

On Cultural Differences of Body Languages between English, Russian and Chinese

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Abstract

Body languages, as important parts of nonverbal communication, include gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact, touch, body movements, etc.. There are similarities between body languages, but most of the body languages vary culturally. With the development of intercultural communication, the contacts between the Chinese, the English and the Russian peoples are on the increase, and the differences between body languages have been among the major barriers to efficient communication.

The present paper first makes a contrastive study on cultural differences of body languages between English, Russian and Chinese, then classifies the differences of the body languages between the three languages into spiritual, institutional and material differences. In addition, the paper puts forward three principles guiding the study of the cultural extensions and their differences. Finally, the paper holds that the cultural extensions of body languages should be introduced into the teaching activities to cultivate the students' all-round communicative competence.

The originality of this paper lies in the classification of the cultural differences of the body languages of Chinese, English and Russian into three levels: spiritual, institutional and material. The paper holds that the spiritual factors are the main internal causes of the cultural differences of the body languages, the institutional factors are the external drive to the formation of the cultural differences of the body languages and the material factors are the embodiment and the important conditions of forming their differences.

The paper suggests that the study of the principles of the cultural differences of body languages is conducive to the understanding of the value system, moral standard, customs, historical background and mode of thinking of a nation and comes to the conclusion that the study of body language culture should constitute an important part of the second language teaching and learning.

Key words: intercultural communication; body language;

cultural differences; foreign language teaching

摘 要

体态语作为非言语行为系统中最重要的一部分,包括目光语、手势语、身体姿势等多个方面;各语种体态语之间具有一定的共性,同时也存在着很多的文化差异。随着跨文化交际的日益频繁,英俄汉“三方交际”也呈渐多之势,三方体态语的文化差异已是交际的主要障碍之一。

正文首先概述了国内外体态语及体态语文化差异研究现状;其后从精神或观念性差异、制度性差异、物质性差异三个方面对英俄汉体态语的文化差异进行了分类;接着本文阐述了体态语文化差异的研究和教学问题,提出了研究体态语的文化内涵及其差异三个原则,并强调重视将文化内涵导入教学活动之中以促进现代高等外语教学的发展。

本文的创新之处在于将“英俄汉体态语文化差异”的研究归类于各自“主导文化”(main culture)差异的“精神或观念性差异”、“制度性差异”和“物质性差异”三个层面之中。本文认为:在形成差异的三方面因素中,精神或观念性因素是形成英俄汉体态语文化差异的“内在因素”,制度性因素是形成英俄汉体态语的文化差异的“外在驱动力”,而物质性差异则是英俄汉体态语文化差异的重要表现及其形成的重要条件。

本文提出研究体态语文化差异的原则对理解体态语所属语言国主流文化的价值观念、道德风尚、风俗习惯、历史背景、思维方式等多重文化内涵有一定帮助;为了培养高校学生全方位的跨文化交际能力,本文还提出:应加大外语教学改革力度,重视将体态语的文化内涵及其差异导入教学活动之中。

【关键词】跨文化交际;体态语;文化差异;外语教学

Chapter I Introduction

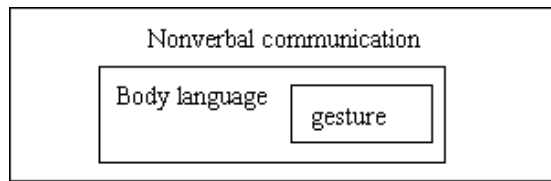
1.1 The definition of body language

Body language (also kinesics), which includes gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact, touch, body movements, etc., is a most important part of nonverbal communication. It has five main communicative functions: repeating, complementing, regulating, contradicting and substituting.

According to Larry A. Samovar (2000:149), nonverbal communication involves all those nonverbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source and his or her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver. Generally speaking, it can be classified into four groups: (1) body language (2) paralanguage (silence, turn-taking) (3) object language (physical appearance, smell) (4) environment language (the messages of space and time, the arrangement of setting and so on).

Thus the term body language should not be confused with the term nonverbal communication and gesture. The relationship between these three concepts can be illustrated by Figure 1.

Figure 1



1.2 The overview of previous studies of body language

The scientific study of body language can be traced back to the time of ancient Greece. The famous philosopher Aristotle first made an analysis on humans' actions by which humans expressed their ideas and wishes. As time goes on, body language has developed into an interdisciplinary subject concerning biology, linguistics, sociology, pedagogy, political science and the most important of all, anthropology and communicative science.

Since the 1950's, many works on body language have appeared in the area of sociology and anthropology. Many anthropologists, such as American scholars Ray L. Birdwhistell and Julius Fast, basically focused their studies on the relationship between body languages and communication. The term *Kinesics* was initiated by Birdwhistell in his *Introduction to Kinesics* in 1952. It refers to the science studying the body language, and its task is to form and code humans' actions and body behaviors in order to study systematically the relationship between nonverbal body movements and communication. Another American anthropologist Fast in his *Body Language* in 1970 thoroughly discussed the communicative meanings and functions of body language.

In USA in 1959, Edward T. Hall published his book *The Silent Language*, which is taken as the first and foundational book of a new discipline *Intercultural Communication*. Then from 1960s to 1970s, with the rapid development of intercultural studies, a lot of works in this research area were published, such as *A Selected Reader* by David Hoopes, *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* by Larry Samovar & Richard Porter and *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* by John Condon & Fathi Yousef (Hu Wenzhong, 1999:10-11). The study of body language has become an important component of the discipline *Intercultural Communication* because of the significant roles it plays in communication and its cultural variations.

On the one hand, the further sociological studies have proved that body language, as the basic component of nonverbal behaviors, plays an important role in humans' communication. It is said that in conversation the communicative messages conveyed by verbal behaviors only consist 30% of the whole, and the other messages are all conveyed by nonverbal means (basically body language). Psychologist Albert Mehrabian even proposed a formula: "the total effect of a piece of conveyed message = 7% of words + 38% of voice + 55% of facial expressions" (Yang Zijian, 1990:577). Although we do not know whether these figures are accurate, at least they let us see the significant roles which body language plays in communication. On the other hand, scholars have found that body language is also a part of culture and is characterized by nationality. Its cultural variations already become a chief barrier to intercultural communication.

From 1970's the former Soviet linguists also began their studies on cultural connotations of language and body language. They named the new discipline *Лингвострановедение* (the similar name in English may be *Language & Culture*). Among the works the representative ones are *Language & Culture* by I. M. Vereshchagin & V. G. Kostomarov who were the founder-members of *Лингвострановедение*, *Theoretical Foundations of Лингвострановедение* by G. D. Tomashin and so on. In contrast to the studies of Western scholars, the former Soviet and now Russian linguists study body language with a literary approach, that is to say, they try to analyze meanings and functions of body language with examples from classic literary works, a good attempt at combining body language study with language or literary teaching.

Scholars at home have also contributed a lot. In China the scientific study of body language only began at the end of 1980's. The representative works are *Introduction to Body Language* by Geng Erling (1988), *Language and Culture* by Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing (Chapter XIV) (1989), *Practical Body Language* edited by Fan Yunhua and Li Jiequn (1991), *Language and Culture: Introduction to Russian Лингвострановедение* by Gu Yijin and Wu Guohua (Volume II) (1991), *Intercultural Communication* by Jia Yuxin (1997), *Intercultural Nonverbal Communication* by Bi Jiwan (1999), and the series of books on intercultural communication edited and translated by Hu Wenzhong such as *Introduction to Intercultural Communication* (1999), etc.. The author of this article has also made a survey on China's academic periodical network (<http://www.cnki.net>). The result is: in the sections of "Arts Science" and "General Education and Social Science" from 1994 to 2002, the author has hit 79 papers altogether by typing "体态语" or "身势语" as keywords and 7 papers altogether by typing "体态语 文化差异" or "身势语 文化差异" as keywords.

