



Chapter

1

Culture and
Communication

本章导读

文化无处不在，包罗万象，它潜移默化地支配着人们的行为表现并深刻地影响着人们的处世态度。本章主要阐述了关于文化的概念，介绍了关于文化的各种隐喻，这些隐喻可以帮助学习者理解文化的内涵。此外，本章还对文化的功能、定义和特点等基本概念进行了阐述。文化具有可习得性、动态性、普遍性、整体性和适应性等特点。人们从各个途径习得文化，文化渐渐演变成个人生命的一部分，在个人不断与社会互动的过程中，文化体现了其自身的灵活性和动态性。

人们往往有意识地把自己归为人类某一群体的成员并形成文化身份。本章对文化与身份的关系，以及文化身份的定义、形成过程及其特点给予了着重描述。随着全球化进程的加速推进，跨文化交际正在渗透到人们生活的方方面面。本章剖析交际发生的过程以及构成交际的要素，详细地阐述跨文化交际的定义及其主要内容，剖析跨文化交际的主要形式，从而帮助学习者全面理解跨文化交际。

文化谈

古丝绸之路不仅是一条通商易货之道，更是一条知识交流之路。沿着古丝绸之路，中国将丝绸、瓷器、漆器、铁器传到西方，也为中国带来了胡椒、亚麻、香料、葡萄、石榴。沿着古丝绸之路，佛教、伊斯兰教及阿拉伯的天文、历法、医药传入中国，中国的四大发明、养蚕技术也由此传向世界。更为重要的是，商品和知识交流带来了观念创新。比如，佛教源自印度，在中国发扬光大，在东南亚得到传承。儒家文化起源中国，受到欧洲莱布尼茨、伏尔泰等思想家的推崇。这是交流的魅力、互鉴的成果。

——习近平

“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛

2017年5月14日

The ancient silk routes were not for trade only, they boosted flow of knowledge as well. Through these routes, Chinese silk, porcelain, lacquer work and ironware were shipped to the West, while pepper, flax, spices, grape and pomegranate entered China. Through these routes, Buddhism, Islam and Arab astronomy, calendar and medicine found their way to China, while China's four great inventions and silkworm breeding spread to other parts of the world. More importantly, the exchange of goods and know-how spurred new ideas. For example, Buddhism originated in India, blossomed in China and was enriched in Southeast Asia. Confucianism, which was born in China, gained appreciation by European thinkers such as Leibniz and Voltaire. Herein lies the appeal of mutual learning.

— Xi Jinping

The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

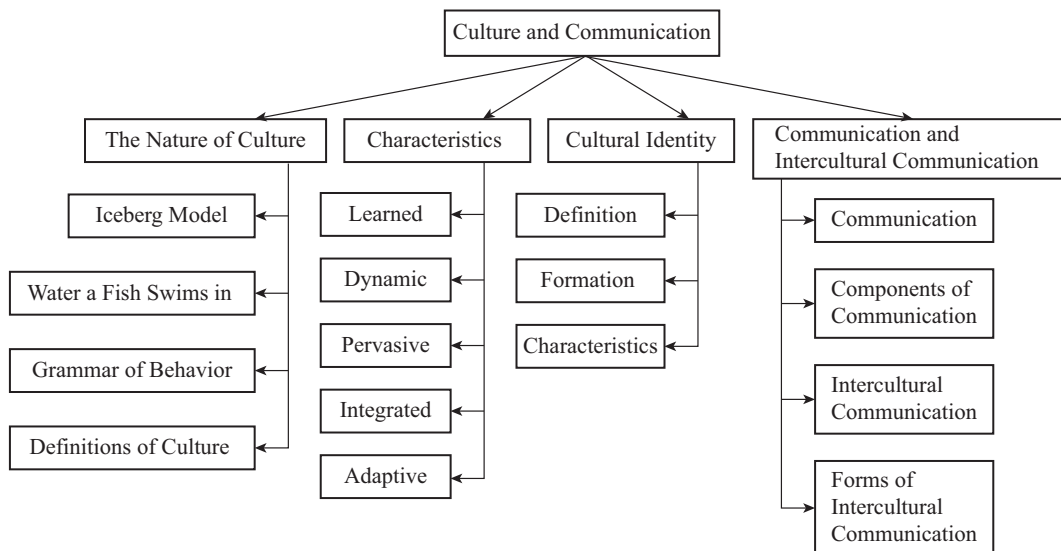
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Learning Objectives

In this chapter, students will learn how to:

- outline the basic nature of culture;
- construct a working definition of culture;
- describe the functions and characteristics of culture;
- summarize the process of the formation of cultural identity;
- evaluate the process of intercultural communication.

