly changing in communication. In other words, the communicator's language is not fixed.

The concept of negotiability is defined as "the property of language responsible for the fact that choices are not made mechanically or according to strict rules or fixed form-function relationships, but rather on the basis of highly flexible principles and strategies" (Verschueren, 2000:59).

Adaptability is defined as "the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs" (Verschueren, 2000:61). This property makes language a most important tool for human life and survival. Yet we need to realize that communicative success is a matter of degree and that there exist chances of communicative failures. On the one hand, language alone does not guarantee communicative success. On the other hand, not all language users can make proper linguistic adaptations.

These three interrelated properties, Verschueren argues, serve as a conceptual tool to come to an investigation for understandings of linguistic pragmatics.

2.1.2 The Four Angles of the Adaptation Theory

As is mentioned in the previous section, the three language properties play an essential role in the making of linguistic choices. And Verschueren (2000:66) proposes that the notion of adaptability can be investigated from four angles: contextual correlates of adaptability, structural objects of adaptability, dynamics of adaptability, and salience of adaptation process.

First, contextual correlates of Adaptability, which motivate and/or are affected by linguistic choice (2000:75), are constituents of context. They potentially include all the ingredients of the communicative context with which linguistic choices are

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interadaptable. The range goes from aspects of physical surroundings, the social parameters of communication to the interlocutors' state of mind. This can be represented in figure 2.1 (Verschueren, 2000:76):
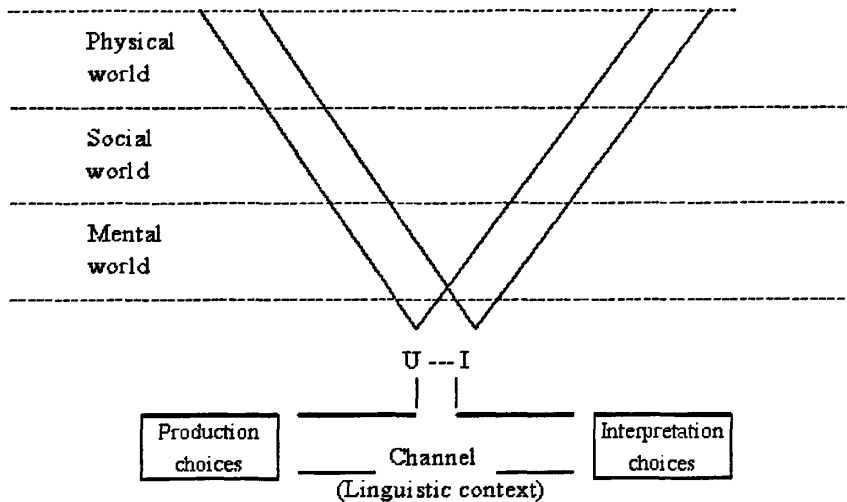

Fig. 2.1 Context Correlates of Adaptation

The figure shows a sketchy summary of what is involved in the form of a visual representation. The focal points in this representation are the utterer (U) and the interpreter (I). And a specific context is set up. In the theory of pragmatics, they are functional entities or social 'roles' rather than real world people, though they usually are that too. Their linguistic choices receive influence from the mental, social and physical world. The actual process of adaptability is the focus of the whole theory. It will enjoy prime emphasis in this research as well.

Second, Structural Objects of Adaptability. These include structures at any layer or level of organization as well as principles of structuring. Since the making of communicative choices takes place at all possible levels of linguistic structure, a pragmatic phenomenon can be related to any layer or level of structure.

Third, Dynamics of Adaptability. This refers to the development of adaptive processes in interaction. The central task of a pragmatic analysis, according to Verschueren, is to account for the dynamics of meaning generation. This task cannot be performed without taking into account the full power of variability and

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negotiability.

Fourth, Salience of the Adaptation Processes. This refers to the status of processes of meaning generation in relation to the cognitive apparatus. Not everything that happens in linguistic behavior occupies the same place in consciousness.

These four tasks can be seen as 'necessary ingredients of an adequate pragmatic perspective on any given linguistic phenomenon' (Verschueren, 2000:67). Contextual correlates and structural objects can often be conveniently used as a starting point for specific description in pragmatics. Dynamics concerns the nature and development over time of the relationship between context and structure. And finally the dynamic process operating on context-structure relationship takes place with different degrees of salience. The contributions of these four tasks are not only complementary, but they carry different functional loads within the overall framework of the pragmatic perspective. They relate to each other as depicted in Figure 2.2 (Verschueren, 2000:67):
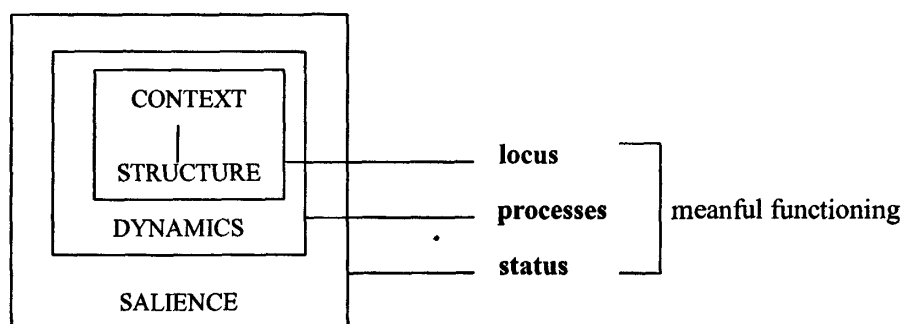
Fig. 2.2 The structure of a pragmatic failure

2.2 The Appropriateness of the Adaptation Theory for the Present Study

In the previous section, a general introduction to the Adaptation Theory has been made. And this section will briefly propose why the Adaptation Theory is more appropriate than most of the traditional theories for pragmatic failure analysis.

Firstly, pragmatic failure is a complex phenomenon involving social, cultural and cognitive factors. And the Adaptation Theory covers the whole range of social,

cultural and cognitive aspects when investigating any given linguistic phenomenon. Thus, it is suitable to adopt this comprehensive theory to the study of pragmatic failure.

Secondly, the Adaptation Theory is systematic and dynamic. Therefore, it can give a consistent and comprehensive analysis of pragmatic failure and reveal the dynamic process of pragmatic failure in daily communication.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has given a general introduction to the Adaptation Theory through the three key notions—variability, negotiability, and adaptability—and the four ingredients of the communicative context—linguistic reality, mental world, social world and physical world. And then it has given the reason why the Adaptation Theory is more appropriate than most of the traditional theories for pragmatic failure analysis.

Chapter Three Methodology

This is an empirical study on Chinese English majors. This section will be devoted to the presentation of the thesis on research questions, subjects, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Key Research Questions

It is commonly assumed that a foreign language learner with a good mastery of the linguistic system is bound to use the language effectively in intercultural communication. The present research is intended to test this assumption and study the pragmatic failure made by English majors in verbal behavior as well as nonverbal aspects.

This study will investigate the following questions:

(1) What is the current situation of English major students' pragmatic competence in China?

(2) What is the relationship between students' pragmatic competence and linguistic proficiency? Does students' pragmatic competence go up with their advance of linguistic competence?

(2) What are the reasons for the pragmatic failures produced by Chinese students?

3.2 Subjects

Due to some objective limitations, it is difficult to choose the subjects by means of random sampling, so a convenience sampling is adopted instead. Convenience sampling, as the name suggests, means that elements are selected as the sampling for the convenience of the researcher tending to choose subjects that are readily available (Wen Qiufang, 2001).

According to Rod Ellis (1994), it's ideal to draw on three sources of data in the study of pragmatics: data collected from learners in their L1, from speakers of the target language and data elicited from L2 learners in their target language. This indicates that under ideal circumstance, study in this field should involve both speakers of the target language and L2 learners of the target language. However, it's very difficult and requires more time and effort than the researcher could afford.

There are altogether 231 subjects in this research including 137 English majors studying from Shandong Normal University and 94 students from Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. They are divided into three groups. Group A consists of 64 students who are second-year undergraduates, Group B consists of 81 third –year undergraduates and Group C consists of 86 fourth-year undergraduates.

They have similar English learning backgrounds: almost all of them began to learn English from middle school and have learned English for more than 7 years by the time of the investigation. Students of Group C had one or two years longer English learning experience and finished most courses of specific English training in university. They are English majors and are from the key universities of Shandong Province and students have to obtain high marks in the College Entrance Examination in order to be enrolled. So they have mastered necessary grammatical knowledge to accomplish the task. For the sake of convenience, factors such as age, sex, and so on were not taken into consideration.

3.3 Instruments

Questionnaire is a popular way of gathering information. For its efficient use of time, anonymity, the possibility of a high return rate and standardized questions which means all respondents are presented with the same question and so there is no scope for negotiating or clarifying the meaning of the question (Mann, 1999).

Multiple choices questionnaire gave subjects some questions on the basis of real situation to answer in proper linguistic forms. This approach provided researchers

with the convenience that limited the questions to a needed scope as well as controlling some factors affecting speaker's speech. Besides it did not have the severe time requirement and data collection in this way was quick. In addition, we could collect data from a large number of learners, and it was more likely that the results could be generalized to a wider group.

In order to serve our different purposes of investigation, we use two questionnaires to investigate learner's pragmatic failure. Questionnaire One is aimed at investigating learners' pragmatic competence, which is further divided into 2 parts. Part One includs 25 questions, and Part Two 10 statements. Those items, including pragmalinguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmabehavioral questions, are aimed at testing learners' pragmatic competence.

In the questionnaire, the first part is making multiple-choices mainly from He Ziran's questionnaire (1987) and some from other prior researches (Peng, 2004; Li, 1998; Xu, 2001). This part of questions focuses on verbal communication and for each of the questions, a brief description of a situation with four answers is provided (See Appendix). The second part is 10 True or False statements based on the material *"Intercultural Communication"*(1999) and *"Language and Culture"* (1989) both written by Hu Wenzhong and He Ziran's *"A Survey of Pragmatics"*. This part concerns nonverbal communication. Questionnaire Two are mainly concerned with students' background information and their attitudes toward cultural learning with regard to the textbooks and classroom teaching.

The questions are chosen according to the following rules: (1) The test items should include pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic and pragmabehavoral questions in order to suit our purpose of investigation. (2) The questions should cover the speech acts of high frequency in real-life cross-cultural communication, such as address forms, apologies, refusals, invitations, leave-taking, greetings, compliments, opening of conversations, and so on.

3.4 Data Collection

A pilot test was done before the data collection. According to the result, the author

made some revision on wording, content and number of the question to ensure the validity and efficiency of the test.

The subjects from Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine did the questionnaires on Dec.24, 2008, and the students from Shan Dong Normal University did the questionnaires on Dec.26, 2008.

The research was conducted in the classrooms. The quantitative investigation, held as a quiz in class, was administered by their university counselors, that is, the questionnaires were handed out and collected by them.

The students were required to complete the two questionnaires before or after class under their counselors' instruction to ensure that they treated the test seriously. Before the questionnaires were distributed to the students, they are told to take it easy for it is not a test but a survey to know their pragmatic competence. They had to do the questionnaires individually. There was no time limit for doing the questionnaires, thus the students could concentrate on the pragmatic aspects of the utterance in making their choices. Therefore the problems of understanding the languages in the questionnaire and the limitation of time could not be counted as factors influencing the choices or as causes of their failures. If they had any linguistic problems, they were allowed to use a dictionary. In so doing, learners might avoid the pragmatic failures brought about by misunderstanding linguistic forms.

