# Cultural Conflicts in Intercultural Communication Between Western and Eastern Cultures in Foreign Language Teaching

Vo Thi Quynh Trang

Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry, Vietnam

## ABSTRACT

The research paper identifies the causes of intercultural communication conflicts in foreign language learning and proposes solutions. The author employed a qualitative research approach, including comparative analysis, investigation, and solution-oriented proposals. Through these methods, the study revealed cultural differences in intercultural communication between Western and Eastern cultures. These differences manifest in perceptions of objects and worldviews, cultural aspects in daily communication, such as differences in eloquence, perceptions of time, etiquette and gift-giving, table manners, forms of address, humor, and concepts of privacy. The study recommends the elimination of cultural biases and prejudices and puts forth principles to help teachers and learners manage intercultural communication conflicts in foreign language learning. These principles include fair and objective communication, seeking common ground while respecting differences, adapting to situations, and respecting cultural knowledge while avoiding hasty judgments. The study also suggests measures to address intercultural communication conflicts in teaching, such as developing learners' intercultural communication skills, enhancing intercultural communication competence, cultivating a multicultural perspective, improving individual cultural quality, stimulating learners' interest in culture, increasing learners' awareness of conscious cultural usage, and creating a multicultural communication environment in the classroom.

**Keywords:** cultural differences, conflicts, foreign language teaching

## 1    Introduction

Culture is a social phenomenon, a product formed by human creative activities. Culture is also a historical phenomenon, a collection of social history. Each generation inherits the original culture while continuously eliminating and renewing it, contributing to the development of social culture. Culture has ethnic and unique characteristics, and is a symbol of differentiation between nations. Due to the regional, ecological environment, economic, political, and social systems, historical contexts, customs, and beliefs of different ethnic groups, each culture has its own characteristics. Language and culture are closely related. Since the 1920s, American linguist (Sapir, 1921) in "Language" said: "There is something behind language, and language cannot exist without culture." Language is the most important tool for communication and thinking of humans, language and culture complement and depend on each other. Teaching foreign languages is also teaching culture, the teaching object is students with different cultural backgrounds, so conflicts in communication between cultures will certainly occur, leading to negative impacts on the teaching effectiveness. To achieve effective foreign language teaching and achieve the desired teaching goals, studying intercultural communication conflicts has great significance.

## 2    Literature review

Research on language and culture has achieved significant achievements worldwide. In particular, numerous research articles have been published in the fields of language and culture, among which the most prominent are Nancy Bonvillain's "Language, Culture and Communication" (2019), William Foley's "Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction" (1997) from the University of Sydney, Australia, Duranti, A. (1997) from the University of California, Los Angeles. In addition, there are new developments in intercultural communication research, with William Gudykunst's "Communicating With Strangers" (1997) and Dodd, C. H. (1994) being notable works. With the popularity of sociolinguistics and intercultural communication, people have gradually realized that if they lack knowledge and understanding of the cultural background of the language they are learning, even if their basic knowledge of the language is excellent, they still cannot avoid difficulties. Therefore, language teaching cannot be limited to the language system itself but must be closely related to the cultural context of the language being learned. Instead of the primitive model of "using language to teach language," in the process of teaching foreign languages, students should be trained in target cultural awareness or sensitivity to culture, so that they can communicate in the language accurately and appropriately. For a long time, learning a second language and culture has been regarded as a process belonging to "target language culture." Stauble pointed out that "the success of learning the target language for second language learners depends on their degree of integration into the target language culture" (Byram, 1989). In terms of acquiring a second language, it is almost similar to that of a native speaker, but in terms of acquiring a second culture, the phenomenon of "cultural assimilation" of the target language is not considered a success in teaching foreign languages. (Kramsch, 1993) breaks the framework of the traditional viewpoint of "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" in foreign language teaching and proposes a new perspective. She believes that teaching culture in foreign language instruction should be positioned as "consciousness raising" rather than "acceptance and absorption". The purpose of teaching culture is not to make learners become more and more "alienated", but rather through "cross-cultural dialogue" to help learners have knowledge and awareness of cross-cultural communication, in order to achieve interaction between the second culture and the mother tongue. Gao, Y. (1995) pointed out that "in the process of learning the target language, the proficiency of the target language and the mother tongue complement each other; the ability to perceive the culture of the target language and the culture of the mother tongue promote each other; the potential of the learner can be developed".