Generally speaking, the Chinese scholars' studies on body languages consist of two parts: communicative functions and cultural differences. On the basis of foreign scholars' researches Chinese scholars have added more specific and convincing examples from Chinese culture.

Judging from what is mentioned above, we can see that cultural differences of body language, as barriers to intercultural communication, have already drawn an increasing attention from scholars.

But the previous studies on body languages are either found in the studies of intercultural communication, *Лингвострановедение* and nonverbal communication, which only consist of several paragraphs or pages and are far from detailed studies, or they just make brief comparisons of body behaviors in many different cultures with many discrete examples, which are not systematic. Until now, there has been no research done on the cultural differences between the body languages of Chinese, English and Russian, not to mention the introduction of the cultural extension of body languages into second language teaching.

On the basis of the previous studies and achievements, this paper first focuses a comparative study of cultural differences of body languages on three languages: English, Russian, and Chinese. With the rapid development of the world economy, political, economic and cultural interchange between China, America, Britain and other western countries is becoming increasingly frequent. Such being the case, the contacts between Chinese people and foreigners, especially people from English-speaking countries and Russia, are increasing. In communication people are encountering more barriers caused by cultural differences, including the cultural differences of body languages.

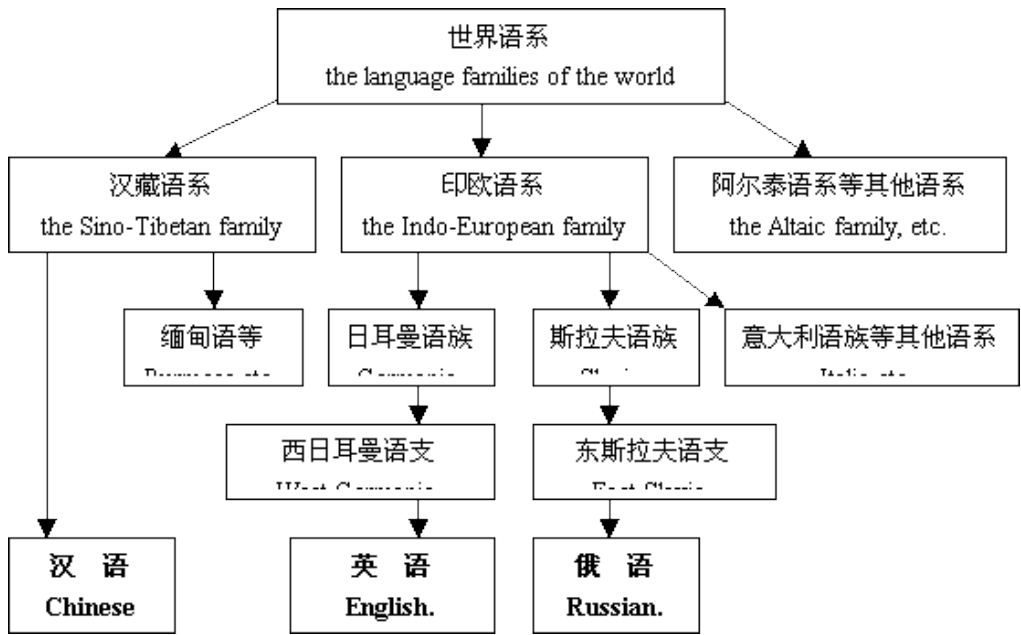
The paper then classifies cultural differences of body languages of each main culture into three strata: spiritual stratum, institutional stratum and material. In the author's opinion, the study of cultural differences can be conducted at two levels: at the first level the study is focused on phenomenon (differences themselves); at the second level --- on the causes of differences which are deeply rooted in culture. The former tells us what is different, while the latter tells us why there are such differences. This paper is just an attempt to make a study of cultural differences of body languages at the second level through a new classification, which, in the author's opinion, can help us better understand the culture of a studied language.

Finally the paper puts forward three principles of studying cultural differences of body languages and proposes some concrete ways of introducing research achievements into foreign language teaching in order to help teachers and students understand the cultural connotations of body languages such as value system, moral standard, customs, historical background and mode of thinking of a nation and cultivate students' all-round intercultural communicative competence.

Chapter II Cultural Differences of Body Languages between English, Russian & Chinese

The cultural differences of body languages between English, Russian and Chinese are the major concern on which we are to focus our effort in this chapter. First of all, let us see the relationship between these three languages in the language families of the world illustrated by Figure 2.

Figure 2



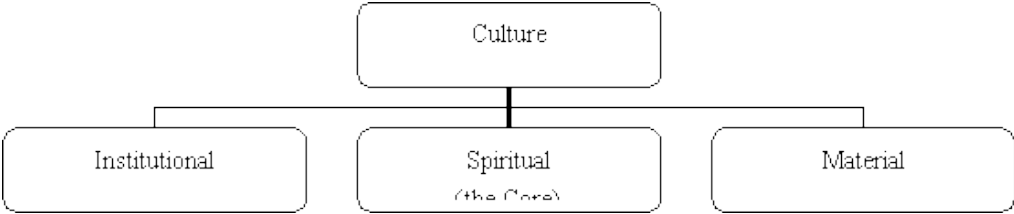
The term culture has been defined in many ways. Here we just talk about the representative ones and try to bring forward its concept in this paper.

The early Western definitions lay particular stress on spiritual culture. A typical example is Sir Edward Tylor, who presented the first important anthropological definition of culture in *Primitive Culture* (1871). He (1979:13-14) defined culture as “ that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” . Later American anthropologists Ogburn and Henges revised Taylor’ s definition by supplementing material stratum. According to the explanation of “*Cihai*”, the great encyclopedia dictionary of the Chinese language, culture in its widest sense refers to all the material and spiritual capabilities acquired by man and all the material and spiritual wealth created by man in the course of social practice; in its narrow sense, culture refers to spiritual capabilities and products, including all kinds of ideologies.

“ 从广义来说，指人类在社会实践过程中所获得的物质、精神的生产能力和创造的物质、精神财富的总和；从狭义来说，指精神生产能力和精神产品，包括一切社会意识形态” 。（《辞海》1999： 4365）

To sum up, the paper agrees that “ culture is creation activities and achievements of the mankind as social groups” （Wei Guangqi, 2000), i.e. in this paper, culture is denoted in the broad sense and culture can be roughly divided into three strata: spiritual culture, institutional culture and material culture (See Figure 3).

Figure 3



Spiritual culture is reflected in invisible forms which result from people’ s thinking, including ideologies, values, ways of thinking, aesthetic standards, beliefs, concepts of time and space, and so on. It is products of the mind (works of philosophy, history and literature, for example). It is intangible, and most spiritual culture is indiscernible, that is, implicit, hidden and abstract. Spiritual culture is the most stable stratum, the core of culture. In contrast with spiritual culture, institutional culture is reflected through social regulations and rules commonly abided by people in the same society, usually referring to those that are used to adjust the relationship between individuals or groups. Laws, regulations, systems, organizations, etc. belong to this category. Material culture, as the term itself suggests, is concrete, substantial and observable, which is reflected through real things, such as buildings, clothes, food, tools, etc. Usually they are what we can see and what we can touch.