3.5 Data Analysis

On the whole, subjects finished the questionnaire in about 25 minutes. The three groups have their own average time: about 22 minutes of Group A, 24 minutes of Group B and 30 minutes of Group C.

I made a statistic description to the results from Questionnaire. I graded the questionnaire as soon as I collected them back and calculated the incorrect answers of each subjects for each items in part I and part II respectively. With the help of statistic software Microsoft office Excel 2003, I made a descriptive analysis of these quantitative data.

The following table shows the students' general tendency of pragmatic failure in verbal and nonverbal communication.

Groups	Average rate of failure		Maximum of incorrect answers		Minimum of incorrect answers	
	Part I	Part II	Part I	Part II	Part I	Part II
A	46.2%	39.2%	12	10	8	2
B	45.3%	38.4%	10	9	7	1
C	43.5%	35.8%	9	6	6	1

Table 3-1 Overview of students' pragmatic failure

The figures show that the seniors who were more proficient in linguistic competence performed only slightly better than the sophomores and juniors in these two universities. English majors also commit pragmatic failure in verbal communication as well as nonverbal communication.

As we have mentioned in Chapter Two, pragmatic failure can be divided into pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure, which stem from different aspects of language use. On the basis of Thomas' classification, the researcher divides the questions and makes a table to show the failure rate of both pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure of each group.

As to the total failure rate of Part I, they altogether fail at the rate of 45%, against which three groups fail respectively at the following rate: 46.2 %(Group A), 45.3 % (Group B), and 43.5 % (Group C).

Groups	Average failure rate	Total average failure rate	Average failure rate of PL	Total average failure rate of PL	Average failure rate of SP	Total average failure rate of SP
A	46.2 %		52.2 %		40.2%	
B	45.3%	45 %	49.7 %	49.6 %	40.9%	40.4 %
C	43.5 %		46.8 %		40.2%	

Table 3-2 Overview of students' pragmatic failure in part I

From the above table, we can see that the total pragmalinguistic failure rate is 49.6%, about 9% higher than the total sociopragmatic failure, which is 40.4%. The reason for this phenomenon may involve the following: the questions concerning with

the sociopragmatic study are almost with regard to age, income, weather, topics that English teachers more often than not explain to students in class and when teachers explain which topic is safe to begin a conversation with native speakers and which is improper. While on the other hand, as pointed by many scholars, teachers may adopt a grammar-translation method of teaching, which leads to the assumption that words or terms in Chinese have the same meaning when translated into English, and vise versa. That's why people often respond to "Thank you" with "Never mind."

The main purpose of Questionnaire Two is to check the data collected from Questionnaire One and to further prove the data. I choose 20 students who get the top score and 20 students who got the low score respectively when they did the Questionnaire One.

According to Questionnaire Two, 90% of the students show great interest in culture teaching.They hope the teachers always explain cultural backgrounds thoroughly, which they think is helpful to a deeper understanding of the text. 85% of the students hold that their culture knowledge come from the teachers' lecture in class. All the students realize the existence of cultural differences among various languages. The students who did well in the Questionnaire One are much more active in interaction with the native speakers. In comparison with the learners with higher pragmatic competence, learners with lower pragmatic competence do not seem to be active in getting the cultural knowledge; they have not read many books about western culture, and they seldom talk to native speakers.

The rates show us students' poor pragmatic competence and prove the hypothesis that is, students' pragmatic competence is in parallel with their language proficiency in general. And again, it proves Rod Ellis's (1994:187) judgement that even the advanced level students cannot acquire the way native speakers speak the target language. From the rate, we can see that even after three years' of English study in university, students still aren't able to do satisfactorily in the questionnaire. The sophomores and juniors make wrong choices in most of the questions. And we can see that the difference between the results of the three groups is not remarkable, so according to the result of the research, the university English majors' education is not

very satisfied and has much room to be improved in the field of communication. We may draw the conclusion that these students' lower pragmatic competence results from their lack of sensitivity to cultural differences and their neglect of the learning of pragmatic knowledge. Teachers have not made a systematic analysis of cultural elements in the actual teaching. As a result, students make pragmatic failure in both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Based on the quantitative analysis of the data in this part, the author will build a theoretical framework to analyze the sources of pragmatic failures from adaptation perspectives in the following chapter in order to help English teachers and learners to know systematically the reasons of the various pragmatic failures in cross-cultural communication.

3.6 Summary

Chapter Three is about the methodology by which the investigation is conducted. In this part, the research questions, subjects, instruments, data collection, data analysis have been presented. Though the author has made great attempts on the survey to get relatively exact data, there are still some shortcomings. First, the design of the questionnaire perhaps can not conclude all the aspects in real communication. Second, the empirical research is conducted only in two key universities of Jinan, Shandong Province. If there were a research all over the country, the research would be more effective. So the results of the research directly affect the degree of reliability and the depth of the thesis.

Chapter Four An Adaptation-

Theoretic Study of Pragmatic Failure

As we have known in Chapter Two, not all language users can make proper linguistic adaptation in language use, and if they fail to make appropriate linguistic adaptation, especially fail to adapt structural objects to contextual correlates and fail to make proper choices, pragmatic failure will occur. In the following part, we will disscuss this question and find out the cause of committing pragmatic failure, i.e. what are the contextual correlates that language users fail to adapt to when pragmatic failure occurs.

As has been shown in Fig.2.1 contextual correlates include language users, i.e. utterer and interpreter, mental world, social world and physical world. If language users fail to make adaptation to these factors, they may cause pragmatic failure.

4.1 Neglect of Adaptation to Physical World

Temporal deixis and spatial deixis are the most studied and most visible ways of anchoring language choices into physical world. Both phenomena have exerted a strong fascination on linguists, from long before "pragmatics" became a common notion. Time is a relative notion rather than an absolute value in relation to language, and it interferes with a lot of other considerations (Verschueren, 2000:95).

The relativity of temporal and spatial reference is primarily a function of the positioning of language users in the 'world'. A lot of linguistic choice-making is dependent on properties of this positioning (Verschueren, 2000:100).

Temporal reference refers to event time, time of utterance and reference time. Spatial reference indicates the absolute spatial relations and the relative spatial reference. In addition, physical world also includes some non-verbal factors, like

bodily postures, gestures, gaze, physical appearance, physical conditions, etc.

If language users overlook these factors when communicating, they would probably choose improper linguistic forms, which may lead to pragmatic failure and then pragmatic failure may occur. Therefore, it is of great importance to observe the language users' physical world and make appropriate adaptation to it.

4.1.1 Neglect of Adaptation to the Temporal References

As is mentioned above, time is a relative notion rather than an absolute value in relation to language. In his book, Verschueren took "Good morning" as an example, which should normally be used only when meeting someone for the first time in the morning; uttering the same formula again when meeting the same person once more later that same 'morning', would lead - at least - to suspicions of absent-mindedness. He divides temporal reference into event time, time of utterance and reference time (in relation to a clear deictic center, other than the time of utterance).

Considering No.14 in the questionnaire:

14. It's June 9th ,Monday. The teacher says in class to the students: "You are to hand in your homework quickly. The deadline is next Thursday." Then the students must hand in their homework before

A) June 12th B) June 10th C) June 19th D) June 17th

In English, "next Thursday" can mean both the Thursday of that week (if it is said before Thursday) and that of the next week, according to the context, while in Chinese, it means the Thursday of the next week.

In the above, since the teacher has told the students to hand in their homework quickly, the right choice should be A) June 12th. In the 231 students, 71, at the rate of 30.7% choose the right answer, from which we can see that most English major students still haven't mastered this kind of expressions and the connotation of temporal reference.

There is another example; if people fail to adapt language or behavior to the

physical world, pragmatic failure will arise. Li Guizhi & Zhang Guo provide a sad story which can illustrate this point.

(1) Once, there was a pair of lovers. The boy is an American and the girl is an English. They loved each other but they were rejected strongly by the girl's family. At last, they decided to elope. The boy tried his best to send a letter to the girl and tell her the time to elope. The date on the letter was "8/10". In American English, "8/10" refers to August 10th, while in British English, it means October 8th. Therefore, the boy came to meet the girl on August 10th He waited for the girl for three days but did not see her. Finally, he left England alone sadly. However, the girl escaped from the family on October 8th and came to meet the boy. She waited and waited but nobody came. Thirty years later, they met by accident and ultimately knew the reason of this love tragedy.

(Li Guizhi & Zhang Guo, 2003:92)

In this story, the boy had not been aware of the difference of the temporal deixis between America and England. If he had realized the difference of the temporal deixis and adapted to it, this tragedy would have been avoided.

Time is an important concept which reflects different ideas of people from different cultural backgrounds. Each culture has an unwritten but widely accepted set of rules regarding time. The varying attitudes toward time and its utilization held by the various cultures in the world mean that serious misunderstandings may arise in cross-cultural communication unless those individuals involved are aware of and sensitive to a number of basic considerations.

Different cultures have different time systems. Unfortunately, most people are not fully aware of this, which may result in clashes between different time systems. There are three time orientations: past orientation, present orientation and future orientation.

Some ancient civilizations tend to look back simply because they have a long history of which they can boast. They are past-oriented. Some traditional peoples can neither grasp the past nor the future. They are present-oriented. Most post-industrial

peoples look forward to the future. They are future-oriented.

Past-oriented cultures place much emphasis on tradition and are often perceived as resisting change. The Chinese, with their traditions of ancestor worship and strong pride in their cultures' persistence for thousands of years, use the past to guide how to live in the present. As a Chinese proverb advises, "Consider the past and you will know the present." Cultures that value the past are also more likely to respect and venerate the elderly than the cultures that value the future.

The third orientation, which puts great faith in the future, is what most Americans insist. Americans are constantly planning for the future. Many of them can hardly wait to finish what they are doing so that they can move on to something else. Having an eye to the future often produces a very low tolerance for extensions and postponements. What they want, they want now, so they can dispose of this moment and move on to the next. In addition, future-oriented cultures welcome innovation and change and have less regard for past social or organizational customs and traditions.

We can determine a culture's attitude toward time by examining the pace at which members of that culture perform specific acts to respond to certain events. Americans, because of the pace of life in the United States, always seem to be in a hurry. People consider time to be wasted or lost unless they are doing something. Conveniences — from fast-food restaurants, to one-stop gas stations, to microwave ovens — help Americans get things done quickly. Americans are constantly seeking faster computers and cars. Americans grow up hearing people say, "Don't waste so much time" and "He who hesitates is lost."

Americans are basically future-oriented. There are two reasons for this. First, their ancestors severed their links with their European roots and started afresh to develop another culture. They do not have a long history. They do not want to look back on the past. Second, their values of independence and individualism always drive them forward to build a brighter future.

Americans look upon time as a present, tangible commodity. They spend it, waste it, save it and divide it, just as if they were handling some tangible object. In order to use time well, most Americans schedule the day and the week and month

carefully, set up timetables, and establish precise priorities. For instance, they prepare carefully for business conferences, for personal interviews, and for group meetings of all types. This is an elementary aspect of efficiency what they assume to be.

But Chinese look on this as obsessiveness and aggressiveness. Our lack of planning communicates to laziness, inefficiency, and untrustworthiness. And above all, time should not be wasted. The English naturalist Charles Darwin echoes this view when he writes, "A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life." Then we'll have a reference to the statement No.34 in Part Two of Questionnaire One.