## 3    Methodology

The main methodology used in this article is a comparative analysis approach with an emphasis on individual research and proposing solutions. The individual research is based on analyzing the basic characteristics of intercultural communication conflicts and explaining cultural stereotypes and prejudices. The comparative analysis approach is used to identify the fundamental cultural differences between the East and the West, clarifying the main factors of conflicts in intercultural communication. The proposed solutions are derived from the negative impacts of intercultural communication conflicts on foreign language teaching, and the article suggests practical methods to resolve these conflicts, thereby proposing ideas for establishing intercultural communication courses in foreign language teaching.

## 4    Results and Discussion

### 4.1    Cross-cultural communication and characteristics of Cross-cultural communication

"Cross-cultural communication" refers to a specific communication situation where individuals from different cultural backgrounds use the same language (native or target language) to communicate verbally. In such communication, conflicts and even disputes can arise. Therefore, cross-cultural communication

requires appropriate communication skills. The following are some characteristics of cross-cultural communication:

- The communicators come from different cultural backgrounds.
- The communicators use the same language to communicate.
- The communication is carried out in real time using spoken language.
- The communication is carried out directly through verbal communication.

## 4.2 Cultural Differences between the West and the East

From the perspective of intercultural communication, the differences between Eastern and Western cultures are mainly reflected in two aspects: First, the differences in perception of objects, specifically the differences in values and ethical standards and the differences in objective perception of the world. Second, the differences in cultural practices in daily communication, mainly the differences in the degree of eloquence, concepts of time, expressions of gratitude and gift-giving, dining etiquette, modes of address, use of sarcasm, and concepts of privacy.

### 4.2.1 Differences in Perception of Objects

**The differences in values and ethical standards:** In the West, individualism is more significant than collectivism, believing that humans play an important role in things and values, and they see themselves as the center of life. Whereas in the East (China and Vietnam) under the influence of Confucianism, collectivism is higher than individualism, and the principle of minority obedience to the majority has deeply rooted in the thoughts of everyone, forming distinct cultural values. Therefore, when facing interests, the decision-making process often differs. For example, Westerners abandon public property for their own life, while Easterners always have a collective consciousness, facing the loss of public property, they often choose to sacrifice personal interests. Especially, Americans strongly support individualism, one of the most commonly quoted sayings in the US is "Let's eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die". But this belief is not suitable for the culture of Chinese and Vietnamese people, who prioritize collective interests, hence the saying "先天下之忧而忧, 后天下之乐而乐" (worry about the worries of the world first, and then enjoy the joys of the world).

The traditional view of the universe in China is "天人合一" (heaven and human are one), and when faced with difficulties, people seek divine protection. Believing that humans are an inseparable part of nature, the values of worshiping heaven in Chinese and Vietnamese cultures are reflected in language, for example, when people encounter emergency situations, they often say "天啊! Trời ơi!"(Oh my God). People worshiping heaven should work according to the will of heaven, worship heaven and believe in the will of heaven, so they dare to act against it. Therefore, they rarely want to challenge nature and conquer nature. On the contrary, the West adheres to the principle of "天人相分" (separation of human and nature), believing that humans and nature are relatively independent, and what people worship is conquering nature and striving for freedom. "Freedom" seems to be the most important aspect of Western culture. In Western culture, when people encounter unexpected situations, they often exclaim "Oh, my God". What they admire is the deity, not heaven.