The study of cultural differences can be conducted from various perspectives. To be general it can be conducted from the perspective of the East & the West; to be specific it can be conducted from the perspectives of race, nationality, national area, social rank, occupation, sex, age, environment, and it can even be conducted from the perspective of any two individuals. According to some scholars' opinions such as Marshall Singer, everyone's cultural background is individual. That is to say, in fact, culture varies not only interculturally, but also intraculturally, and even with different individuals, so when we come to the study of cultural differences, first of all we should choose the object of study.

The paper agrees with professor Hu Wenzhong (1999:7) who holds that viewed from the creators of culture and the subjects of the cultural activities, there is a MAIN CULTURE among different cultural aspects in every country or nationality, which should be the major object of our study. For example, in China the Han culture is the main culture. And the others such as area, social rank, occupation, sex, age are SUBCULTURES, which are in the second place of our study. The differences between individuals are only meaningful when they are representative.

On the one hand, there are similarities between body languages in different cultures because of biological nature. For example, in most countries and nationalities people smile when they are happy and tremble when they feel cold; on the other hand, most body languages, just like verbal language, are not biologically inherited but a learned behavior acquired from people's experience and upbringing in the society they are born into, therefore a body language is closely related to society and shaped by culture. In different countries and nationalities body languages vary culturally.

This paper classifies cultural differences of body languages according to the three strata of each main culture: spiritual stratum, institutional stratum and material stratum.

2.1 Cultural differences of body languages between English, Russian & Chinese in spiritual stratum

Various nationalities create each unique culture in its common language, common region and common economic life, in the course of which the cultural views form the living soul of the culture (Wei Guangqi, 2000). It runs through all the cultural activities, and is manifested in each component: religious beliefs, values, psychology, thinking and behavior patterns and products of mind such as body language studied in this paper. Although spiritual culture is indiscernible, its impact on social life is great. For example, the famous psychologist Sigmund Floyd holds that one's behaviors result from his own unconscious spiritual activities or psychological activities. Lu Xun gave up practicing medicine resolutely in 1904 and became a writer in order to save the nation, holding that the impact of spiritual factors on culture is the greatest.

Thus the paper holds the view that spiritual factors are the internal cause of cultural differences of body language.

2.1.1 Cultural differences of religious beliefs

Humans felt a great psychological need for supernatural powers in fear of death and the uncertain future. This leads to humans' worshipping to gods, i.e. religious beliefs. And we think this is the reason why religions can still exist and develop in modern society with highly developed natural sciences and social sciences, such as in USA. However, in different historical periods the influences of religious beliefs on culture and their manifestations, such as language and body language, are in different ways and different degrees.

In early days religion produced a very great impact on culture and involved almost all the aspects of social life. Out of the sacred faith and worshipping to mysterious natural powers, a lot of taboos came into being, including verbal and nonverbal taboos (behavior taboo, diet taboo etc.)

With the development of society, the impact of religion on culture subsides gradually. Though the influence of religion is becoming weaker and weaker, its impact on language and body language is obvious, because both verbal language and nonverbal body language are formed gradually in the long historical river. The cultural differences of religious beliefs are a great part of the cultural differences between body languages in English, Russian and Chinese.

Take the gesture for praying for example (see Figure 4)

Body language	In English and Russian	In Chinese
Praying	1. Using right hand to row a cross by touching forehead, belly, left shoulder and right shoulder in proper order, then crossing fingers of both hands or putting the palms together;	Putting palms together, without wagging or with

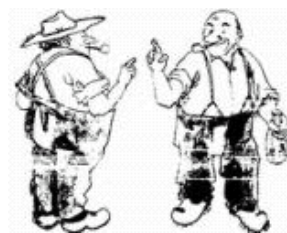
Figure 4

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Figure 5

2. Crossing fingers by putting middle finger on wagging forefinger (as the idiom goes " Keep your fingers crossed!")(this way only exists in English, see Figure 5)

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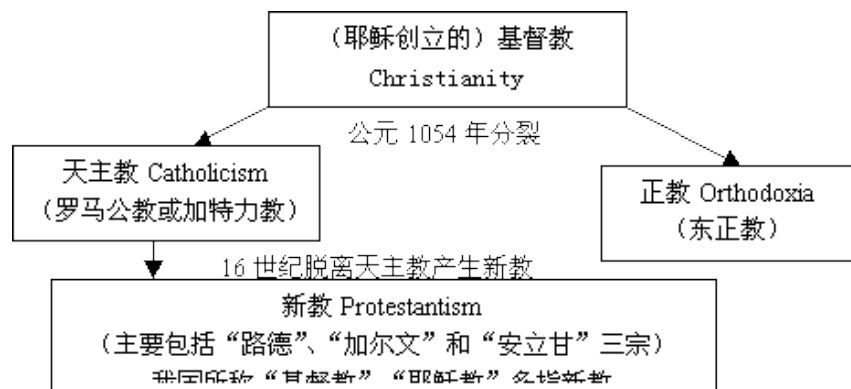
Cross is the symbol of Christianity. Jesus was on the cross to dedicate himself to rescuing and

redeeming the mankind (Jesus was betrayed by his disciple Judas and killed by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate on the cross). God of the Trinity is both the Creator and the Savior. He embodies the greatest providence of God to the mankind. So, sincerely believing in Christianity, the Britons and Americans pray for happiness with this gesture.

The Eastern Orthodox in which most Russians put their faith, together with the Catholicism and the Protestantism are the three groups of Christianity. The relationship between them can be illustrated by Figure 6.

Figure 6

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Christianity, which was founded by Jesus, split in 1054 A.D.: one is Catholicism and the other is Orthodoxia (also Eastern Orthodox). Then in the 16th century the Protestantism broke away from Catholicism, including Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anglican Communion. Christianity in our country mainly refers to Protestantism.

Eastern Orthodox, Catholicism and Protestantism take *the Old Testament* and *the New Testament* as the Holy Bible, so in this respect the cultural differences between English and Russian are few. The body language by which Russians pray is similar to that of Britons and Americans.

In Chinese the gesture for praying " putting palms together" came from Buddhism. This gesture is the salute of Buddhists. Putting palms together means that Buddhists are concentrated and they want to express their respect and hope. Putting palms together is actually the etiquette that ancient Indians did. Indians think that the right hand is the sacred hand, while left hand is the net hand, so Indians used to use two hands for different purposes. But when they put the sacred and the net hands together, it symbolizes that human's sacred side is unified with his net side, which indicates human's truth, honesty, piety and respect. Since the foundation of Buddhism in the 15th century B.C., this etiquette has been adopted in activities of Buddhism. In about 64 A.D. Buddhism was introduced northwards to China. Consequently, this gesture becomes part of the body language of Chinese too.

It is very interesting that to a pious Buddhist the gesture " putting palms together" is done only when both hands are lifted until before the face, moreover, both hands should not be wagged. But when foreigners make this gesture, they usually add some extra body movements, such as turning round palms or nodding head, which makes fun instead. The Chinese way of making this gesture is often accompanied with wagging hands, nodding head, and even with expressing wishes orally.

The gesture for swearing can serve as another typical example of the difference of religious beliefs. (See Figure 7)

Figure 7

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Body language	In English	In Chinese
Swearing	1. Raising right hand, palm open, and sometimes putting left hand on "the Holy Bible" 2. Only holding the Holy Bible highly by right hand	Swearing by pointing forefinger to the heaven or the sun (as the Chinese idioms go " 指天誓日" or " 指天发誓"

Because of the similar religious backgrounds the gestures for swearing in English and Russian are still basically the same.