34. When you are five-minute late for your foreign teacher's class, you open the door quietly and sit down in your seat. (   )

When arriving late for class, American culture teaches students to enter quietly without knocking at the door and sit down to save time, while Chinese culture teaches students to knock and shout "Report" then offer an explanation and wait for the teacher's permission to enter. Judging from the perspective of their own culture, many subjects thought the statement was inappropriate and thus made pragmatic failure.

4.1.2 Neglect of Adaptation to the Spatial Reference

The relevance of space as a contextual correlate of adaptability stretches beyond mere spatial reference. There are indicators of absolute spatial relations, and a different type of 'absolute' system is dependent on intrinsic orientation. Spatial reference is usually relative to a perspective. Utterers often make their perspective coincide with the intrinsic orientations of objects talked about. Utterers may make their own perspective coincide with that of an interpreter, or the utterer perspective may be altogether abandoned in favor of an interpreter's.

To indicate the important role physical world plays in communication, Verschueren uses his own experience as an example, arguing that even simple

sentences may prove problematic as tools for communication if the relativity of spatial perspectives is not taken into account.

(2)   Once, when making a stopover at the Frankfurt airport to meet a colleague, he was trying to find his way to the terminal where they had agreed to meet. Confronted with a security check that looked too much like one of the stages passengers have to pass through before getting to their aircraft, he thought he had better ask before continuing in the same direction. The following exchange took place:

Verschueren: I want to get **out**, not **in**.

Official: OK, it's this way.

Reassured, he continued through the checkpoint only to find that he had entered one of the boarding areas, as he had feared. Clearly, while his out and in had been oriented to the airport building, the official's out and in were oriented to Frankfurt.

(Verschueren, 2000:99)

From example (2), we can see that Verschueren did not achieve the expected communicative goal because both he and the official had ignored the rationality of spatial perspectives. They failed to make adaptation to the spatial reference, and thus the effect of communication was not as satisfactory as expected.

Here is another example:

(3) Once, one of my friends went to the American Embassy in Beijing to go through the formalities for obtaining a visa. During the interview, the visa officer gazed at her, smiling. However, my friend felt very embarrassed and avoided his eyes from time to time, glancing around. Later on, she was informed that she could not get the visa though her answers were good.

(Zhang Guo, 2004:61)

This example shows that gaze, a non-verbal factor, is a significant accompaniment of oral communication. For instance, on many occasions, utterers can direct their gaze away from an addressee while an addressee usually has to keep looking at the utterer to signal that he or she is listening. The girl in the example failed

to obtain the visa because she neglected the positive effect of gaze. She should have made adaptation to this non-verbal factor in order to have her communicative purpose realized.

Each culture also has an unwritten but widely accepted set of rules regarding space. Values regarding space tend to be equally emotional. For example, many American tourists label the Chinese as being rude for pushing and shoving in public.

Pushing and shoving is tolerated to different degrees and in different situations across cultures. Generally speaking, the Chinese belong to oriental long-distance culture; but pushing and shoving is tolerated in crowded shops, buses, restaurants and other gatherings. This may seem unpleasant and aggressive to Americans. Why does the public distance of Chinese people seem to be smaller than the social distance? A simple fact is: China has almost one quarter of the world's population. So pushing and shoving is unavoidable. Playing with and touching the child is common in China, which denotes that the child is so lovely and cute.

A vivid metaphor will illustrate the notion of body distance. Everyone seems to live in an invisible bubble or balloon, which constitutes his/her private territory (quoted from He Daokuan, 1988:146).This territory is not to be invaded by strangers. Hall (1959) establishes four distances for American culture:

1) Intimate distance: 0—18 inches

2) Personal distance: 1.5—4 feet

3) Social distance: 4—12 feet

4) Public distance: 12—25 feet

Of these four spatial zones the first is reserved for intimates, the third is used for business, the second is a transitional distance between the above two, and the last is observed on formal occasions. (quoted from He Daokuan,1988:147)

Let us look at the following example in Questionnaire One:

27. An American mother takes her lovely little daughter to a park. If a passer-by touches the daughter on the head, the mother feels happy. (   )

In NO.27 in Part II of Questionnaire One, 75% students think the statement is inappropriate while 25% fails. The American mother in the example is not necessarily happy to see a stranger touch her child's face or get too close to the child. She believes that the stranger may have some contagious illness that will transmit to her child. The mother must be awkward and uncomfortable because she really does not want the stranger to do so. While playing with and touching the child is common in China, which denotes that the child is so lovely and cute. In fact, touching should be cautious in any situation when the interaction happens between different cultures.

Physical world also includes body language which refers to any little movement of any part of the body. Here are some categories that may escape our notice: head movement, eye behavior, gait, sitting manner and leg movement.

It is believed that every culture has its unique social rules governing eye contact. Direct eye contact signals honesty and interest in America. There is even a tendency in North America to be suspicious of someone who does not follow the culturally prescribed rules for eye contact.

This interpersonal skill is so important that one popular communication textbook offers the following advice to its readers: "You can improve your eye contact by becoming conscious of looking at people when you are talking to them. If you find your eyes straying away from that person, work to regain direct contact." The key word in the above sentence is "direct". Direct eye-to-eye contact is not a custom throughout the world. In many cultures direct eye contact is a taboo or an insult. In China, for example, prolonged eye contact is considered rude, threatening, and disrespectful.

Sitting posture is a constant source of cultural misunderstanding. Americans feel very relaxed at home and in their private offices. When an American puts his/her feet up on his/her desk, it signifies a relaxed, in formal attitude, many times a sort of tribute to the person with whom he/she is conversing. But to some Chinese, this connotes rudeness and perhaps arrogance. Chinese students are shocked to see their American teachers sit on the teacher's desk in class. They tend to regard it as impolite. But the American teachers, by so doing, just want to show that they are comfortable

with their students in order to make the class more relaxed.

Hand gestures can be different across cultures. Chinese people motion others to come by shaking the hand with the palm turning downward while to Americans this may be the gesture to wave goodbye. When they motion people to come, they shake the fingers toward themselves with the palm turning upward.

The Chinese smile means to ease tension in a conflicting situation often elicits angry remarks like "Why are you smiling? What's funny?" coming from Americans; and more than once, a smile means by a Chinese to cover an embarrassment is interpreted as a direct sign of pleasure or satisfaction by American.

35. If your American friend Ann visits you at your home and breaks a plate, you smile to comfort her.(   )

While doing No. 35 in Part Two of Questionnaire One (Appedix) , a number of subjects believed that it was proper to smile to comfort her when their American friend Ann was visiting them at their home and broke a plate and thus pragmatic failure occurred.

In the United States, pointing is a very common gesture. Americans point to objects and at people with the index finger while in most areas of China, pointing with the index finger at a person is considered rude.

Therefore, to achieve the expected communicative aim, we must take these factors of physical world into consideration and adapt to these factors.

4.2 Neglect of Adaptation to Social World

According to Verschueren (2000:91-92), "there is no principled limit to the range of social factors that linguistic choices are interadaptable with. Most of them have to do with properties of social settings, institutions, or community-specific communicative norms that have to be observed".

Sometimes the very fact of linguistic choice-making has to be institutionally

sanctioned: for example, only a judge can pass a sentence, and it does not make sense to read someone's rights unless he/she is a suspect. In such cases, we can speak of ratified utterers and ratified interpreters.

"Within these settings and institutions many linguistic choices depend on relationships of dependence and authority, or power and solidarity, not only between utterer and interpreter but also between utterer and/or interpreter and any third party which either figures in the topic of the discourse or is otherwise involved. In addition, social settings and institutions impose many types of principles and rules on the way in which certain types of linguistic acts can be performed, or who has the right to perform them"(Verschueren,2000:91).

Verschueren notes that the social world can be studied from two perspectives: the cultural conventions and the social settings of a society.

4.2.1 Neglect of Adaptation to Cultural Conventions

As Verschueren (2000:92) points out, "culture, with its invocation of norms and values has indeed been a favorite social world correlate to linguistic choices in the pragmatic literature", culture plays an important part in the choice-making in communication, especially in cross-cultural communication. Many cross-cultural pragmatic failures are caused by cultural differences. According to Adaptation Theory, cross-cultural pragmatic failure is caused by language user's failure to make adaptation to the different cultural values and norms, or different patterns of communication. When language users fail to make adaptation to the difference between Chinese and Western values and beliefs, pragmatic failure occurs. Some other cross-cultural pragmatic failures are caused by language user's failure to adapt to the different patterns of communication.

Jia Yuxin has made a thorough investigation into the differences in performing such speech acts as addressing, inviting, refusing, greeting, requesting, complimenting and apologizing between Chinese and Western cultures.

Take greeting for example. In Chinese culture people often use "Where are you

going?" or "Have you eaten?" to greet each other, but in English culture, people will never use such utterances to greet others for they have a strong sense of privacy. Instead, they often use "It's a good day today, isn't it?" So if a Chinese greets an American using "Where are you going?" the American will feel offended for he regards the greeting as an invasion of his privacy.

Jia notes that in different cultures people employ different strategies in performing refusal, request and apology (1997:348-358). For instance, when making requests, Chinese and English speakers follow different modes of thinking to organize their presentation. In making a request, a Chinese tends to employ the "presenting + requesting" structural pattern, in which the request is deferred until sufficient background of it has been presented. On the contrary, an English-speaker is more likely to use the "requesting + presenting" structural pattern. In other words, he makes the request in explicit terms first, and gives reasons in the end if necessary.

Therefore, in cross-cultural interaction, participants should make adaptation to this difference and choose the proper linguistic forms accordingly. If not, the communicative aim may not be obtained but misunderstandings and irritation may be caused.

4.2.2 Neglect of Adaptation to the Social Settings

According to Verschueren, "the social dimensions of variability with which linguistic choice-making is inter-adaptable include social class, race, nationality, linguistic group, religion, age, level of education, profession, gender and so on" (Verschueren, 2000:92). When people communicate, all the factors listed above have to be taken into account in order to ensure the success of communication. Both parties of communication, i.e. utterers and interpreters, have to make adaptation to these factors listed above, otherwise pragmatic failure may arise. Further elaborations on these factors will be given below in detail.

The Language User's Social Class

Interlocutors' social class plays an important role in their linguistic choice when

they communicate. Both the utterer and the interpreter's linguistic choices are affected by his/her social class. In communication, both parties should pay attention to each other's social class and accordingly make adaptation to each other's social class. If they fail to do so, pragmatic failure may find its way.

Let's look at Question No.1 and No. 31 in Questionnaire Qne

1. In London, you want to go to Health Airport in taxi, you say to the taxi man

    A) "Excuse me, would you possibly take me to Health Airport?"

    B) "Excuse me, would you mind taking me to Health Airport?"

    C) "Health Airport, please."

    D) "Would you please take me to Health airport?"

31. You want to borrow a magazine from one of your closest friends. You say:

    "Would you mind if I borrowed this?" (   )

For Question No.1, the rate of failure is 25.1 %.Some of the subjects choose the wrong choice such as "Excuse me, would you mind taking me to Health Airport please?" Students are told in class that they should be polite when speaking to foreigners to display the merits of our Chinese people. But in this situation, the taxi man may feel uncomfortable and confused at the formal request. Subjects should notice that they are speaking to a taxi driver, and should have made proper adaptation and chosen a less formal form.

The request in No.31 is very polite and formal. However, because of the different social status and the relationship between the speaker and the listener, the request in No.31 is inappropriate.