People in the East always have a good virtue of giving up "小我 -Tiểu ngã" ( individual self) for the "大我 – Đại ngã" (collective self). Individual self refers to the individual, collective self refers to the group. Therefore, Chinese people often care more about what others think of them and care about their image in the eyes of those around them. In Western culture, people pay more attention to the development of the individual and believe that social values can be achieved through the development of personal values. As long as personal values are realized, social values will be correspondingly realized. This value perspective is

completely opposite to the value perspective that takes the group as the center in East Asian culture. Westerners often do not care about the opinions of others, what is important is their own emotions. Traditional Chinese thought believes that "吃得苦中苦, 方为人上人" (only by enduring hundreds of hardships and thousands of bitterness can one achieve success, become respected and loved by others), but Americans believe that enjoying life and pursuing happiness are inherent rights of human beings. In the "Declaration of Independence" of the United States, it was written "The pursuit of happiness".

**Difference in worldview perception:** Different ethnic groups have different perceptions of the objective world, and in the process of development and evolution, they also have different perceptions of the same object. For example, the perception of "dog" in Western and Eastern cultures has completely different meanings, emotions, and psychological reactions. This is also reflected in language, where the word "dog" in Western culture carries positive connotations and is often praised, such as in the phrases "lucky dog," "every dog has its day," "top dog," and "love me love my dog." However, in Eastern culture, the word "dog" often carries negative connotations and is used as an insult. In Chinese, the word "dog" is often associated with insults, such as "狗汉奸" (traitor), "走狗" (lackey), "狗眼看人低" (to look down upon someone), "狗急跳墙" (to act desperately), and "狗皮膏药" (hypocrite). Similarly, in Vietnamese, phrases such as "đồ chó đẻ" (someone who speaks ill of others), "chó cậy gần nhà, gà cậy gần chuồng" (someone who relies on proximity), "chó già giữ xương" (someone who is greedy), "chó dữ cắn càn" (someone who is aggressive), and "đánh nhau như chó với mèo" (someone who likes to fight) all reflect negative connotations associated with dogs and cats.

In Western culture, according to the Bible, "dragon" is a symbol of evil, a fierce and savage creature that guards treasures. On the contrary, in Eastern culture, "dragon" is a sacred symbol, a symbol of kings and emperors, a symbol of supreme status and power. In Chinese and Vietnamese, words with the character "龙-rong" always have positive connotations, for example, 龙争虎斗 (representing a contest of equals), 望子成龙 (representing the hope for children to become successful), 龙腾虎跃 (representing a powerful momentum). In Vietnamese, there are also phrases such as rồng bay phượng múa (referring to beautiful calligraphy strokes), cá chép hóa rồng (representing success in an examination), cá gặp nước, rồng gặp mây (meaning favorable conditions and good luck), chạm rồng trổ phượng (representing ornate and exquisite decoration), con Rồng cháu Tiên (representing the proud lineage of the Vietnamese people). In English, the hope for children to succeed is often expressed as "to hope that one's son will become somebody," but it cannot be expressed as "to hope that one's son will become a dragon" as it can be in Chinese and Vietnamese. Moreover, "four Asian dragons" in English is not expressed as "four Asian dragons," but as "four Asian tigers."

In Eastern culture, the color red is a symbol of happiness, success, good luck, loyalty, wealth, and prosperity. This comes from the worship of the sun god in ancient times. During the Lunar New Year, one of the most important festivals in China, people will paste red couplets, hang red lanterns, and give red envelopes to children; in traditional weddings in China and Vietnam, the bride and groom will wear lucky red clothing. It can be seen that red is a word of praise with positive symbolic meanings in Chinese and Vietnamese, for example in Chinese: 红人 (meaning favored, trusted and valued person), 开门红 (meaning smooth sailing and good luck), 红运 (meaning good fortune), 红火 (meaning thriving business and prosperity), 红尘 (meaning the worldly life full of bustling and exciting activities), 红利 (meaning profit distributed to shareholders or bonus for employees), 红榜 (meaning honor roll), 红包 (meaning a red envelope as a gift to express appreciation or blessing). In Vietnamese, the color red also carries positive meanings, for example: số đỏ (meaning lucky number), vận đỏ (meaning lucky encounter), đen tình đỏ bạc (meaning

good fortune in money matters), trải thảm đỏ (meaning to warmly welcome someone). In Western culture, the color red is a word with negative connotations, representing anger, rage, and danger, for example: see red (meaning to be angry), red-blooded (meaning cruel), red light (meaning danger); it also symbolizes bloody rebellion, for example: the red rules of tooth and draw, red hot political campaign. It can be seen that the negative meaning of the color red is quite clear in Western culture.