In Chinese the gesture " 指天誓日" or " 指天发誓" comes from Taoism which has had a history of more than 1800 years and influenced Chinese culture deeply. According to the religious doctrine of Taoism,


太上老君 is the most revered and respected God and the sun, the moon, the stars etc. should be concurrently worshipped too. Moreover, Taoism holds that the world consists of four parts: "Heaven", "Ground", "Human" and "Devil ". Among them "Heaven" is the most sacred and lofty, so when Chinese use this gesture to express the oath, it means they are very serious and will fulfill their pledge conscientiously too.

2.1.2 Cultural difference of values, psychology, thinking and behavior patterns

In the course of intercultural communication the impact of values, psychology, thinking and behavior patterns on body language is profound. It makes people express themselves unconsciously by the body language of their own or interpret others' body language wrongly -- according to their own culture -- which usually leads to communicative conflict. Now let's see some examples.

It is said that shaking hands is an old custom of the primitive people in the Stone Age. Meeting each other, people put down the club or sharp stone for hunting to hold a hand, in order to show that there was no hostility. Nowadays the gesture of shaking hands is widely used all over the world for greeting, nevertheless, cultural differences still exist. (See Figure 8)

Figure 8

Body language	In English and Russian	In Chinese
Shaking hands 	Holding hands tight and at the same time an eye-contact is required	Holding hands loosely and trying to avoid a direct eye- contact

The Chinese hold that it is modest and elegant to shake hands loosely and avoid a direct eye-contact, especially when there are opposite sexes. Holding hands tight and looking at each other directly makes the Chinese feel uneasy and is taken as a very rough behavior. On the contrary, Britons, Americans and Russians are unhappy to hold hands like " a dead fish" because to them a dead-fish handshake shows people's weakness, reluctance, even contempt. In addition, in their culture, greeting or talking accompanied by looking directly at the other's eyes is a sign of honesty, otherwise, the people they greet would be considered dishonest, frightened, or absent-minded, as the American idiom goes " Don't believe those who dare not look straight at your eyes." We think this is the reason why the Chinese are often misunderstood by Russians as cunning or unreliable too. My colleague Ella, a Ukraine teacher, teaches Russian in our School more than five years and now is already well acquainted with Chinese culture. She often says the Chinese way of handshake is often and very easily misunderstood by foreigners because of the totally different cultural concepts. Even knowing this, she is still hardly able to get used to it psychologically. Moreover, Russians think it is very

unlucky to shake hands when stepping on the threshold or through the door. There is a proverb in Russian “ Через порог не здороваться, не беседовать” .

Another typical example which can illustrate the impact of cultural psychology on body language is the concept of “ the evil eye” . In contrast to English and Chinese culture, the concept of “ the evil eye” , which comes from the ancient Roman culture, has produced a great impact on psychology of Russians. They believe that there are devils in the back of the left shoulder in the unseen world and their evil eye can bring misfortunes to people. “ 毒眼会把人看坏 (сглаз, сглазить)” (Zhao Minshan, 1996:301). So as for the position, the right side is preferred in Russian culture. And in order to avoid misfortunes caused by “ the evil eye” , Russians usually do not speak the good words in advance. Especially, they avoid praising excessively such as “ You are very healthy!” , “ You drive so well!” Instead, they say some hostile words to express their sincere wishes. For instance, to wish other people success they usually say: “ Ни пуха, ни пера!” (Wish you can hunt nothing, even a piece of feather!); the best way to wish others a good trip is to scold him ceaselessly. As for body language, when Russians hear excessive praise or blessing, or see cat on the road, which is taken as unlucky things in Russian culture, they spit 3 times behind the left shoulder, and at the same time usually say “ Тьфу! Тьфу! Хоть бы не сглазить!” or strike wood with hand in order to avoid troubles and misfortunes.

There are still many other body behaviors varying culturally in this category. For instance, almost everyone has the experience of pointing a way for others. Have you ever noticed the difference of making this gesture between people from different countries? From childhood Chinese are taught that it is impolite to use forefinger to point at things. This concept is also reflected in language. As we know, the Chinese idioms “ 指指点点” , “ 指手画脚” and “ 指桑骂槐” contain the derogatory sense. This is the same with Russian, as the Russian phrase goes “ Не тъкайте пальцем.” (Do not use the finger to point at things.) To the Chinese and Russians the whole palm should be used instead. However, as for British or American people the name of the forefinger is “ index finger” , so they do not think it is a rude gesture.

Another similar example that can be presented is the gesture for beckoning someone to come (See Figure 9).

Figure 9

Body language	In English and Russian	In Chinese
“ Come here” (beckoning someone to come)	Hand extended toward person, closed hand, palm up, with forefinger only moving back and forth (in China, this same gesture would be considered offensive by many)	Hand extended toward person, open palm, palm down, with all fingers crooked in a beckoning motion (in Russia, this same gesture means goodbye)



To Chinese the English or Russian way of making the gesture is inappropriate, because Chinese just make the same gesture for beckoning children or animals; sometimes this gesture is considered offensive by many, so it even may arouse troubles. But if Russians see the Chinese’ beckoning gesture, they would go away instead of coming nearer, because they think the Chinese just say goodbye to them nonverbally.

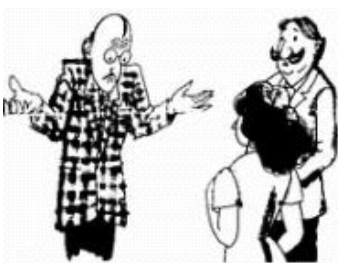


Figure 10

In addition, shrugging shoulder is widely used by British, American and Russian people to show that one is indifferent, powerless or having no secret to conceal. But there is no such kind of gesture in Chinese body language. (See Figure 10)

2.1.3 Cultural difference of products of mind

Body language can also be shaped by products of mind. It refers to the impact of works of philosophy, natural sciences and social sciences on body language.

Take the well-known gesture for “ victory” for example, which is now widely used all over the world (See Figure 11).

Figure 11

Body language	In English	In Russian	In Chinese
			1 Original way: raising both

the gesture for "victory"	With the forefinger and middle finger raised to form a "V", with the palm of hand towards others	Originally there was no gesture for "victory", (See Figure 12) now also use the gesture "V", but should not make this gesture above someone's head	arms highly, wagging hands; 2 Now the gesture "V" is also used, moreover, the same gesture has another meaning "Two"
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Figure 12

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It is said that the doughty Prime Minister Winston Churchill first made this gesture during the Second World War to show his confidence of the victory over the German Fascism. The gesture "V" just stands for "victory". Be careful that the right way of making this gesture is facing the back of your hand to yourself.

"As he appeared before a large crowd, he was greeted with cheers and applause. The occasion was a momentous one and Churchill flashed the 'V for victory' sign... Whether by mistake or ignorance, instead of facing the palm of his hand to the front, he made the "V" with the back of his hand towards the audience. Some in the crowd applauded; some gasped; some broke out in laughter. The Prime Minister's gesture, as given, meant quite something else. Instead of "V for victory", it meant something dirty; it was an obscene gesture!" (Deng Yanchang Liu Runqing, 1990:135).

Although Russians and Chinese have already accepted the gesture for "V" in English, there are still some details to which you must pay attention. In Russia you should be careful with the way of making this gesture. If the gesture is made above someone's head, this will lead to troubles. Because in Russian it refers to an animal's horn and symbolizes cuckold, as the Russian idiom goes "Жена наставила рога мужу. (He is a cuckold)". In Chinese this gesture more often means "Two", so you should consider the situations for deciding its meaning.