Generally speaking, if interlocutors are in a close relationship or of similar social position, they will choose a less formal and more direct linguistic forms, otherwise, they will choose more formal and less direct ones. If people fail to realize that different social positions require different linguistic choices, it is possible that they could not get themselves fully understood and pragmatic failure may occur.

The Language User's Race or Ethnicity

In verbal communication, race is another important factor that interlocutors should take into account. When two people of different races communicate, both of

them should try to avoid talking about racial differences between them. In other words, they should make adaptation to their racial differences.

As we all know, in America, Black English and Standard English are different in many ways, such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and discourse. Therefore, in communication, the utterer should pay attention to the interpreter's race and make appropriate linguistic choices. In the same way, the interpreter should also adapt to the utterer's race. If either party fails to do so, pragmatic failure will arise and communication may break down. For example,

(4) (In an American class, a white teacher asks a black boy to answer a question. The following is their dialogue.)

Teacher: James, what does this word say?

James: I don't know. ↗

Teacher: Well, if you don't want to try, someone else will. Freddy ?

(Gumperz, 2001:192)

In Black English, if "I don't know" is uttered in a rising tone, it dose not take its literal meaning, on the contrary, it means "I need some encouragement" (Gumperz,2001:192). In this example, the black boy wants his teacher to encourage him, whereas the teacher fails to adapt to his race and this feature of Black English's intonation. Thus his teacher misunderstands the boy's answer as a refusal to answer the question. In other words, the boy fails to achieve his communicative purpose. Here, the teacher should make adaptation to the Black English's intonation and interpret the boy's answer as a request for encouragement rather than a refusal. Therefore, pragmatic failure arises.

The Social Relationship with the Interpreter

The relationship between interlocutors is very important in their production and interpretation of utterances in communication. Different social relationships between interlocutors require different linguistic forms.

Suppose, several people are chatting in a room, on a hot and stuffy day and, everyone thinks it desirable if someone will open the window. When making the request, the speaker will choose the proper utterance according to his relationship

with the hearer. If it is the father who speaks to his son, he may naturally use the imperative tone and it may be like this, "Jingjing, open the window!" If it is the son who speaks, the utterance will probably be, "Dad, please open the window, OK?" Between friends, it would be, "Could you please open the window?" If the speaker is a guest who is not familiar with the host, he may make the request implicitly, "Well, it is very hot in the room, isn't it?"

From the simple example above, we can see that social relationship has a great influence on choice-making in communication. Therefore, the utterer must choose the proper linguistic form so as to make adaptation to his social relationship with the interpreter. Otherwise, communication may break down and his communicative aim will not be achieved.

Let's look at the flowing example:

(5) (A and B are close friends. A asks B for help)

A: Could you possibly help me with the luggage?

B: (Angry) ⋯

(He Ziran.1997:207)

In this example, A fails to reach his communicative aim because he does not adapt to the close relationship he has with the B.

In the meantime, we should attach attention to one point that in Chinese culture the relationship between friends is much more informal than similar western relationships. Linell Davis (2001:103) notes that in Western culture such as in America, people often apologize to their friends for such minor inconveniences as telephoning late at night or asking for some special help. Even in close friendships American use such polite forms as "could you ⋯" and "would you mind ⋯".

Besides the factors mentioned above, there are some other social factors that influence the choice-making of the interlocutors in the production and understanding of utterances in communication. For instance, the old are not willing to admit that they are old especially in western culture. In conversations, they are reluctant to talk about such topics as death and disease, and they do not like others to address them with the terms which indicate they are old. Therefore, when communicating with old

people, the utterer should pay much attention to these factors and adapt to them by choosing the proper topics and the proper address forms.

What's more, people's religious belief can also have an influence on language users' choice-making. Qian Guanlian (2002:202) notes that before 1949, in the market, if a person pointed at a Buddha and said,"把这个东西买回去",a Buddhist who heard this would be very angry and corrected him by saying"你应该说‘把菩萨请回去’". In communication if the utterer fails to adapt to the religious belief of the interpreter, he will sound blunt or irritate the interpreter and cause the communication to break down.

4.3 Neglect of Adaptation to Mental World

According to Verschueren (2000:87), "verbal communication is no doubt communication from mind to mind". That is why figure 2.1 has at its base the utterer's and interpreter's 'perspective' on a mental, social and physical 'reality'. Aspects of physical, social, and mental reality get 'activated' by the utterer and the interpreter in their respective choice-making practices, and tell us how they become part of language use as elements with which the making of choices is inter-adaptable.

The speaker's personality traits, emotions, beliefs, desires or wishes can influence the way he makes a choice. Moreover, when making a linguistic choice, the utterer has to assess the mental world of the interpreter. Therefore, the judgments of the interpreter's personality traits, emotional involvement, patterns of beliefs, wishes and desires, motivations and intentions may all influence the linguistic choices the speaker will make (Verschueren:89). All these aspects of the speaker's and the hearer's mental world play an important part in producing and understanding utterances. Both speaker and hearer should make adaptation to each other's mental world. If either part of them fails to do so, i.e. if the utterer fails to adapt to the mental world of the interpreter, or the interpreter fails to make adaptation to the utterer's mental world, then pragmatic failure will occur. Verschueren has listed several factors of the metal world that will influence the speaker when he/she produces an utterance.

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4.3.1 Neglect of Adaptation to the Expectations of Language User

Indirect speech is very common in communication, and there are often implicatures in the utterance. So when the speaker performs an indirect speech, and if the listener couldn't figure out his real intention, pragmatic failure may occur. Sometimes, one may intentionally misinterpret the other's intention.

The following example quoted from Discourse Strategies (Gumperz, 2001) can illustrate the importance of realizing the other's expectation.

(6)　A black postgraduate student goes to interview a black housewife. After he knocks at the door, the host opens the door and says to him smilingly. The following is their dialogue.

Husband: So y're gonna check out ma ol lady, hah?

Interviewer: Ah, no, I only come to get some information. They called from the office.

Husband: (smile disappear)…

(Gumperz, 2001:173)

In this example, the husband wants to make sure whether the black student is a member of their in-group by using Black English. At that time, the postgraduate student is thinking about the formal training of doing a normal interview, so he uses the formal utterance of an interview and ignores the style of the husband. As a result, the interview was ill at ease and unsuccessful. After deep thought about it, the student should have answered "Yea, I'm a git some info" to show that he is familiar with the black custom. He fails to make adaptation to the speaker's expectations and an unsuccessful interview results. Question No.15 of the questionnaire will give us more insight.

15. Professor. Smith says to you in a seminar: "You might be interested in having a look at Bloom's article on this." Then you will take it as

A) a suggestion　　B) a request　　　　C)an assignment.

D) an indirect command and you may ask: "Do you want me to read that for

the next essay?"

For this question, most students choose A) and B) only 35 out of 231, at the rate of 15.2%, choose the right answer C). The Professor keeps to the fairly common British convention of avoiding explicit directives. But it may confuse a lot of our Chinese students. We may interpret it as an optional possibility. So this is an example of failure to make adaptation both to the speaker's expectations and to the social conventions of the English language and society.

4.3.2 Neglect of Adaptation to the Interpreter's Personality

Personality is a very important factor in communication, especially between people who have known each other. People are relatively tolerant of strangers, while critical to those who have known them. So people should choose the right linguistic forms and intonation, taking the listeners' personality into consideration. Otherwise, he may make inappropriate choices by using offensive linguistic forms, and bring about communication breakdown. The following example is a convincing one.

In *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Daiyu is a beautiful girl, but she is very narrow-minded. She is much too sensitive to what others say and thus always gets hurt by others' words. Nearly all the people know this, so they are very cautious in choosing words when speaking to Daiyu. However, sometimes some of them fail to do so, and make her feel unhappy and hurt.

(7)　周瑞家的进来笑道："林姑娘，姨太太着我送花儿与姑娘戴来了。"

　　Mrs. Zhou greeted her with a smile as she entered and said, "Madam Xue asked me to bring you these flowers to wear."

　　黛玉只看了一看，便问道："还是单送我一人的，还是别的姑娘们都有呢？"

　　Daiyu glanced briefly at them, "Am I the only one getting these?" she asked. "Or have the other girls been given some too?"

　　周瑞家的道："各位都有了，这两枝是姑娘的了。"

　　"Each of the young ladies has some. These two are for you, Miss."

黛玉冷笑道："我就知道，别人不挑剩下的也不给我。"

"I might have known." Daiyu smiled bitterly. "I wouldn't get mine till the others had taken their pick."

周瑞家的听了，一声儿也不言语。

Mrs.Zhou had nothing to say to this.

(曹雪芹，高鄂，1987: 53　Yang Hsien-yi, Gladys Yang,1987:104)

In this example, no other ladies pay much attention to the flowers, and Dai-yu does not care about the delicacy of the flower. What she minds is that whether she has been looked down upon. Since Mrs. Zhou is a servant, she should be careful when speaking to her masters and should have made adaptation to Daiyu's personality and answered in another way rather than "各位都有了，这两枝是姑娘的" which sounds to Daiyu that "Others have taken theirs and these last two that no other likes are for you". Mrs Zhou should have been careful, but she fails to make the adaptation and chooses an inappropriate answer which makes Daiyu feel unfairly treated. As a result Daiyu feels greatly hurt and Mrs. Zhou herself feels embarrassed.

Here is another example: One day John played a joke on one of his friends who is a kind of introvert person, but his friend got angry and said: "Do not make such kind of joke on me; I don't like it." In this example, because John's friend is the type of person who tends to take everything seriously, he does not like others to play jokes on him. In this situation, John should have tried to adapt to his friend's personality traits and made appropriate linguistic choices.

So, the interpreter's personality traits may be the first important factor to influence the linguistic choices of the utterer. Verschueren suggests that the utterer make adaptation to the personality traits of the interpreter by choosing the proper linguistic forms, no matter oral or written. If he/she fails to do so, communication will break down, and thus pragmatic failure will arise.

4.3.3 Neglect of Adaptation to the Interpreter's Social System

Value systems are very important in determining a person's communicative

pattern, and a lot of research has been done in this area, especially in cross-cultural communication. Values are, according to Rokeach (1973), "a learned organization of rules for making choices and for resolving conflicts." However, different people may have different belief or value systems. In order to ensure the success of communication, we should first get to know the interpreter's beliefs, and make adaptation accordingly. Otherwise, pragmatic failure will produce.

The westerners do not want the others to tell them what they should do or what they should not. In western cultures, people seldom talk about such personal matters as age, marital status, and income. However, in China, collectivism is valued, and people like to take a "we" attitude. In communication, people always seek harmonious relationship with each other and attach great importance to mutual care. Chinese people, especially the elder, like to ask about personal matters and make direct comment on them or to give direct advice to friends, to show one's concern and care for the others. If people are not well aware of the differences, a lot of pragmatic failures may occur.

In the questionnaire, several aspects of value systems are touched upon in questions No.2, 16, 25, 28, 32, 35. The influence of value system on the proper linguistic-choice will be illustrated in several examples.

   2. Prof. Smith has just given a lively lecture on language teaching, which last two hours. And you say to him in appreciation.

   A) You've given a wonderful speech.

   B) Prof. Smith, your lecture was such an attractive one that I'd like to listen to you for another two hours.

   C) I must say, I really appreciate your talk this morning, Prof. Smith.

   D) What an excellent lecture you've given, Prof. Smith.

Only 42 students, 18.2% of the whole 231 students, choose the right answer C). In academic comment, the westerners are used to be practical and realistic. They wouldn't like to be flattered. Many students choose A, B, and D, all of which contain subjective exaggerated comments, so they are not suitable to show one's appreciation of a foreigner.