### 4.2.2    Cultural conflicts in daily communication

**Cultural differences in greetings:** In China and Vietnam, acquaintances often ask "Have you eaten yet? Where are you going? Are you feeling well? Are you busy?", etc. However, these questions are not necessary to verify whether you have had your meal or where you are going, but rather a way of greeting. China and Vietnam are both large agricultural countries where the most important thing is to eat well and stay warm. Therefore, it is very natural to ask about meals and destinations when meeting each other, and over time, this has become a daily greeting. These greetings are equivalent to "hi" and "hello" in English, and sometimes they are a way of chatting and confiding in each other. If you use this greeting style in Western culture, it may cause misunderstanding, even discomfort, as it is related to privacy issues, and may be misunderstood as an invitation for dinner or something that is not your business.

**Concept of time:** Time is money. In Western culture, time is extremely valuable, and we should not waste other people's time. When visiting others, it is necessary to make an appointment in advance for the time and place. If you drop by without notice, it may disrupt the other person's schedule, causing discomfort and even aversion. Chinese and Vietnamese people tend to arrange their lives more casually, and unplanned visits can bring more surprise and excitement. Therefore, if someone visits without permission, it will definitely make them unhappy.

**Personal image and gift-giving:** Maintaining one's image and gift-giving have become an essential part of daily life, and cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings when giving gifts. Westerners do not care about the value of the gift, whether it is expensive or not. When receiving a gift from someone else, they usually open it in front of them and express their joy and gratitude. Chinese people will measure the value of the gift based on the actual situation. If a cheap gift is given, it shows that the giver is stingy and lacks dignity. When giving gifts, one should be modest and humble, and when receiving gifts, one should politely refuse and usually wait until the guest has left before opening the gift. These two ways of gift-giving are completely opposite, and they will certainly cause conflict for people who do not understand intercultural communication.

**The ritual on the dinner table:** Easterners have a tradition of being good hosts. At banquet parties, they usually enthusiastically invite each other to drink, and the table is full of delicious food. However, the host always says a few polite phrases, such as "多多包涵" (meaning "please excuse the food if it is not good") or "家常便饭" (meaning "this is just a family meal"). Sometimes the host will use chopsticks to pick up food and put it in the guest's bowl, urging them to eat more and drink a lot. If they do not eat or drink a lot, they will be considered disrespectful to the host. In the West, people respect personal rights and privacy, so they will not force others to do things that are difficult. When eating, they will never pick up food and force you to eat it. You can eat whatever you want, and they will not use different methods to persuade you to drink or force you to drink until you are drunk.

**The way of saying goodbye:** The way of saying goodbye is quite straightforward and direct in Western countries, usually indicating that "I have to go now" and sending friends off at the right time, leaving private time for the other person. When Easterners say goodbye, it is relatively subtle and flexible, often expressing "I have a little something to do, I need to go," and when seeing off, they should go as far as possible to

show their affection and respect for the other person. If you say goodbye like this to a Westerner, they will feel like they are wasting their time and invading the other person's privacy.

**Difference in addressing:** Easterners are influenced by the education of Confucianism culture, and are quite formal in addressing others. Based on blood relations, roles in the family, social status, and position, appropriate forms of address are used, for example, 大伯 (oldest uncle on the father's side), 二叔 (second youngest uncle on the father's side), 四舅 (third youngest uncle on the mother's side), 王老师 (Teacher Wang, a teacher with the surname Wang), 张教授 (Professor Zhang, a professor with the surname Zhang), 苏主任 (Director Su, a department head with the surname Su), etc. The forms of address always reflect the roles, status, and respect of the individuals involved.