The gesture "OK" also comes from the English language. Britons or Americans use the thumb and forefinger to form a ring standing for the letter "O", with the other three fingers raised to form the letter "K". Originally there was no such kind of gesture in Russian and Chinese. "OK" meant nothing to Russians and Chinese because of the difference between languages. But along with the development of intercultural communication this gesture has already come into the body language of Russian and Chinese. (See Figure 13)



The gestures for numbers are formed under the influence of product of mind too. The figure 14 well illustrates the differences of gestures for numbers between English, Russian and Chinese.

Figure 14

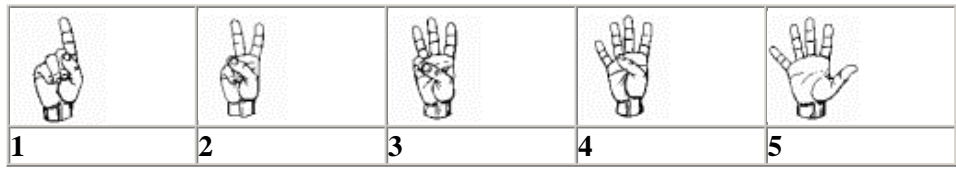
English

0	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9

Chinese

1	2	3	4	5

Russian



Generally speaking, we should pay more attention to the gestures standing for three, six, seven, eight and nine because in English and Chinese these gestures differ a lot and often lead to misunderstanding in communication. For example, the Chinese gesture for number " eight" is just the form of the Chinese character " 八" , but to foreigners it more likes the form of a pistol. In Russian there are only gestures for numbers from one to five.

In addition, the way to count on fingers is different in these three languages too. The English way is raising fingers by turns, beginning with the right hand from forefinger to the little finger and ending with the thumb of the left hand. The Russian way, on the contrary, is bending fingers by turns, beginning with the little finger and ending with the thumb. (Liu Guangzhun, 1999:106) The Chinese way is similar to the Russian way, but differs in the order of bending fingers. It begins with the thumb and ends with the little finger.

2.2 Cultural differences of body languages between English, Russian & Chinese in institutional stratum

Professor Wang Yuesheng (2000:10) of Beijing University defines institution as " the communication rules formed after numerous conflicts and compromises in the course of communicating" .

A famous American scholar Samuel P. Huntington (1989:12), the author of *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, also proposes that institution refers to " steady periodic behavior patterns that are treasured" .

From the above mentioned definitions we can come to the conclusion that the institutional culture is manifested in regulations and rules commonly abided by people in the same society, including laws, regulations, systems, customs, morals, rules etc. Usually people are forced to abide by these rules. Thus institutional culture is the external drive to form the cultural differences of body language between English, Russian and Chinese.

2.2.1 Cultural difference of morals, social regulations

Morals and social regulations produce impact on many aspects of culture, including body language, and some of them have already become rules that people must abide by.

Take greeting for example. (See figure 15)

Figure 15

Body language	In English	In Russian	In Chinese
Kissing	A form of greeting, is only among the opposite sexes or among women	A form of greeting, is among the opposite sexes or people of the same sex	No such form of greeting

It is said kissing and hugging also come from the ancient Roman culture. In the ancient Rome women were not of equal social rank with men, so only men were allowed to drink. Thus when men came home, the very first thing he did was to smell his wife' s lips to check if she had drunk alone at home. After passing through many generations, this form of greeting used by ancient Roman husbands and wives has become modern etiquette between men and women."

Nowadays kissing can be given not only on lips, but also on cheeks, on hands etc.. The way of kissing varies with the countries and the relationships between people.

In USA the kissing is only among the opposite sexes or among women. To be specific, parents usually kiss kids' forehead; kids kiss parents' lower jaw; friends, relatives, classmates or colleagues of the same generation often kiss each other on cheeks or just symbolically touch on cheeks; kissing on lips and hugging usually only take place between lovers or between husband and wife.

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The British culture is more conservative. This feature is reflected in many aspects of its culture, such as political system --- constitutional monarchy, ancient buildings, even weights and measures --- GB' s. Thus the Britons are also considered reserved in communication. For greeting they often shake hands, they do not kiss and hug so often like Americans do, but the way of kissing and hugging is similar to Americans. Moreover, in the upper society and the scholars' circle the etiquette of kissing ladies' (not girls') hands to show respect to honorable women still exists. (Figure 16)



Maybe, the forming of this etiquette is related to the dressing habits. We know that British ladies used to wear big skirts, so it was not convenient to kiss ladies' cheeks.

Here another point is worth noticing. In the concept of British and American cultures the men who kiss and hug each other are usually suspected to be homosexuals. Based on this idea, they accept the close physical contact between men, sometimes even women, i.e. people of the same sex as a homosexual relationship. We think this is why Westerners visiting China for the first time are often surprised to see in China that two young friends or students of the same sex often walk with their arms around each others' shoulders or holding hands. To them it is not a proper

behavior.

In social intercourse Russians often shake hands, hug or kiss each other too. In contrast with the ways in USA or UK, the hugging and kissing between Russian men are a normal social phenomenon, indicating nothing but a friendly greeting. Moreover, the hugging between Russians is called " the bear' s hugging" because Russians like to show their warmth and enthusiasm through an exaggerated hugging.

In Chinese culture, before the Song Dynasty, the rules of interaction between men and women were not very conservative. The cultural environment and social customs had been quite open until the Sui and Tang Dynasties. For instance, the relationships between men and women in these two dynasties were not restricted very much because some of the leaders of the two dynasties born in noble families in west China' s Shanxi province were closely related to minority ethnic groups such as Xianbei, which could be well illustrated by many paintings of the Tang Dynasty. However, having learned the lessons of the collapse of previous dynasties caused by betrayal or rebellion of too powerful subordinates or generals, the emperors of North Song Dynasty began to strengthen the concentration of power and imposed rigorous moral education and control on the society. In line with political needs, Lism or Neo-Confucianism (a Confucian school of idealist philosophy of Song and Ming Dynasties) came into being during the North Song Dynasty. In addition to establishing a rigid social order among people, Taoism or Lism also quoted and created many so-called " etiquette canons" to prevent direct contact between men and women because " It is the convention that men and women should not be in direct touch with each other." (《孟子·离娄》: " 男女授受不亲, 礼也。") That is to say, men and women of one family should not sit together, or hang clothes in the same place, or use the same towel or comb, or pass thing from hands to hands. Sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law can not talk to each other. When a married daughter returns home, her brothers should not sit together with her at table or use the same bowl to have a meal.

Since there were so many strict rules to restrict the interaction between men and women even within the same family, it is easy to understand why the Chinese can hardly accept kissing or hugging in public as a form of greeting.

The traditional Chinese form of greeting for men is bowing or making a short bow by clasping one' s hands before the chest (" 作揖"); and for women it is making a curtsy (" 道万福"). It is obvious that all these practices were possible to keep people from physical touching, however, nowadays these greeting forms are basically rare outside of movies depicting an earlier time.

Generally speaking, we hold that the restrictions and fetters formed during the North Song Dynasty and after have a negative impact on culture.

After the baptism of the May 4th Movement, Chinese culture has already become much more liberal, but very close physical contact between opposite sexes in public remains inappropriate, even taboos. We are sure that with the reforming and advancement of the Chinese society the restriction in this aspect is tending to subside. For example, in communication with foreigners the leaders of our country already greet by kissing and hugging.

2.2.2 Cultural difference of laws, rules, systems and organizations

Although the gun was first invented in China in the 12th century AD (In 1132 AD, during the South Song Dynasty the Chinese strategist Chen Gui invented a kind of gun.), when it was introduced into Europe in the 13th century, its further development in Europe and impact on European culture was much more significant than in China.