16. There is a tourist group after lunch. The rain has just stopped.

Elderly English tourist: "I'm going out for a walk around the street."

Tourist guide:

A) Oh, no. You are old. You must have a rest.

B) Fine. See you later, Take care.

C) You're old. You'd better go with some else.

D) Do you want me to go with you?

40.6% of the students fail to choose the appropriate answer. Many students choose the wrong answer such as A) "Oh, no. You are old. You must have a rest." and B) "Fine. See you later, Take care."

Old people are respected in China, and people would like to show their care of the others by giving suggestions, such as choices A) and B). However, no one would like to be considered old in western countries for it stands for being useless. As a result, westerners could not possibly accept this answer pleasantly, and as a tourist, he/she may probably be annoyed by the service of the guide. The guide fails to make adaptation to the tourist's value system, and his intention will probably be misunderstood because he chooses the wrong way.

In the Western countries, where individualism is highly valued, people pay great attention to their personal privacy, so people seldom begin a conversation with some personal matters, such as age, marital status and their incomes. In China, however, it is a common practice to begin a conversation with the above topics. It is therefore suggested that when communicating with the westerners, the Chinese should try to avoid talking about this. Otherwise, pragmatic failure will arise. For example,

(8) (One day, a Chinese student talks with an American teacher when they are having a break.)

Chinese student: How many children do you have? Where is your wife working?

American teacher: It's my own business.

In this example, the Chinese student fails to take the American teacher's beliefs into account, therefore, pragmatic failure arises. The Chinese student should adapt to this when he communicates with the American teacher.

4.4 Neglect of Adaptation to the Linguistic Reality

In communication, the utterer should not only adapt to contextual correlates, but also to linguistic reality as well. If he communicates in English, he should conform to the English ones. Furthermore, there are many differences between Chinese and English. Thus, in cross-cultural verbal communication, both the utterer and interpreter should pay much attention to these differences and properly adapt to them so as to keep the communication developing smoothly. Otherwise, there will occur irritations between the interlocutors and pragmatic failure will arise. Take a communication between a Chinese and an English-speaker for example, the utterer should adapt to Chinese or English reality. That is to say, he should adapt to the rules guiding the appropriate use of Chinese or English. If both of the users act according to their own rule, pragmatic failure will probably occur.

4.4.1 Neglect of Adaptation to the Linguistic Reality in Vocabulary

English and Chinese belong to two language systems. Words or terms of the two languages have little similarity except for loan words or a few onomatopoeias. Most words or terms are culturally loaded. Though some words have similar denotative meanings in these two languages, they have different associative meanings, that is, different connotative meanings, emotional meanings and collocative meanings.

Wan Shaohua (2001:25) notes when a native English-speaker says "the authorities of the government" or "the authorities of school", he does not attach any prerogative sense to the word, but the Chinese equivalence "当局" is usually used as a derogatory word. On the other hand, the Chinese "宣传" has a positive meaning while the English equivalence "propaganda" reveals a derogative meaning. Besides these, some other English terms such as "idealism", "ambitious" and "metaphysics" have positive or at least neutral connotations while their respective counterparts "唯心主

义", "野心勃勃的", "形而上学" carry derogative or negative connotations in Chinese culture. Moreover, some words that have same denotative meanings express different emotional meanings, and arouse different emotions. For example, the Chinese term "胖" makes Chinese people think of "cushy job" or other rare opportunity, but its English counterpart "fat" means something disgusting, something to be thrown away. Besides the fact that equivalent words in two languages have different associative meanings, there is another point worthy of attention. That is some words appear to refer to the same object or concept, but actually they refer differently in these two languages.

Deng Yanchang (1989) points out that words or terms in one language do not have the same meaning when translated into another. Though some words have similar denotative meanings in two languages, they may have different connotative meanings, emotional meanings. They may differ considerably in secondary or additional meanings. Considering the 26th statement in the Questionnaire:

26. Ron won 100-meter race, Zhang Hua says to him, "You are a lucky dog."(　)

According to the statistics, only 49 out of the 231 subjects choose the right answer, at a rate of 21.2%. 78.2% of them fail to realize that it is an appropriate compliment. This is because of the different connotations of the word "dog", which stands for the most faithful friend of human beings in the western English–speaking countries, while in China, only a kind of humble and insignificant animal. In the west dog is often raised as a pet, especially as a companion of the lonely old people, so it is doted on a lot and even considered as a member of the family. In the English idioms, the word "dog" is often used to describe the action of a person without any negative implication, such as "You are a lucky dog", "Every dog has his day", and "Old dog will not learn new tricks." It is also used to make up phrases as dig dog, clever dog, work like a dog, sea dog. Compared with the word "dog" in English, its translation in Chinese "狗" is not so lucky, which is often used to form phrases of negative

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meaning, for example, 狐朋狗友 (a gang of scoundrel), 狗急跳墙 (a cornered beast will do something desperate), 狼心狗肺 (cruel and unscrupulous). This is because dog was and is considered as a tool to protect the house in China. Although, in recent years, more and more dogs are raised as pets, the negative image of dog is deeply rooted in the mind of Chinese people.

Therefore, having not realized the connotation of the word, many students won't consider "You are a lucky dog" as a compliment, whereas some of them may even consider it as an insult. So, when students are not told about the implications of the word "dog", they will probably consider "You are a lucky dog" as an improper compliment.

There is another fact that native English speakers may have developing Asian areas of Korea, Singapore, Hongkong, and Taiwan called "the four Asain tigers" instead of "the four Asain dragons". Tiger often stands for cruelty and horror in Chinese culture. However, it is the symbol of strength and courage in English.

Another example may illustrate this, such as "intellectual". The explanations of 'intellectual' in all English-Chinese dictionaries are '知识分子' .Yet, there are important differences in what 知识分子 and intellectual mean in their perspective cultures. In China, the term 知识分子 generally includes college teachers, college students, and such people as doctors, engineers, interpreters—people who have had a college education—and middle school teachers. In the U.S.A. and Europe, however, intellectuals would include only people of high academic status such as college professors, but not ordinary college students. So the term covers a much smaller range of people. And the term is not always complimentary in the U.S.A.

Number is also a term that has different connotations in different cultures. Number 13 is regarded as evil, misfortune in western culture, so people there don't like it and tries to avoid using it, even there is not the 13th floor in a building. But in China, people have no disgust for it.

4.4.2 Neglect of Adaptation at Phrase and Sentence Level

Syntax is the study of the rules governing how words and phrases are put together to form sentences in a language. The choice of words and sentence both belong to the syntactic field. Brogger notes, "The choice of certain formal structures cannot be kept distinct from the sociocultural design that they are made to serve"(qtd in.Wang Haiying,2001). Several expressions in English have their seemingly equivalents in Chinese, such as Never mind, That's all right, and their Chinese translation 没关系, and of course and 当然了. However, they are used differently and have different implications. Let's look at question No.5 and No.7 of the questionnaire:

5. One day when an American lady accidentally bumped into you,

Lady: I'm terribly sorry.　You:

A) It doesn't matter.　　　B) I don't mind.

C) That's right.　　　　　D) Don't worry

7. Mr. Timms has arrived for a meeting, which, unfortunately, has been canceled.

Mrs. Banks: I'm terribly sorry about not letting you know sooner, Mr.Timms, but unfortunately, it was canceled at the last minute and there simply wasn't enough time to inform everyone.

Mr. Timms:

A) Oh, don't let it worry you, Mr. Banks, I quite understand.

B) Oh, that's ok, Mrs. Banks, I understand.

C) Oh, it doesn't matter, Mrs. Banks.

D) Oh, don't worry about it, Mrs. Banks.

Among the 231 students, only 93, at the rate of 40.3%, choose the right answer for question No.5; only 68 at the rate of 30.7%, make the right choice for No.7. Responses to apology in Chinese can be 没关系，别介意，我不介意, the literal translation of which may be "I don't mind", "Don't worry." While in English, the response to apology is "Never mind", "It doesn't matter", "That's all right". The seemingly equivalents have different functions from each other.

Question No.4 in the Questionnaire One reflects another example that English learners fail to make adaptation to the function of the English sentence.

4. If someone gives directions in English so quickly that you don't understand,

You might respond

A) "Excuse me, could you repeat that a little more slowly?"

B) "What?"

C) "Could you repeat that?"

D) Try to repeat the directions to the person

This is a request, and many of the students choose B. we can see that students are mislead by the Chinese 什么. In Chinese, "什么" is the most common request for repetition, regardless of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. However, in English, what sounds like an order or imposition rather than a request, and it sounds rude and abrupt.

4.5 Summary

To sum up, this chapter has mainly given a relatively comprehensive explanation of the cause of pragmatic failure on the basis of Verschueren's Adaptation Theory. By citing a lot of examples in daily communication including verbal communication and nonverbal communication, it has demonstrated that the main cause of pragmatic failure is that in the course of communication either the speaker or the hearer fails to adapt language or behavior to the communicative context, i.e. the physical world language users, the social world, the mental world and the linguistic reality.

Chapter Five Implications and Suggestions

As is discussed in Chapter Four, Pragmatic failure is caused either by the speaker's inappropriate utterances or the hearer's misunderstanding resulting from their failures to make adaptation to ingredients of the communicative context and certain linguistic realities. So far, there is no systematic way of developing students' cross-cultural communicative competence, but some possible solutions could be worked out. This chapter would like to make some tentative suggestions on the ways to enhance students' cross-cultural communicative competence. The success of communication requires the joint efforts of both the language learners and language teachers. The language users should take all the ingredients of communicative context into account and the language teachers should try to cultivate the students' cultural awareness in their language teaching.

5.1 Measures Taken by Language Learners

In verbal communication, choice making is a complicated process because it is determined by various factors that the language users should adapt to. Thus, language users i.e. utterer or speaker, interpreter or hearer should consciously make appropriate adaptation and increase their pragmatic empathy, i.e. the ability to "put oneself in others' shoes", including the speaker's intention and effort to appropriately express oneself or make himself understood and the listener's effort to correctly understand what the speaker says (He Ziran, 1991:11-14).

In communication, both utterer and interpreter ought to put themselves into the other's shoes. That means both of them should be considerate towards each other. When utterer makes linguistic choices, i.e. produce utterances, he should consider all the factors about the interpreter; similarly, when interpreter understands utterances, he should take utterer's factor into consideration. Accordingly, when a Chinese make

adaptation to the American value system, the American should also make adaptation to the Chinese value system. In other words, adaptation in real communication is a two-way process, requiring the conscious efforts from both the utterer and the interpreter. Only in this way can successful communication be guaranteed.

In cross-cultural communication, there is much for language users to do to keep the communication developing successfully. Language users should consider and make adaptation not only to the personality, emotion, intention, religion, age, education, gender but also to other factors such as different value system, different communicative style and linguistic realities.

Sitaram and Haapanen (1979, qtd. in Borden, 1991:102) notes that to make it possible to communicate successfully across cultures, there are two rules that language users must follow. The first one is that each participant should understand the other's values. That understanding should precede any attempts to communicate inter-culturally. The second rule is that each should adapt his or her communication to the other's values. Adaptation implies respect for the other's value system. Without such respect one cannot adapt his or her communicative behavior to the other system. Adaptation should be an on-going act. A person should know the art of constant adaptation to other cultures. Understanding each culture's values and adaptation to each other's value systems are the key to successful communication across cultures.