However, in Western countries, especially in the United States, there is a culture of emphasizing equality among people. When addressing others, using their first name is seen as friendly and will not cause offense. For example, in many American universities, professors prefer their students to address them as "Mr./Mrs. X" instead of "Professor X". This is because America is a country that values freedom and equality, especially in the realm of academia, where freedom and equality are particularly important and there is no distinction between high and low status.

**Difference in modesty of speech:** When receiving compliments from others, Chinese and Vietnamese people often express modesty, considering it polite to downplay themselves and show respect for others. On the other hand, Westerners often find this modesty confusing and prefer to accept compliments with enthusiasm and respond with confidence. For example, many foreign students cannot understand the long-standing tradition of modesty in China, and Chinese language teachers often explain that if someone says to you, "David, you are really enthusiastic!" older people will modestly reply, "哪里，哪里" (no, no, it's not true at all). If someone compliments Mary by saying, "You're really beautiful!" Chinese people often reply, "哪里，哪里，一点都不漂亮" (no, no, I'm not beautiful at all). This modesty can be confusing for foreigners, as they do not know that it is an art of expressing fluidity in the Chinese language.

**The difference in perception of privacy:** The concept of privacy in Chinese culture is relatively weak. Individuals are considered to belong to the collective and emphasis is placed on unity, love, and caring for one another. They are often willing to understand each other's difficulties and the other person also wants to share their thoughts and feelings with them. In contrast, people in the West place a great deal of importance on personal privacy. They pay attention to their personal space and do not want to discuss their personal matters with others or let others interfere with them. Therefore, the East and the West often clash over privacy issues. For example, when Chinese people meet for the first time, they often ask about age, marital status, children, occupation, and even income. In the eyes of Chinese people, this is a polite way of getting to know each other, but in the eyes of Westerners, these questions are seen as an invasion of their privacy.

### 4.3  Causes of intercultural communication conflicts

The reason for intercultural communication conflicts is due to individuals having different cultural backgrounds in communication regarding pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. However, these are only external factors, and cultural habits are the internal factors. Gu, J. (1988:103) once said: "When people in native-speaking countries talk to foreigners, they tend to have a tolerant attitude towards the pronunciation and grammar errors of foreigners; conversely, they often see violations of dialogue norms as rude behavior." From this, it can be inferred that if foreigners learn Chinese, Vietnamese, or any other language in a target language environment but do not understand the culture of China, Vietnam, or any other country, their actions not only cause dissatisfaction for the locals but also lead to a feeling of cultural

failure within themselves. Here, the author introduces two reasons leading to intercultural communication conflicts: cultural prejudices and stereotypes.

The concept of cultural prejudice was first mentioned by American sociologist Lippmann in his book "Public Opinion" published in 1922. He pointed out that the environment in which humans live, whether natural or social, is too complex. To save time, people use a simplified method of perception to form "cultural prejudices". Cultural prejudices have both positive and negative aspects, are a common type of appearance, and have a relatively stable and continuous nature. In most communication, the negative aspect lies in the fact that people may have preconceived impressions of a certain culture without having any contact with it, such as thinking that the Chinese are humble, the British are cold and distant, the Germans are stubborn, the French are romantic, the Americans are straightforward and optimistic, etc. This can certainly cause intercultural communication conflicts.

Gao, Y. (1995:52) believes that "When the differences between Eastern and Western cultures cause misunderstandings and cultural conflicts, we often think about issues from our own cultural perspective, and this habit gradually forms cultural stereotypes. Cultural stereotypes have some clear basic characteristics: excessive generalization, excessive simplification, influence and stubbornness." When people from different cultures communicate with each other, it is difficult for them to actively perceive intercultural communication, leading to communication barriers or even communication failure. These barriers mainly come from the cultural prejudices of each ethnic group.