The impact of other weapons such as knife or sword on Chinese culture is greater. In Chinese classic novels or operas there is a common scene: after the feudal officials have settled a lawsuit, pronouncing death sentence, they usually say: " Push out and behead him or her!" The Chinese

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gesture indicating beheading is illustrated by Figure 17.



Severe laws applied by the Russian emperors of past ages have a very great influence too. It is said that in the reign of Peter the Great, in dealing with the rebellion, 799 soldiers were killed just from the end of September to October 1698, corpses could not be cleaned up for five months. (Russia, H.I.Paplenko, *The Biography of Peter the Great*: Chapter III). In Russia, since the 16th and 17th centuries, the main square of a city, for instance, the Red square of Moscow, had always been chosen for carrying out death sentences. The citizens were called together either to listen to the government decrees promulgated by czars, or to watch death sentences being carried out. There used to be two ways to carry out death sentences: one is beheading, the other is hanging, but the former is the usual way. Thus the square where death sentences used to be carried out is called *the forehead place* (*Лобное место*), referring to the place of emperor or the place where someone gets beheaded. The terrible death sentence is vividly reflected in Russian body language. (See Figure 18)

Figure 18

Body language	In English	In Russian	In Chinese
the gesture indicating killing or suicide	with the raised thumb and forefinger to form a pistol, pointing the forefinger at the temples	1. Using palm to cut the neck 2. Using the forefinger to circle around the neck, then pointing upwards and shaking the head or showing the whites of one's eyes	Using palm to cut the neck

Another aspect of this category is that there are many special body movements in Chinese because of the difference in political systems and ideology. For instance, Chinese Young Pioneer's salute (raising the right hand above the head), differ from those in English. Certainly this kind of body language used to be very common in the former Soviet Union too, but from the Russian foreign teacher and some other native speakers we get to know that in Russia after the change of political system and ideology, these body behaviors gradually disappeared.

In addition, the different working disciplines can also lead to different body languages. For instance, in Western countries such as Great Britain and America if you want to call others' attention, interrupt a talk or ask for permission to make a speech at a meeting, you should lift the forefinger. It is the silent "Excuse me". However, in our country, we are always required to raise the hand before making a speech.

2.3 Cultural differences of body language between English, Russian & Chinese in material stratum

Like language, body language also came into being and develops in human's labor during a long historical process. Both of them are the results of human's interaction with environment, so the social activities of each era and material achievements inevitably leave marks on language and body language, which are embodied in physical products, such as architecture, dressing, eating habits and tools etc. The body languages belonging to this category just can not send messages without real things. For instance, if someone does not stand on the road, if there is no motor vehicle running on the road, the gesture "thumb up" will not be interpreted as someone wants to get a free ride. In this sense, the paper holds that the differences in material stratum are not only the embodiment of cultural differences of body language between English, Russian and Chinese, but also the important condition of forming differences.

2.3.1 Cultural difference of eating habits

The history of making and eating bread is over 5000 years. According to historical records, people in ancient Egypt (in 4000 B.C) began to pay taxes by bread. Romans, for the wealth in the Nile and North Africa, such as wheat, bread, conquered Egypt and brought the method of making bread to Europe (In 30 B.C Octavius led the Roman army and annexed Ptolemaic Dynasty in Egypt). In the Middle Ages, i.e. the feudal era of Europe from 476 B.C (the extinction time of the west Roman kingdom) to 1640 A.D. (the time of British bourgeois revolution), white bread was the food that only the noblemen could enjoy and was a symbol of high social position. It even made the social status of bakers higher at that time, because it was stipulated at that time that tenant farmers should not rub flour or make bread by themselves, they could only eat the brown bread mixed with impurities given by feudal barons. The gesture of putting bread into the mouth is the mark of eating bread for 1500 years.

So far as Russians' eating habits are concerned, on the one hand, the ladle is the most traditional tableware of Russians. The knife and fork were introduced into Russia from the West later on. According to the introduction of foreign experts, even nowadays in the countryside of Russia a lot of families still use ladles basically to have a meal. On the other hand, one of the most famous Russian dishes is the red soup "щи". There are some very famous proverbs about it in Russian language, such as " Не та хозяйка, которая говорит, а та, что щи варит" (To appraise a housewife's work one should not see how she speaks, but how she cooks the red soup), " Щи да каша- пища наша; Щи да каша- мать

наша" (The red soup and gruel are our food, the red soup and gruel are our mother), that is to say the red soup is one of the Russians' staple food. The level of cooking the red soup has nearly become the qualification standard for a housewife. According to what is mentioned above we can easily understand why in Russia the gesture of expressing eating is to form a ladle.

Using chopsticks to have a meal is an invention of the Chinese and is a characteristic of the Chinese culture. China has an extremely long history of using chopsticks. The earliest statement can be seen in *Shi Ji* (or *The Record of History*). " King Zhou used ivory chopsticks and Jizi sighed." Generally, Chinese people can use the chopsticks to replace all movements of hands. This habit passes on from generation to generation and has a great influence on Chinese culture. Therefore, using the forefinger and the middle finger to form chopsticks is the most representative Chinese body language referring to eating. Then why do foreigners not use the gesture of imitating a fork to represent eating? In the author's opinion, compared with eating bread with hands, the history of using fork is relatively short - only about 200 years. Nowadays most people still eat bread with their hands; moreover, using fingers to imitate the fork also seems unsightly. (See Figure 19)

Figure 19

Body language	In English	In Russian	In Chinese
the gesture indicating eating	Making the gesture like putting bread into the mouth	Making the gesture like using ladle to eat	Forming chopsticks with the forefinger and the middle finger

There are some other special body practices related to the so-called "wine culture" and "tea culture". For example, in China when one's tea cup or wineglass is being refilled Chinese people usually make two kinds of gestures accompanied with the verbal expression " Thank you!": one is putting one or both hands upright, palm open, beside the cup or glass the gesture; the other is knocking at the table gently by using the forefinger. The former is the traditional way, while the latter is widely used in the southern regions of China. There is a Chinese legend about the second one. It is said that this gesture comes from the Chinese etiquette --- kowtowing, i.e. getting down on one's knees and knocking at the ground noisily with one's head. In Qing Dynasty the emperor Qianlong once made an inspection tour in the civilian dress in south China. He poured the well-known " Longjing tea" of China for the accompanying officers. If this happened inside the imperial palace, the officers would definitely get down on knees and knock for thanks, but in order to avoid revealing the truth and safeguard the etiquette between the emperor and ministers, one clever minister thought of a good idea, that is, replacing the gesture of " kneeling down" with finger crooked to knock at the tabletop. Since then this convenient gesture came into existence in our Chinese culture.

In Russia the "wine culture" is more famous. Russians' capacity for liquor is world famous, on every festival, holidays or birthdays Figure 20 Russians drink the vodka in a large amount. So in Russia there are also some special gestures related to wine, which is very difficult for foreigners to understand without study. For example, the gesture " шелкать пальцем по горлу (шее)" (using the thumb and the forefinger to form a circle, then tapping one's chin or neck with the forefinger) means " the invitation for drinking, somebody wants to drink, somebody is drunk or somebody is a drunkard" . In Russia it can often be seen that strange men make this gesture to each other near shops, where wine is sold. It turns out that in order to restrict excessive drinking, the government of Russia requires that the wine be sold with the big bottle packaging to raise price for restraining the purchasing power. However, by making the gesture several drunkards could pool money together to buy the wine. Another gesture of expressing drinking " выставлять большой палец и мизинец" (See Figure 20) is similar to the Chinese gesture of figure 6, with the thumb pointing upwards and the little finger downwards to simulate a goblet or a wine bottle.