5.2 Measures Taken in Foreign Language Teaching

It is language users' unconscious failure to make proper adaptation that causes pragmatic failure. Sometimes they know they should adapt to some factors but fail to do so. While sometimes they do not know what they should adapt to and fail to especially in cross-cultural communication. Therefore, it is of great importance to increase students' awareness to make adaptation and let them know more about different linguistic norms, different culture values and different culture norms in foreign language teaching. Moreover, developing students' pragmatic competence can help to make it clear to students what they should adapt to, and therefore make it

easier for students to make conscious adaptation in communication. The following are some measures.

5.2.1 Arousing Students' Cross-cultural Awareness

Culture awareness is the term used to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behavior on language use and communication, which indicates that foreign language learners have a good command of cultural knowledge of the target language, a strong competence of adjustment and communication. In addition, they can think and react in the way as native speakers of that language do (Zhang Xiuqing, 2004: 51-52).Cultural awareness makes people know that they cannot only focus on their native culture or helps people realize their own misconstrued perceptions of an interaction with people from other cultures. If people have some cultural awareness, when they come across some phenomena and behavior they cannot explain, they can deal with the situations successfully through their own understanding.

To cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness actually is to instruct students the cultural similarities and differences. It is not difficult for students to grasp the general but due to the lack of knowledge about the differences, they are likely to make some mistakes—transfer culture. So when we instruct the cultural similarities, what we need is not to teach something new, but to stimulate and remind learners of something they have known. Cultural differences will remain unknown if we do not encounter or discover them. Without being aware of them, students will speak and behave according to their own cultural rules taking granted that all people are the same in a certain situation.

Means of Arousing Cultural Awareness

The importance of cultural awareness has been explained in the above section. However, people may still feel confused as to how to raise cultural awareness. The American scholar Patrick R. Moran (2004) proposes the key concept of "cultural experience" Moran (ibid.:13) defines "cultural experience" as the encounter with another way of life. The author of this thesis holds the view that it is possible to raise

cultural awareness, and "cultural experience" is an efficient way to achieve the goal. In the following, the author divides "cultural experience" into direct engagement and indirect engagement and tries to suggest some revealing approaches to raising cultural awareness.

(I)Direct Engagement

Direct engagement of the culture refers to the immediate experience of the culture, such as face-to-face interaction, on-line chatting, traveling, and so on.

(i)Face-to-Face Interaction

Face-to-face interaction is very important in raising cultural awareness. In face-to-face interaction with people from other cultures, people should try to immerse themselves into another culture and try to understand other people. Nowadays, in most universities in China, foreign teachers are available for English majors. However, there are few chances for English majors to communicate with native speakers.

In order to raise cultural awareness, students should take part in a lot of meaningful social activities, for example, going to the English corner to practice with foreigners, taking on the volunteers for the international conferences, undertaking the guide to the native tourists and so on. In addition, native informants can be valuable resources to the classroom teachers. If possible, native speakers should be invited to deliver lectures and hold face-to-face discussions with students, which would be beneficial for raising learners' cultural awareness.

(ii) On-Line Chatting

As Zhang Weiyou (2004:307) puts it: "The influence of the Internet is being felt in more and more areas and English as a foreign language (EFL) is greatly influenced by the Internet partly because the major part of the Internet is in English." Therefore, students should be encouraged to use the Internet.

Chatting is one of the most popular activities on the Internet and involves people from all walks of life and of all ages coming together in areas where they can join in a variety of topics that they are interested in with people from all around the world (Zhang Weiyou, 2004:311). Chatting with foreign friends on the Internet, students can improve their written English and get some information about the culture directly

from native speakers.

Moreover, students can communicate with foreign electronic pen friends through the Internet. Two students from different countries can arrange to send e-mail regularly to each other. On-line chatting, reading and writing e-mail in English are interactive and challenging activities, which are enjoyed by most students. Furthermore, if students come across some difficulties and problems, they can ask the experts on the Internet directly. The students can be sure that someone out there knows all about any field they may be interested in and, even better, is willing to share his or her knowledge with them.

(iii)Traveling

Conditions permitting, traveling to the host country is the best way to experience the culture directly. Through traveling, people can visit native speakers and communicate with people from different cultures to get a sense of culture. This experience can broaden people's mind and leave very deep impressions.

(II)Indirect Engagement

Indirect engagement of the culture refers to the secondhand experience of the culture, such as learning from textbooks, courses, audio-visual presentation, reading Net Surfing and so on.

(i) Learning from Textbooks and Courses

Textbook is one of the major functioning carriers of the target culture in cross-cultural communication. For most Chinese students, they are used to and also good at learning from textbooks. Through textbooks, students can learn about different cultures and expose themselves to differences. Now that textbooks are such important sources, it is necessary to write textbooks carefully. More information on customs, habits and behavioral patterns of English native speakers should be included in the textbooks. Furthermore, the textbooks should include more authentic texts and situational conversations, which can help students to acquire the culture of the target language.

Moreover, if conditions permit, a course of cross-cultural knowledge can be established. Through the course, students can learn general knowledge about different

cultures and the specific knowledge about the target culture systematically. In the course, it is better for teachers to "story" their own language-and-culture learning experiences. Teachers' personal narratives, stories, and anecdotes are very effective and can provide students with vivid descriptions, which can raise learners' interest in cultural learning.

(ii)Audio-Visual Presentation

Audio-visual presentation refers to the practice of presenting learners with intercultural knowledge by means of tapes, videotapes, movies, broadcasts, etc. (Chen Zhian et al., 2005:231). Nowadays, with the development of science and technology, more and more schools and universities are equipped with many advanced audio-visual resources. Therefore, if conditions permit, teachers can use video films and English instruction films, and ask students to observe cultural traits and differences while watching.

Videos are very useful materials for introducing the target culture to students. For example, a video called "*Go Through America*" is very much welcomed by many students, because it presents a series of dramas about some Chinese students who visit many American cities, mountains and rivers, and famous universities all over the US. Students can indirectly experience everyday life in the U.S. through the video. The author also has such an experience and still remembers a movie presented by the teacher of the course of English listening. The name of the movie is "*Four Weddings and a Funeral*". The teacher showed us the movie in the class and asked us to observe the differences of wedding and funeral ceremonies between western countries and China. After watching it, she asked us to discuss in groups and exchange ideas about the topic. Thus, through the careful observation and the discussion activity, we experienced the different cultures and discovered many differences of wedding and funeral ceremonies between western countries and China. Besides movies, situational comedies can also be used as a rich source of speech act data, because they offer rich, varied and contextualized models.

In short, audio-visual presentation is a good way to introduce the culture. And after watching and listening, it is better for teachers to arrange some follow-up

activities, such as discussions, debates, role-plays, games and so on. There is no doubt that students would like these kinds of activity and become very interested in the class.

(iii)Reading and Net Surfing

Apart from textbooks, students can also get information about cultures from other extra curriculum books, magazines, newspapers and so on. Readings can provide students with background information about the target culture. Life styles, values, traditions of a society are often reflected in the literature. Through reading these works, students can absorb information about the target culture and gradually raise cultural awareness.

Therefore, students should be encouraged to read authentic materials, such as authentic newspapers, advertisements, journals, short stories, novels, plays and other types of literary works.

Moreover, students can also surf the Net and skim for information. Surfing the Net means looking at a variety of things casually while browsing the Internet, which is like the situation when people go to a book store or the library and look around causally (Zhang Weiyou, 2004:307).Through surfing the Net, students can get much information and experience the target culture indirectly.

In short, the author holds the view that cultural experience is an effective way to raise cultural awareness. Only through raising awareness of cultural factors can learners perceive differences between the target culture and their own when they are involved in communication across cultures. The cultivation of cultural awareness is mainly achieved through culture learning.

5.2.2 Enhancing Students' Awareness of Language Use

Pragmatics studies the relationship between language and context. Just as Stalnaker (1972, quoted in Ge Lingling, 2002:145) puts it, "Pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed." Language is not an abstract or a static system. In other words, people use language in contexts, in

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dynamic real-life situations. What people express and understand in communication must be achieved in an accompanying environment and be restricted or regulated by a certain context.

Since communication is always carried out in a certain context, it is unavoidably influenced and constrained by context. Whether communication is successful or not depends on whether communicators make proper adaptation to contextual factors. Any change of any contextual factor may bring about changes in appropriateness.

For example, a native speaker of English would be unlikely to invite a superior to dinner by saying "Hey, d'you fancy a bite to eat?" since such language would be inappropriate for their social relationship. Similarly he would be unlikely to say "I was wondering if you would be interested in partaking of a hamburger" to his best friend.

"The context of setting makes a radical difference in people's understanding of a word" (1995:1) E.A. Nida, an American linguist once notes. Take the sentence "Is that your car?" for example. It can be understood as the following in different contexts.

(a)What a beautiful car you have!

(b)How shabby your car is!

(c)Would you please drive your car away?

(d)I was wondering if you could give me a lift.

<div align="right">(He Zhaoxiong, 2000:17)</div>

Criper and Widdowson (1975:147) point out that "In foreign language teaching the tendency is to assume an equation between linguistic form and communicative function. Learners are commonly misled into thinking that commands are uniquely associated with imperative sentences and questions with interrogative sentences". However, in actual communication, commands and request are not only expressed by imperative sentences, and interrogative sentences are not only used to ask questions as shown above.

Therefore, in foreign language teaching, context in which language is used should be paid much attention to. Teachers should teach not only the general rules of

the language, but also the pragmatic rules of using the language to enable students to know the contextual factors they should adapt to in communication and improve their pragmatic competence. Pragmatic failure may occur when speakers violate pragmatic principles. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to have the students understand certain knowledge about those principles, among which, cooperative principle (CP) and politeness principle (PP) are applicable and have drawn more attention from linguists and teachers.

5.2.3 Introducing CP and PP in ELT

In order to achieve the goal of effective and harmonious communication the participants should abide by the maxims of CP and PP. The knowledge of these maxims may help students to speak appropriately and politely in cross-cultural communication. As Yule (2000:37) remarks, "It is important to recognize these maxims as unstated assumptions we have in conversations. We assume that people are normally going to provide an appropriate amount of information....We assume that they are telling the truth, being relevant, and trying to be as clear as they can." Leech proposed Politeness Principle (PP), an important pragmatic principle. He (Leech, 1983:32) categorizes the PP into six maxims, each maxim being made up of two sub-maxims as detailed below:

(I)TACT MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)

(a)Minimize cost to other   (b) Maximize benefit to other

(II)GENEROSITY MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)

(a)Minimize benefit to self   (b) Maximize cost to self

(III)APPROBATION MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)

(a)Minimize dispraise of other   (b) Maximize praise of other

(IV)MODESTY MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)

(a)Minimize praise of self   (b) Maximize dispraise of self

(V)AGREEMENT MAXIM (in assertives)

(a)Minimize disagreement between self and other

(b)Maximize agreement between self and other

(VI)SYMPATHY MAXIM (in assertives)

(a)Minimize antipathy between self and other

(b)Maximize synpathy between self and other

Another important pragmatic principle is Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP).

All the members of many societies appreciate politeness regardless of social status or age. By now, there have been lots of linguists taking interests in the studies on politeness. House and Kasper remark that politeness markers are an integral part of the foreign cultural system (Thomas, 1983:99). Different cultures arrange the relative values of cooperation and politeness principles in different orders. As Brown and Levinson put it, the application of the principle differs systematically across cultures (Brown & Levinson, 1978:283). This accounts for why there often exists pragmatic failure when Chinese students communicate with the native English speakers. So, it is necessary to further study the differences in the application of CP and PP between Chinese and American cultures. Therefore teachers should point out these differences . to students.