Chapter Outline





Pre-class Activities

—Lead-in Case

Case 1 An Interview in India

In the following interview, Trevor is a program host. The program is produced in India. An interviewee is invited to talk about Indian culture.

Trevor: Hello! Welcome to our program!

Interviewee: Hi, Trevor. Glad to see that you chose my beautiful country for your project. In fact your name means “lucky” in Hindi, our mother tongue.

Trevor: Really? That’s interesting. What language do you people use in daily life? Do schools teach English here?

Interviewee: Schools in cities aren’t very different from those across the world. The medium of instruction can be English, or any of the many regional languages. There are almost thirty recognized

What language is used in your school?

languages and hundreds of variants (变体)!

In rural areas the medium of instruction is primarily any of the regional languages. This depends on the state where the school is located.

Trevor: India is a big country. How do you describe family life in India?

Interviewee: Family is very important in India. Fathers are generally the only earning members of the family. This is particularly true in the rural areas. In cities, it is usual to find both husbands and wives employed professionally. Single motherhood is uncommon and does not enjoy social sanction (承认). There is a lot of diversity across the country, making it almost impossible to generalize family life.

Trevor: I saw some movies about India and got to know that in India, marriages are arranged by parents. Is it still the fact now?

Interviewee: Traditionally, arranged marriages are the norm. However, gradually a trend moving toward love marriages is seen.

Trevor: What is the wedding ceremony like?

Interviewee: Very great. Different states have different customs, and therefore the ceremonies differ greatly. This means at least 29 different types of ceremonies, if we discount the diversity in each state.

Trevor: Where does the couple live afterwards?

Interviewee: Mostly with the man's parents. The girl has to move in with her in-laws. In the cities couples prefer to stay separately for privacy.

Trevor: I'm very concerned about the Indian food. What is the customary food eaten in India?

Interviewee: Dal (木豆), rice, chapati (薄煎饼), fish, eggs and meat. It should be understood that there are

What does the interviewee mean by this sentence? Do you agree with her?

Try to find more information about Indian wedding ceremonies and prepare a speech on the topic.

different beliefs. Therefore, it is impossible to generalize the food eaten across the country.

Trevor: I know the way to serve food is quite unique in India. Could you tell us about it?

Interviewee: We use plates, like elsewhere in the world. During festivals or marriages food can be served on banana leaves. What's special is how the food is eaten. Instead of using spoons and forks, we eat with hands. Of course after cleaning them thoroughly. Although many foreigners find this unhealthy, it isn't if cleanliness is maintained!

Trevor: Thank you for telling us so much about India.

On hearing this Indian custom, what do you think of it?
Please tell about your immediate feelings.

Answer the following questions:

- (1) Is the interviewee proud of her culture? Why?
- (2) What else do you know about Indian culture?
- (3) If the program producer comes to China to make the program, how do you think a Chinese interviewee will answer the questions raised by the host? Try to role-play it with your partner.



In-class Learning

Text

Pre-reading Mini-lecture Learning

Please watch the Mini-lectures “The Nature of Culture” and “Definitions of Culture”, and examine the metaphors introduced in the Mini-lectures. Please give your own definition of culture and share it with your group members. You may use the sentence pattern “Culture is _____”.

The Nature of Culture

Most people assume that everyone knows what culture means, but they can hardly define it. Some images modeled by scholars could help us understand the features of culture.

1. Culture Is an Iceberg

One of the most well-known models of culture is the iceberg. Its main focus is on the elements that make up culture. Some of these elements are visible, whereas others are hard to discover. The idea behind this model is that culture can be pictured as an iceberg: Only a very

small **portion**¹ of the iceberg can be seen above the water.