The gesture representing " I am full" differs from language to language too. In English it is laying flat across one's own neck with the palm, in Russian --- " проводить пальцем по шее" , rowing in the throat with the forefinger to show that too much food has been stuffed through one's neck, in Chinese --- patting one's belly with a single hand or both hands to show that the stomach has already been too full. (See Figure 21)

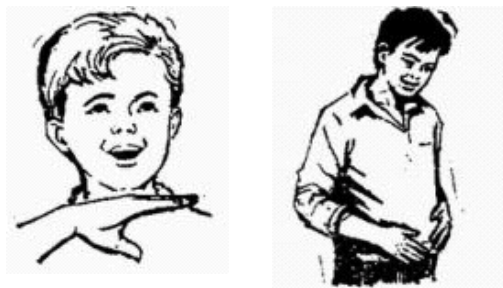


Figure 21

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2.3.2 Cultural difference of the traffic, economy, sport activity

In 1886, the first automobile was produced in Western Europe. On 29th of January in 1886 Carl Friedrich Benz in Germany first obtained the patent of the automobile. It marked the birth of the automobile. Since then, in Britain and U.S.A, which is known as "the country on the four wheels", a large number of new words and new body languages related to cars have come into use. The gesture " thumb up" in English means

good, excellent, agreement” , but is more often used to get a free ride in a motor vehicle.

In Russia and China where the industrial development of automobile is relatively late and the basic development of auto industry is in socialist period, the gesture for calling a taxi or getting a free ride is different from the one in English countries and has become popular only in recent years. (See Figure 22)

Figure 22


Body language	In English	In Russian	In Chinese
the gesture “ thumb up” 	1 It means “ good, excellent, agreement” 2 It is used to get a free ride (See Figure 23)	It means “ good, excellent, agreement”	It means “ good, excellent, agreement”

Figure 23



But there are differences in this kind of gestures between UK and USA too. As we know, Englishmen drive by left and sit on the right, while Americans do just the opposite. Therefore, when the traffic lights do not work, Englishmen stretch the right hand out of their car windows to hint the direction, but Americans must stretch the left hand.

As for body languages in modern economic life and sports activities, many Chinese and Russian gestures in this category are just taken from Western countries. For example, basketball was invented in U.S.A. in 1891. In this year a sports teacher James Nasmith in Springfield, Massachusetts invented the basketball sport and made the first rules of the game. In 1908 USA made the unified basketball rules and introduced to the whole world in many languages. Afterwards, basketball with its rules has been gradually spread all over America, Europe and Asia and has become a world sport. So, in basketball games the gesture for substituting (two forearms surround each other), the gesture for stopping are the same in Russia, China and English speaking countries. Generally speaking, this kind of body language is more international, so the cultural difference does not exist. We think this is the reason why the Chinese basketball player Yao Ming, the Russian forward Andere Kirilenko and the famous American basketball player Jordan Michael can play basketball together without misinterpretations of the gesture rules.

2.4 An experiment on the extent to which three aspects of culture influence body languages

In order to find out to what extent the three aspects of culture (spiritual, institutional and material) influence body languages, the author conducted an experiment on body language in the School of Foreign Studies of Anhui University by means of questionnaires (See Appendix 1). Figure 24 presents the information of subjects.

Figure 24

Major	Grade	Number
English	Third-year students	40
Russian	Fourth-year students	20

The subjects are all third-and fourth-year students because in English department the course *Intercultural Communication* is offered to third-year students, and in Russian department the course *Лингвострановедение* is offered only to fourth-year students.

The students’ feedbacks about influence of spiritual factors, institutional factors and material factors on body language are presented by Figure 25, Figure 26 and Figure 27.

The results of the experiment in other aspects will be mentioned in Chapter 3.

Figure 25

Influence of spiritual factors on body language	Number of English majors	Percentage of English majors	Number of Russian majors	Percentage of Russian majors
Great	25	62.5%	16	80%

Quite great	8	20%	4	20%
Some	6	15%	/	/
Little	1	2.5%	/	/
No	/	/	/	/

Figure 26

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Influence of spiritual factors on body language	Number of English majors	Percentage of English majors	Number of Russian majors	Percentage of Russian majors
Great/ Quite great	23	57.5%	13	65%
Some/ Little/ No	17	42.5%	7	35%

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Figure 27

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Influence of spiritual factors on body language	Number of English majors	Percentage of English majors	Number of Russian majors	Percentage of Russian majors
Great/ Quite great	19	47.5%	9	45%
Some/ Little/ No	21	52.5%	11	55%

The students' feedbacks show that more than 80% of the students think the influence of spiritual factors on body language is great or quite great; more than 50% of the students think the influence of institutional factors on body language is great or quite great; only almost 45% of the students think that materials, such as architecture, dressing, eating habits, tools etc. have " certain influence" , " quite great influence" and " very great influence" on body language

The conclusion we can arrive at is that the impact of spiritual culture on body language is the greatest, the spiritual factors are the main internal causes of the cultural differences of the body languages; the institutional factors are the external drive to the formation of the cultural differences of the body languages; in contrast to the spiritual and institutional culture, the influence of material culture on body language is relatively weak, it is the embodiment and the important conditions of forming their differences.

Chapter III

Studying & Teaching the Cultural Differences

of Body Languages

3.1 Principles for studying the cultural differences of body languages

From the preceding chapter we can see that there do exist great cultural variations of body language, so the study of it is undoubtedly necessary. In this chapter the author will come up with some principles for guiding our study.

First, in intercultural study we should always try to avoid ethnocentrism (the belief that one' s culture is primary to all explanations of reality), the same attitude should be taken towards the study of body language. Avoiding ethnocentrism requires that people respect any kind of culture and not judge another culture' s behavior on the basis of their own, if they differ. This is because the purpose of intercultural study is to help people understand differences between cultures, help them to conquer cultural barriers in practice and finally to promote a successful intercultural communication.

Second, we should not exaggerate the difference and ignore the generality of body language culture.

Although the paper tries to call attention to cultural differences of body language by demonstrating many examples, we should bear in mind that body language has generality to a certain degree too. Some are biological ones, as the paper has already stated, others are the result under the

great impact of intercultural communication. In recent years, with the rapid progress of modern science and technology, the connection between people from different regions, nations and continents are getting much tighter and closer by means of tourism, migration, communication system and so on. As a result, the merging of cultures is taking place naturally in cultural interchanges. Some body languages that originally belonged to one culture, now can be world widely accepted and used, such as the gestures " OK" and " V" . In this sense, we think that the body language culture, like the culture itself, is not a static one, so we should know that our conclusion of the cultural differences of body language is time-bound and may become obsolete.

Then another question may be put forward: will the cultural differences of body language disappear in future due to the coming globalization? The paper holds that since spiritual culture is the main cause of cultural differences of body language, it is the covert culture including ideologies, values, ways of thinking, beliefs and so on; it is relatively stable in contrast to institutional and material culture, so we think that the body languages related to this category must be relatively stable too. Moreover, we think every nation cherishes its own culture, its own cultural wealth, pluralism of culture including the pluralism of the body languages is the important condition that the development and prosperity of world culture depend on, so the globalization of culture will not occur so easily, as the globalization of economy does.