Take the act of making a compliment for example. When being complimented, an American would readily accept the compliment by saying something like "Thank you" to show his appreciation of the praise, but a Chinese would try to deny the truth of the compliment. They both are being modest and they both think they are behaving properly.

Yet in cross-cultural communication, neither of them would think the other is polite, unless they are acquainted with the other culture.

From their different reactions to a complement, we can find two notable differences in the application of the CP and PP by native speakers of Chinese and native speakers of English. Just as Li and Chen note that there are two notable disparities when Chinese native speakers and English native speakers applying the CP and PP: First, Chinese native speakers would rather observe Modesty Maxim than Quality Maxim, but English native speakers prefer to follow the Quality Maxim in the same circumstance. Second, Chinese native speakers would observe the Modesty

Maxim at the cost of Agreement Maxim, whereas English native speakers prefer Agreement Maxim in the same situation (Li and Chen,1997:212). It is advisable for teachers to explain these differences to students so that they can speak properly and politely in cross-cultural communication.

5.2.4 Bettering Teaching Methods

Context is a key notion in pragmatics as well as in communicative English language teaching. We all know that textbooks only provide the basic contents and teaching goals which teachers are supposed to fulfill. The books can not offer everything, so it is the task of the teachers to give the linguistic sense. Thus, in teaching English the teachers should teach not only the grammar of linguistic items, but also their potential force matched for different contexts.

Sometimes, some linguistic items can be taught by creating situations. Ma Zhenmin proposes several methods, including chain stories. For instance, when teaching the language point "no more than", the teacher may use two books and ask the students to guess the prices, and he or she will bring about a pen and ask the other students to guess its price. Then he or she will say: "it is no cheaper than the thick book." And the teacher asks the students what this means. After some attempts by the students, the teacher gives the right one which may have been said by one of the students. Then the other students are required to practice. What is more important is that the teacher should impose on students the contextual meaning, and context is dynamic, just as Thomas says: "meaning is in interaction". Therefore the students should learn to seek meaning in context, both textual and situational.

Also the teachers should always remind the students of the fact that English –speaking people have a different value system such as the following content including Individualism versus Collectivism, Equality versus Hierarchy, Directness versus indirectness, Self-reliance versus Dependence and so on.

(i) Individualism Versus Collectivism

The most outstanding difference between American and Chinese value systems is

that between individualism and collectivism. The relative importance placed on the individual and the collective obviously influences the way people interact.

Generally speaking, in individualistic cultures, people are more self-oriented and the concepts such as "I", independence and self-reliance are emphasized, whereas in collectivist cultures, they are more group-oriented and the concepts such as "We", interdependence, duties, obligations, needs, and views of in-groups are valued. Individual goals are more important in individualistic societies than in collectivist societies while belonging to groups is emphasized more in collectivist societies than in individualistic societies.

Individualism is one of the cultural values highly treasured in American culture. Every individual has the right to pursue self-interest, self-expression, and self-freedom. For American people, this value may have to do with the emancipation of the man from the yokes of the church on the European continent, and with the opening up of the New World on the other side of the Atlantic. This was a process full of danger that laid high value on individual's achievement and self-reliance.

In contrast, because of the long history of feudalism and strong belief in harmony, Chinese people have never fully realized the value of man as an individual. They tend to perceive oneself as an integral part of the whole (quoted from Jia Yuxin, 1997:61). Individual identity is submerged. People avoid being singled out for praise or blame.

It is widely believed in individualist culture that each person is a separate identity and there is something wrong with someone who fails to demonstrate individualism. Privacy must be maintained; equality and solidarity must be canonized. People are taught to respect and preserve others' rights to appear unique and special. An individual must have his or her own space and should be free within his or her boundary. In their eyes, due respect to an individual's liberty, rights, and independence will be considered polite, and lack of it will appear to an American to be improper, and even rude. So in the US, the motivation for being polite is the individual's wants.

This conclusion can explain why the use of first names is advocated and accepted among status non-equals; why the compliments often flow from status

superiors to inferiors; why privacy is highly protected in the conversations and why requests are likely to be put forward in an indirect way in the individualism-oriented cultures.

In China, Confucianism has influenced Chinese sociopolitical life for thousands of years. The Confucian tradition advocates subordinating the individual to the group or the community and maintains that the ultimate goal of human behavior is to achieve harmony, which leads the Chinese to pursue a conflict-free and group-oriented system of an ever-expanding circle of human-relatedness.

Chinese place a high premium on interpersonal accord and harmony as is emphasized in Confucian ethnics. Proper human relationships are the foundation of society and Chinese society is composed of an interesting web of relationships.

Chinese downplay their individuality while their main concern is how well they are perceived and accepted by others in the group. Chinese people want to be included as a member of the community. They always think and behave from the perspective of others and take the "wants" of others into consideration.

It is noteworthy that they show great deference to superiors and are reluctant to stand out. They are concerned that an imbalance in personal relationship may bring disadvantages to them in the web of relationships and destroy the existing harmony or increase their chances of being ostracized. Because of this, self-denigration and modesty are commonly adopted.

It is also significant that Chinese people set a clear demarcation for in-groups and out-groups. We may adopt positive politeness strategies and talk freely, casually and even rudely before family members and close friends. We not only denigrate ourselves but also denigrate or deny the ability of the in-groups all in the name of achieving harmony within society.

Saying that American culture is individualistic does not mean that all Americans are always individualists. Rather, it means that Americans are more likely to think and act in individualistic ways than people in collectivist cultures are. The difference between individualist and collectivist cultures is a relative one, not an absolute one. So, we should bear in mind that American culture tends to be more individualistic

than the culture of China.

（ii）Equality Versus Hierarchy

Americans believe that "All men are created equal." You can see examples of equality being emphasized in everything from government (everyone has the right to vote) to social relationships ("Just call me by my first name").

One of the characteristics of the Chinese culture is hierarchy. Every person is supposed to have a set position in family and society in order to achieve harmony between the people. One of the famous saying of Confucius is "Let the emperor be an emperor, the subject a subject, the father a father, and the son a son", the implication being that within the family as within the nation, persons are not equal; each has to mind his/her own position and role and act accordingly; and personal desires are best subjugated to the will of the patriarch (the male head of a family or a tribe).

Confucius holds that there is nothing wrong with inequality because, in his view, the obligations between senior and junior run in both directions. The senior party had his/her duties for the junior, and vice versa. These reciprocal obligations are expressed in the Chinese virtue known as Li, which means "right conduct in maintaining one's place in the hierarchical order". Throughout the Chinese history, people have shown respect for age, seniority, rank, maleness, and family background, from which hierarchy is clearly seen.

Many Americans insist on bringing in the "call me by my first name" attitude to the work setting because most of them believe that acknowledging a hierarchy violates their civil rights. In China, where hierarchies determine everything from how a person must be addressed to the type of language that must be used, the American attitude is perceived as showing disrespect.

In America, nobody is expected to bow to the wishes of any authority. Everyone is free to show his/her individual identity and free to express his/her will and emotion without any restraint. Chinese individuals are expected to respect and obey the wishes of any authority.

(iii) Directness Versus Indirectness

In the United States, people are encouraged to be direct, "speak up", and make

sure their views are heard. This positive value toward the expression of emotion is very different from the one found in China. Chinese are socialized not to openly express their personal emotions, especially strong negative ones.

Chinese usually avoid direct and blatant refusal, while Americans prefer a clear Yes/No reply, regarding excuses as insincere. This difference in communication styles should be identified and taught to students of English or those who deal with Americans as part of their jobs: be frank with Americans; do not try to give excuses to avoid confrontation.

Americans tend to treat other people with informality and directness. They shun the use of formal codes of conduct, titles honorifics, and ritualistic manners in their interaction with others. They instead prefer a first-name basis and direct address. In sharp contrast, the Chinese are likely to assume that formality is essential in their human relations.

Americans like to call a spade a spade. They would voice their own opinions whenever possible. Children often argue with their parents. Students frequently challenge their teachers. Citizens always express their objections to government actions. Modesty makes no sense. A modest man gets no job. A modest man may suffer hunger as a guest in an American's home, since the host takes his word as it is.

Chinese people are less direct. When requested to do something, they will say they are not sure, or they will try to do it, and yet frequently their real meaning is "no". Americans will think Chinese hypocritical or irresponsible. Americans in the same situation would respond honestly. They agree or refuse to do the thing requested according to their own will and ability. If they are not sure, they will indicate this in their reply.

Differences in communication styles may also cause bad feelings between Chinese and Americans. Americans tend to dislike indirect communication, and often feel that Chinese "beat around the bush" too much rather than being direct. In contrast, Chinese often find Americans too blunt and direct.

（iv）Self-reliance Versus Dependence

Most Americans are taught from an early age that they should take care of

themselves, and in general they view self-reliance as a virtue. It is considered weak to be dependent on others. Americans believe that "God helps those who help themselves". In order to keep his/her freedom and rights, an individual must learn to rely on himself/herself. Dependency is considered a limitation on individual growth and fulfillment. American society values self-reliance so highly that it is sometimes called "do-it-yourself society".

The teacher can tell the students the following story to strengthen their understanding about self-reliance versus dependence.

During the American Civil War, a very hungry young man fell down in front of a farm gate. The farmer gave him food but in return he asked the young man to move a pile of wood in his yard—in fact it was not at all necessary to move the wood. When the young man left, the farmer moved the wood back to its original place. Seeing all this, the farmer's son was confused. (quoted from Zhang Ailin, 2003:33)

Firstly, the teacher can let students themselves tell something about the story, and then explain the reason to the students. For the story, the farmer explained to his son that one should never at any time in any way make other people feel inferior, even unintentionally and out of goodwill. What accounts for the farmer's behavior is that he believed in individualism, independence, self-reliance, self-esteem, and egalitarianism, the major values in the US.

Emphasizing relation with others, Chinese are inclined to be socially or psychologically dependent on others. Dependency is considered a natural desirable trait capable of producing warm human relationships. Chinese often say "When at home, depend on parents; when out, depend on friends." They do not think their dependence is a sign of weakness. Almost all the parents in China are expected to be responsible for their children's education from primary school to college. In return, all the grown-ups are expected to be responsible for their aged parents' lives.

Secondly, the teacher let students know the different social system and this kind of knowledge can be reinforced through practicing. For example, role plays which can not only serve as diagnostic tool for teachers, but also provide much needed practice for learners. The artificial situations, if designed well, are suitable and beneficial for

Chinese learners since English is by no means a common language for communication in China. Practice can serve not only as a particular kind of input, but also as a valuable feedback which will enable the students to be more conscious of the usage of the English.

5.3 Summary

Summing up, now more and more importance has been attached to the avoidance of pragmatic failure in communication. This chapter has also offered some tentative suggestions on the ways to avoid pragmatic failure. Firstly, the language learners should take some measures to reduce the occurrence of pragmatic failure. They should bear all the ingredients of the communicative context in mind. In addition, the language teachers should also take some measures in classroom teaching. The teachers should cultivate the students' cultural awareness by culture teaching. They may take some, and hopefully, all of the following methods: arousing students' cross-cultural awareness, enhancing students' awareness of language use, introducing CP and PP in ELT and bettering teaching methods.

Conclusion

The present thesis investigates some English majors' pragmatic failure in both verbal and nonverbal communications and attempts to probe into the possible causes from the perspective of Adaptation Theory. This study has offered some potential contributions to the study of pragmatic failure and the EFL teaching in China.