The basic components of culture and society are formed by three parts: ideology formed by beliefs, values, faith, etc.; products formed by literature, art, music, etc.; and behavior formed by basic needs of life such as dressing, customs and traditions, and leisure time. Anthropologists believe that culture is the emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors formed by humans in long-term social interactions. Language is a means of transmitting culture. Therefore, those who learn a language in a cross-cultural context and those who communicate in a cross-cultural context must understand and master the hidden social culture within the language environment.

The "Encyclopedia of China" defines prejudice as making judgments based on certain external signs or misinformation, leading to errors in judgment or a situation that is not consistent with reality. Subjective causes arise when people perceive the world of objects, look at issues with subjective consciousness and emotions, and discuss people and objects. According to the perspective of each individual, the view of the phenomenon is always different and based on standing on their own perspective, expressing theories and viewpoints based on their own perspectives and feelings.

Cultural prejudice is the inaccurate perception of people belonging to this culture towards people belonging to other cultures in cross-cultural communication. Due to the relationship between language and culture, in the process of using language, it can reflect the subtle structure of human thinking and consciousness, especially when there is cultural prejudice, in the language aspect, it will show the contradiction and conflict of cross-cultural communication.

## 4.4 Teaching strategies to eliminate intercultural communication conflicts

### 4.4.1 Eliminating cultural prejudices and biases

To solve the problem of conflicts between cultures in teaching foreign languages, the author believes that the first thing to do is to eliminate long-standing cultural prejudices and biases, which bring prejudices based on long-term differences such as religion, belief, ideology, and values into teaching. To eliminate cultural prejudices and biases, we must first establish a multicultural awareness. Whether teaching any foreign language in a target language environment or in a non-target language environment, we need to actively establish awareness of intercultural communication. Teaching a foreign language is not only about

teaching the language itself, but also teaching the culture of that language. We must be aware that culture is something that is familiar to the learners' ears. For example, when teaching in a target language environment, someone who is aware of the differences in education culture between East and West can avoid prejudices of Chinese education culture, actively improve Chinese-style teaching methods, adjust teaching methods according to specific teaching targets, avoid using traditional Chinese education cultural prejudices to establish teaching plans, teaching methods, teaching programs, etc. We need to enhance subjective awareness of intercultural communication, and be prepared to cope with conflicts, refraining from expressing cultural prejudices in words.

Secondly, we should value the accumulation of intercultural knowledge. Accumulating intercultural communication knowledge is very important for foreign language teachers. Doing well in the work of researching, learning, and accumulating intercultural knowledge related to the culture of the teaching targets, whether it is teaching in a target language environment or not. Many cultural conflicts stem from a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of the other culture. For example, a prejudice against South Korea is that it is a country of plastic surgery, but you cannot randomly ask a Korean student if they have had plastic surgery and then generalize cultural prejudices to individual cases, leading to communication conflicts. In fact, not all Koreans support or accept plastic surgery, and some are even proud of that fact. At the same time, in the process of constantly learning and accumulating, we should compare subjectively with the culture of our own country, look at the differences from an objective perspective as much as possible, think about the problem, avoid conflicts, and seek solutions.

### 4.4.2    Principles of Resolving Intercultural Communication Conflict

To resolve conflicts in intercultural communication, the following principles should be followed:

Firstly, the principle of fair and objective communication. In a multicultural world, there are many rich and diverse cultures, and there is no good or bad, high or low. As a foreign language teacher, it is not enough to have a subjective perception of one's own culture. If different cultures are seen as ethnocentric or cultural prejudices and biases, it will be difficult to perceive cultural differences objectively and fairly, and there will naturally be injustice in teaching here. For example, impatience in teaching students with prejudices, perfunctory teaching or even refusing to teach, biased teachers, serious and patient teaching for students with a cultural background formed by economic factors; discrimination in treatment of exchange students between top-ranked universities and normal universities; discrimination against students affected by historical and political issues, etc. When faced with teaching objects with different cultural backgrounds, we should not feel superior or inferior about culture because of the different level of development of each country. The author has a deep experience of this discrimination when studying for 7 years in Shanghai. This unfair cultural discrimination is reflected in the teaching process and will gradually receive feedback from teaching objects. Due to the nature of this teaching method and the influence of the teacher's image on the impression of the country, students will feel disappointed, disgusted, and resentful towards the teacher. At the same time, the impression of the country tends to develop in an unfavorable direction. Therefore, teaching must always adhere to the principle of persistent fairness as a guide, peaceful dialogue in teaching, and avoid discriminatory teaching behavior.