Third, body languages are numerous, cultural differences of the body languages are many and complicated too. So, in research work on cultural differences **we must make classification according to our research purpose and research condition.**

There are many types of classification in previous studies. For example, the pioneers of body language studies Ekman P. and V. Friesen classified the body language into five groups: emblems, illustrators, affective display, regulators and adaptors. This kind of classification laid a stress on the functions of body language, and cultural differences were illustrated with examples. Larry A. Samovar, a famous scholar of intercultural studies, divided the cultural differences of body languages according to the behaviors of human' s body: general appearance and dress, body movement, postures, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and gaze, touch, smell and paralanguage. In each group Samovar selected many examples from different cultures, especially those which can lead to cultural shock. We think that the purpose of his study is to make people aware of the cultural barriers caused by body language. There are still other classifications such as Chinese scholar Bi Jiwan' s classification, which was made according to Prof. Lu Shuxiang' s (Bi Jiwan, 1999:10) approach to the contrastive study of language differences: " There are three ways in which body languages of two cultures are different. One is that the two are absolutely unlike; the second is that one body language has several equivalents in another culture; the third is that one has no equivalents at all in another culture." Yang Xiaoli (1994), a scholar from Anhui University, even made a research into the body language in Chinese idioms and divided these body language idioms into four basic types: facial expression, body movements, voice hint, dressing and decorations.

This paper is the first to make a study from the perspective of the nature of culture and divides the differences into spiritual stratum, institutional stratum and material stratum. We hold that this kind of classification can not only offer an in-depth understanding of cultural background in which the differences of body languages are rooted, but also contribute to the general theory of cultural differences and help us to transform our perceptual knowledge into rational knowledge.

In one word, only through scientific classification can we do a successful research into the cultural differences.

3.2 Necessity and ways of introducing cultural differences of body language into foreign language teaching

Nowadays it has been generally acknowledged that the final aim of foreign language teaching and learning is the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence. The concept of intercultural communicative competence is proposed by western scholars such as Ruben (1976) just a few decades ago, so there are different views about its definition and components in the academic circle. Our interest here is not in providing a theoretical definition, but in using the term to call attention on body language teaching and training.

First of all, intercultural communicative competence is undoubtedly based on a good language proficiency referring to reading, writing, listening, speaking and translating. Is body language related to language? Of course, the answer is yes, because body language is part of language. For example, according to Yang Xiaoli' s statistics, in Chinese idioms there are already 860 idioms concerning body language, such as 眉飞色舞, 挤眉弄眼, 昂首挺胸, 俯首称臣, 捶胸顿足, 拍手称快, 手舞足蹈, 抓耳挠腮 and so on. The Gesture Idioms in English and in Russian are commonly used in language too, such as " keep one' s fingers crossed, shrug off, pats on the back, with folded arms, with open arms, thumb a ride, twiddle one' s thumbs, etc.; вешать нос (be in low spirits), шелкать пальцем по горлу(шее) (invitation for drinking), положить руку на сердце (be frank), выставлять большой палец и мизинец (refers to bottle, drinking), грозить пальцем (threaten), смотреть сквозь пальцы (be indifferent to sth.). Moreover, in literary works the description of the hero' s body movements are an important approach to reveal the psychology and the personality of the hero, the right interpretation of the body language can contribute to the better understanding of work.

Secondly, the core of the concept intercultural communicative competence is communicative competence. Human communication consists of two parts: verbal and nonverbal. The paper holds that communicative competence should include nonverbal communicative competence, such as body language. The famous Chinese scholars Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing (1990:145) stated in their book *Language & Culture* " When one communicates in a certain language, it is generally advisable to use the nonverbal behavior that goes with that particular language. Observation shows that a truly bilingual person switches his body language at the same time he switches languages. This makes communication easier and better." But the test result of our investigation shows that over 50% of the students failed to give the correct answers to the number gestures in

English. So we must pay attention to body language learning in foreign language teaching.

Thirdly, intercultural communicative competence requires that the participants of the intercultural communication have cultural awareness and bi-cultural competence. In our investigation more than 90% of the students think there are communicative obstacles and misunderstandings caused by body language in communication between people from different cultural backgrounds, and more than 95% of the students think the reason of these communicative obstacles and misunderstandings is cultural difference. Like language culture, body language culture should also be introduced into foreign language teaching. Moreover, 73% of the English majors and 88% of the Russian majors think studying cultural differences and introducing it into foreign language teaching to improve the communicative competence are "quite important or very important". Thus, this paper comes up with some basic approaches to introducing cultural differences of body language into foreign language teaching or strengthening its training.

1. To present students with abundant and various materials about the body language culture, such as reading materials and video tapes. And by studying the body movements of different nationalities, students can acquaint themselves with the nature of cultural differences of body language and cultivate their cultural awareness.
2. To offer more interactive activities to students. As we know, body language is mainly used in human's face-to-face communication, so the best approach to training is practice. Many language teachers like to choose role-play exercises for students. Have you ever noticed and corrected the nonverbal error that students have made in communication? For example, once some students of mine played the friends' party in Russian. There is nothing wrong with their language, but one student made a gesture of drinking in Chinese way. Catching this occasion, I taught them the right gesture in Russian: *выставлять большой палец и мизинец*, it is similar to the Chinese gesture of figure 6, just the thumb should be put upwards and the little finger downwards to simulate goblet or wine bottle.
3. By making full use of internet (for instance, there is one website of foreign language at home - <http://www.englishchina.com/> - with the platform for foreign language teaching exchanges, which can offer us new information and materials about language and body language), teachers and students can do some further research together. Body languages are complicated and numerous, and are changing. So it is very important for us to do this basic work.

Chapter IV Conclusion

Humans communicate in two ways: verbal and nonverbal. Body language, as the most important part of nonverbal communication, plays an important role in humans' communication.

Most of the body languages vary from culture to culture. Due to this, its cultural differences already become the chief barriers to a successful intercultural communication.

According to the author's point of view, in order to get in-depth understanding of cultural differences of body language, we should try to combine our study with the cultural backgrounds it belongs to. Thus the paper first classifies the cultural differences of body languages between English, Russian and Chinese into the three strata of each main culture: spiritual, institutional and material and holds that spiritual culture is the main cause of cultural differences of body language. It is the internal factor. The institutional culture is the external drive to form the cultural differences of body language. And the material culture is the embodiment and the important condition of forming differences.

The paper holds that on the one hand, we should make more studies on the cultural differences of body language; on the other hand we should try to introduce it into foreign language teaching, such as the causes *Audio-Visual*, *Intensive Reading*, *Extensive Reading*, *Intercultural Communication* and *Translation*, because studying and teaching the cultural differences of body language can help students better understand its culture background, improve their language learning, cultivate their all-round intercultural communicative competence and achieve a successful intercultural communication.

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Appendix 1

调查表

麻烦您能花上几分钟时间完成以下的调查，如果您对跨文化交际有兴趣的话，那么，让我们一同来研究一下跨文化交际中的体态语吧。

先行致谢！

1.你认为不同文化背景的中、美、英、俄国家的人们在文化交际过程中，除了语言交际过程中可能会产生误解或障碍外，在体态语等非语言交际也会产生误解或障碍吗？

[是]	[否]
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2.你认为这些交际误解或障碍（甚至冲突）是因为彼些间存在着文化差异的原因吗？











[是]	[否]
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3.你如何评估下面各方面的文化因素影响体态语的程度？

（1表示“没有影响”，5表示“影响非常大”；1→5影响递增）

宗教信仰、价值观念、思维方式、教育背景对体态语的影响	①	②	③	④	⑤
伦理道德、社会风尚、法制规章对体态语的影响	①	②	③	④	⑤
建筑、服饰、餐饮、工具等物质产品对体态语的影响	①	②	③	④	⑤

4.以下是英语体态语中表示数字的习惯手势，请在手势下填入相应数字。

5.你认为体态语文化差异研究与教学对提高我们的跨文化交际能力重要吗?

① 不重要→②→③→④→⑤ 非常重要

占用了您的时间，再次表示感谢！

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