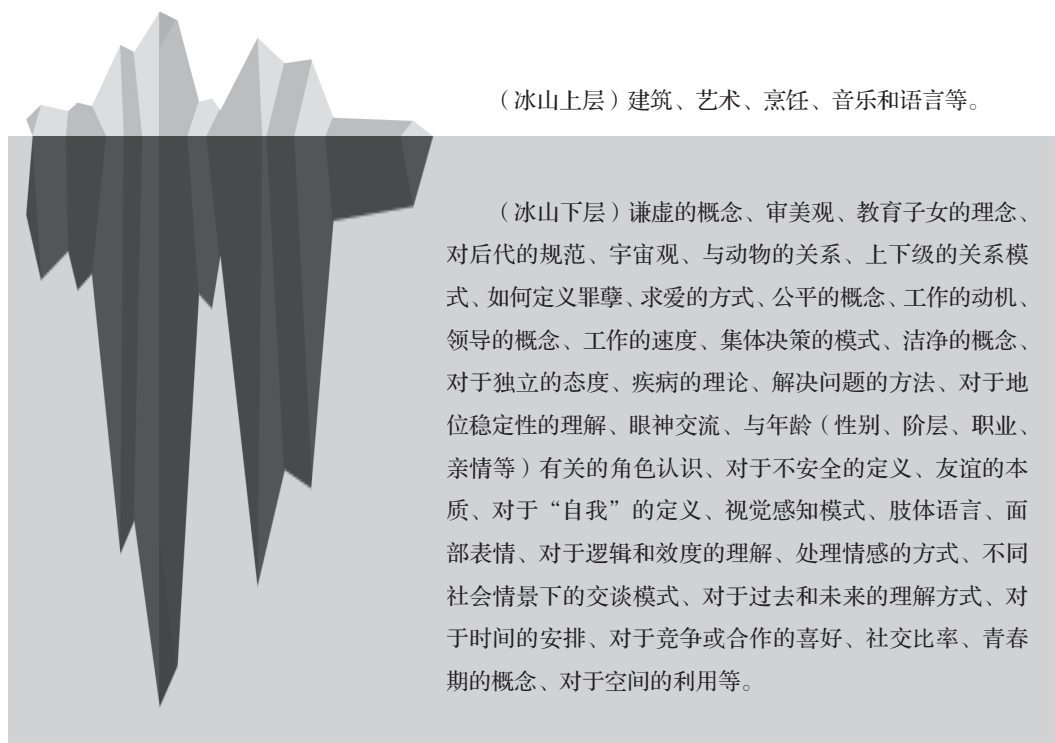


Figure 1 The Iceberg Model

(Source: Translated from *AFS Orientation Handbook Vol. 4*, New York: AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc., 1984, p.14.)

The top of the iceberg above the water includes **architecture**², art, cooking, music, language, just to name a few. It is supported by the much larger part of the iceberg which is underneath the water and therefore invisible. Nonetheless, this lower part of the iceberg is the powerful foundation. These powerful foundations of culture are more difficult to observe: the history of the group of people that hold the culture, their norms, values, beliefs about space, nature, time, etc.

The iceberg model implies that the visible parts of culture are just expressions of its invisible parts. It also points out how difficult it is to understand people with different cultural backgrounds—because we may observe the visible parts of “their iceberg”, but we cannot immediately see what are the foundations that these parts rest upon.

1 portion 部分

2 architecture 建筑风格

2. Culture Is the Water a Fish Swims in

A fish lives in water where it finds food, **reproduces**¹ and protects itself from danger. A fish notices everything except the water it is swimming in. The fish takes the water for granted because it is totally surrounded by the water that it really cannot imagine another environment. The same is true for us. Our culture is so much a part of who we are and what the world is like for us that we do not notice it. We take it for granted. For most people, for most of their lives, everything they see and do takes place in the same culture. Everyone is swimming in the same water. They couldn't describe the water even if they wanted to.

3. Culture Is the Grammar of Our Behavior

In order to behave appropriately in any society, people need to know the culture. It includes all the rules that make actions meaningful to the people around them. In learning to speak, everyone learns to use the grammar of their native language, but they use it **automatically**² with little or no conscious awareness of the rules of grammar. Similarly, people learn their cultural grammar unconsciously and apply its rules automatically. Most people find it difficult to describe the meaning system of their own culture, just as native speakers of a language are usually unable to describe the grammatical rules of that language unless they have specifically studied grammar.

4. Definitions of Culture

Culture has been defined in hundreds of ways over the years. Each of these definitions **highlights**³ different aspects of culture and many of the definitions even conflict with each other.

According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, culture is “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively”. It refers to intellectual perspective, such as music, art, exhibition, dance, etc. When you talk about **Picasso**⁴, **Beethoven**⁵, etc., you are talking about culture. The followings are just a handful of definitions of Culture:

1 reproduce 繁殖

2 automatically 自动地

3 highlight 强调, 凸显

4 Picasso 毕加索

5 Beethoven 贝多芬

"Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another."

—Netherlands scholar Geert Hofstede

"Culture is defined as a pattern of learned, group-related perception—including both verbal and nonverbal language, attitudes, values, belief systems, disbelief systems, and behavior."

—American scholar Marshall Singer

"Culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning."

—American scholars Daniel Bates and Fred Plog

Various definitions of Culture provided by scholars and experts of different fields shed some light on our understanding of cultural phenomenon. Using their description as a starting point, we advance a definition of our own that is more suited to the goals of this book. We define culture as "the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, hierarchies, religions, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving".

After-reading Check

1. Diagram Filling