Firstly, this study examines students' pragmatic competence concerning nonverbal communication and finds that they also commit pragmabehavioural failures. This broadens the study of pragmatic failure from verbal communication to nonverbal communication. Since there are few such investigations, it is expected to draw researchers' attention to the study on pragmabehavioral failures. Although it is unlikely to get an exact picture of English majors' pragmatic competence only through an investigation composed of a piece of questionnaire, the outcome reveals quite a lot of useful information.

Secondly, on the basis of the data analysis, the author makes an exploration into both intra-cultural and inter-cultural pragmatic failure including verbal communication and nonverbal communication from the perspective of Adaptation Theory. Through detailed investigation and analysis, the thesis has found out the causes to pragmatic failure. Pragmatic failure is caused either by the speaker's inappropriate utterances or the hearer's misinterpretation resulting from failures to make adaptation to all ingredients of the communicative context and certain linguistic realities. Adaptation theory is able to explain and explore into various causes of pragmatic failure and provides a new insight into the study of pragmatic failure.

Last but not least, this thesis also gives some tentative suggestions which can give a whole picture of the measures to avoid pragmatic failure to the teachers and students.

However, according to Verschueren, there are two other key notions in the process of making linguistic choices: variability and negotiability, which is not

touched upon in the analysis of pragmatic failure in this thesis. Therefore, further investigation into pragmatic failure about the causes and the measures taken to avoid pragmatic failure can be viewed from these perspectives in the process of choice-making in human interaction.

All in all, the author hopes that the present study can arouse people's attention to the phenomenon of pragmatic failure and stimulate more discussions so that this issue can be studied in a much more thorough and systematic way.

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Appendix

语用能力问卷调查

为了了解英语专业学生的语用能力特邀您参加该问卷调查。问卷调查的结果仅限于研究之用，资料保密！请根据自己的想法或实际情况如实填写。谢谢合作！（如有不认识的单词可以查阅词典）

学校	院系年级	性别	年龄
何时开始学习英语			

Questionnaire 1

Part I Directions: For each question in this part, you are presented with a short description of one situation and four choices. Read the description of each situation and select the most appropriate choice in that situation. Mark your choice by writing the corresponding letter in the brackets.

1. In London, you want to go to Health Airport in taxi, you say to the taxi man
   A) "Excuse me, would you possibly take me to Health Airport?"
   B) "Excuse me, would you mind taking me to Health Airport?"
   C) "Health Airport, please."
   D) "Would you please take me to Health airport?"   (   )

2. Prof. Smith has just given a lively lecture on language teaching, which lasts two hours. And you say to him in appreciation.
   A) You've given a wonderful speech.
   B) Prof. Smith, your lecture was such an attractive one that I'd like to listen to you for another two hours.
   C) I must say, I really appreciate your talk this morning, Prof. Smith.
   D）What an excellent lecture you've given, Prof. Smith.   (   )

3. You've just finished a lecture, and you say to the audience,
   A) What I've said is not complete, I'm afraid.
   B) Thank you, I hope you enjoy my talk.
   C) There must be lots of mistakes. Please correct me any time.
   D) I've wasted your time.   (   )

4. If someone gives directions in English so quickly that you don't understand, you might respond
   A) "What?"   B) "Could you repeat that?"
   C) "Excuse me, could you repeat that a little more slowly?"

D) Try to repeat the directions to the person ( )

5. One day when a British lady accidentally bumped into you,
   Lady: I'm terribly sorry. You:
   A) It doesn't matter.   B) I don't mind.
   C) That's right .   D) Don't worry.   ( )

6. You are sitting with you new coming boss Mr. Jones in the office. You want to smoke, you say
   A) Mind if I smoke?   B) Is it OK, if I smoke?
   C) Do you mind my smoking here?
   D) Excuse me, sir, would you mind my smoking here?   ( )

7. Mr. Smith has arrived for a meeting, which, unfortunately, has been canceled.
   Mrs. Banks: I'm terribly sorry about not letting you know sooner, Mr. Smith, but unfortunately, it was canceled at the last minute and there simply wasn't enough time to inform everyone.
   Mr. Smith: A) Oh, don't let it worry you, Mr. Banks, I quite understand.
                 B) Oh, that's ok, Mrs. Banks, I understand.
                 C) Oh, it doesn't matter, Mrs. Banks.
                 D) Oh, don't worry about it, Mrs. Banks.   ( )

8. Your foreign teacher says to you "Your shoes are nice". Your response would be
   A) Thank you. It's very kind of you to say so.   B) No, no. My shoes are cheap.
   C) No, not at all
   D) It is your eyes that can see them which are nice.   ( )

9. When introducing yourself to someone you don't know at a party, what would you say?
   A) Hi, I'm_____."
   B) "Hi, I'd like to meet you."
   C)Maybe I introduce myself to you and at the same time I make your acquaintance."
   D)"Hi, I'm_____. Do you know any people here?"   ( )

10. An American student is at the home of his foreign teacher, Mr. Green.
    Mr. Green.: we're so glad to have you here today.
    The student:
    A) Thank you.   B) I'm glad to be here.
    C) I want to see you long ago.   D) Oh, I've bothered you too much. ( )

11. If someone offers you some food that you really don't like, you might say:
    A) I'm fed up.   B) I don't care for that.
    C) Sure, I'd love some more.   D) Thanks, but I'm really full.   ( )

12. You have spent the afternoon with your foreign teacher Mr.Good. You have just got to go.
    Mr. Good: Do drop around and visit us some time.
    You: A) Yes, of course. If I am free.
          B) Thank you, I will
          C) Thank you, I'll come on Monday at 7 p.m.
          D) I will come any time, if you like.   ( )

13. One of your foreign friends gives you a gift.

    Friend: Here's a little something for you. I hope you like it.

    You:　A) That's very nice of you. Oh, that's just what I want. Thanks a lot.

    　　　B) Oh, you really shouldn't have gone to the expense.

    　　　C) No, no, I really can't accept it.

    　　　D) Oh, I have had such a thing already.　　　　　　　(　)

14. It is June 9th, Monday. The teacher says in class to the students: "you are to hand in you homework quickly. The deadline is next Thursday. "Then the students must hand in their homework before

    A) June 12th　　　　B) June 10th　　　C) June 19th　　　D) June 17th　　(　)

15. Professor. Smith says to you in a seminar: "You might be interested in having a look a Bloom's   article on this." Then you will take it as

    A) a suggestion　　　　B)a request　　　　　C) an assignment.

    D) an indirect command and you may ask :"Do you want me to read that for the next essay?"　　　　　　　(　)

16. There is a tourist group after lunch. The rain has just stopped.

    Elderly English tourist: "I'm going out for a walk around the street."

    Tourist guide:

    　　A) Oh, no. You are old. You must have a rest.

    　　B) Fine. See you later, Take care.

    　　C) You're old. You'd better go with some else.

    　　D) Do you want me to go with you?　　　　　　　　　(　)

17. Suppose you are a shop assistant and a foreigner comes up to you, you say:

    　　A) You are welcome. What do you want?

    　　B) Would you like to buy something?

    　　C) Can I help you?　　　　　　　D) I'd be glad to serve you.　(　)

18. You overheard someone say to another: "You are to be here by eight." Then the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is probably

    A) Teacher and student　　B) Husband and wife

    C) Sisters　　　　　　　　D) Friends　　　　　　　　　　(　)

19. In a factory, the guide is interpreting for a group of foreign guests. When they have finished visiting one workshop, he would like the group to follow him to the next workshop, he says

    A) This way, please　　　　　B) Come here.

    C) Move on　　　　　　　　.D) Follow me　　　　　　　　(　)

20. You're at a foreign friend's house. When you have just been offered a cup of tea, you are thirsty and would like to accept, but you do not want to be impolite and so you refuse the offer. So in the next dialogue, how would you answer?

    Host: Are you sure? It's no trouble.　　You:

    A) Yes, please.　　　　　B) Well, perhaps I've changed my mind. Thank you.

    C) Thank you.　　　　　D) In fact, I would like it and please.　　(　)

21. A and B are not on good terms. One day they are talking about the exam.

    A: They say it's the cleverest students who fail in their exams.

    B: You should be OK then.　　　　　By this B means:

A) You're clever. I'm sure you didn't fail the exam.

B) Sure you passed the exam

C) You are not clever.

D) You are wrong in saying so.   (   )

22. John Smith is your boss and you do not like him .One day you say to your friend: "John Smith is disgusting." Your friend says sympathetically: "Well, he's your boss." What does he mean?

   A) It's true that he's disgusting, but he's your boss, you have to bear it.

   B) You're wrong in saying so.

   C) You'd better try to like him.

   D) You can not back bite your boss.   (   )

23. A foreign tourist is asking you about the post office: "Is it open on Sundays? " Then you would say:

   A) Of course.   B) You needn't ask.

   C) Yes, it is   D) Yes, it is open on Sundays.   (   )

24. You and the wife of the manager Mrs. Smith are on the way to fashion show. Mrs. Smith: It's really cold tonight.

   You: A) Here, take my coat.   B) Are you afraid of the cold?

          C) Really? I don't think so.   D) Yes, it is, isn't it?   (   )

25. In a hospital, you say to your friend Mary, who caught a bad cold:

   A) "It's rather cold. You'd better wear more clothes."

   B.) "I do hope you'll be feeling better soon."   (   )

Part II Directions: Decide whether each of the following statements is true or false.

26. Ron won 100-meter race, Zhang Hua says to him, "You are a lucky dog."(   )

27. An American mother takes her lovely little daughter to a park. If a passer-by touches the daughter on the head, the mother feels happy. (   )

28. In England, people are expected to be punctual to a business appointment whereas it is correct to be 5 to 15 minutes late for an invitation of dinner. (   )

29. In England, people are expected to be punctual to a business appointment whereas it is correct to be 5 to 15 minutes late for an invitation of dinner. (   )

30. American custom demands that there should be eye contact in conversation.(   )

31. You want to borrow a magazine from one of your closest friends. You say: "Would you mind if I borrowed this?" (   )

32. Standing at the side of the road, a man with a thumb up to the passing drivers means to stop the drivers. (   )

33. Mrs. Brown is about 50.One day she wears a new dress, one of her students

compliments "You look nice wearing this dress."(   )

34. When you are five-minute late for your foreign teacher's class, you open the door quietly and sit down in your seat.(   )

35. If your American friend Ann visits you at your home and breaks a plate, you smile to comfort her.(   )

Questionnaire 2

根据题目所给要求，做出适合你情况的选择或答案。

1. 你认为说不同语言的民族间存在着文化差异吗？

 （1）很多（2）较多（3）存在，但不多（4）几乎没有（5）没有

2. 你认为自己的文化知识是通过下列哪些方法获得的？（请按实际学习中的使用将下列方法排序）＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

 （1）读英文杂志及介绍西方风俗习惯和礼节方面的书

 （2）看英文电视、电影和录相

 （3）和说英语的本族人多接触

 （4）老师在课堂上讲授

3. 你经常和说英语的本族人用英语交谈吗？

 （1）很多　　（2）较多　　（3）偶尔　　（4）没有

4. 你对文化知识的兴趣程度如何？

 （1）很感兴趣　　（2）较感兴趣　　（3）一般　　（4）不感兴趣

5. 就如何提高学生的跨文化交际能力，你对英语教师的建议是：

＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

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Papers Published

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