Secondly, the principle of finding common ground while maintaining differences. Nowadays, the level of internationalization is increasingly high. The interaction, collision, and integration of various cultures are becoming more frequent. As a special profession, foreign language teachers must encompass all the different foreign cultures around the world with an attitude of integration. For example, for students from different countries studying abroad in China, they naturally bring their own different cultures with them. Chinese language teachers must have a spirit of integration and face different cultures. The culture is

imposed on the teaching subject, unified into Chinese culture, and the cultural foundation of the other side is ignored. Conflicts that arise in intercultural communication are considered natural, and it is difficult to accept foreign cultures with an open attitude, which shows signs of cultural centrism or cultural bias. For example, some teachers bluntly tell Arab girls who come to China as short-term students in the summer, "Why are you wearing clothes like this on such a hot day? Are you not hot?" This is obviously a difficult rejection of their culture, which has caused a negative reaction from the other side. Recognizing the diversity, plurality, and differences in culture, it is essential to respect, accept, and tolerate as many foreign cultures as possible.

Thirdly, the principle of flexibility and adaptation within a framework is important. In teaching, conflicts arising from cultural differences may occur. When faced with such conflicts, teachers should remain calm, self-controlled, and adaptable from the beginning. For example, when a foreign student expressed their impression of Vietnam in class, he directly said that the character of Vietnamese people is very poor, giving examples such as spitting, cursing, making noise, pushing in line, littering, etc. and expressing regret for coming to Vietnam. The teacher immediately explained that some Vietnamese people may have behavioral issues, but it is not appropriate to generalize the entire Vietnamese population. However, the foreign student strongly objected and said that what he saw was true, and that this was his personal cultural prejudice.

Fourthly, it is important to respect knowledge and avoid hasty evaluations. Many people express their opinions, judgments, and attitudes towards different cultures without realizing that such expressions may hurt the pride and dignity of the other party, even the national pride. Such behavior lacks respect and acceptance for foreign cultures, causing confusion for both parties and leading to communication failure. In teaching foreign languages, teachers and students should naturally communicate across cultures, especially during extracurricular activities. They may discuss certain issues, verify rumors from other cultures, and address student inquiries about certain phenomena in the country they are studying in. If they do not respect the truth, make hasty evaluations, or express negative attitudes, it may lead to intercultural conflicts, disputes, or even abandon.

### 4.4.3    Discussion on methods for resolving intercultural communication conflicts in teaching

Teaching foreign languages along with incorporating culture into lesson content can help prevent intercultural communication conflicts. We must pay attention to teaching culture during language instruction to stimulate student interest in culture. For example, international students studying in the United States are very interested in American culture, but often encounter a contrast between reality and imagination or difference from what they know about America, or disappointment due to cultural stereotypes and prejudices, which can lead to loss of interest in cultural awareness, discourage determination to integrate into the culture, and even result in culture shock. However, for these newly arrived international students, most have poor English proficiency and limited language communication. Therefore, many people focus only on teaching without considering the cultural adaptation of students from the beginning. They regard cultural adaptation as a personal issue and do not care much about the fact that some students drop out, transfer to another school, or become sojourners due to cultural conflicts. The author believes that this is a wrong approach.

We can come up with ideas: first, it is necessary to create a basic cultural class, to understand students' perspectives and identify cultural differences, while providing timely feedback. Organize programs to introduce unique cultures to attract students, stimulate their interests, identify cultural differences, and promote deeper and more profound self-awareness of culture. Make them feel that studying in this country is very interesting and wonderful. Of course, this will also stimulate their interest in learning foreign

languages and bring many benefits to the effectiveness of learning. To understand and have a deep understanding of culture, the best way is to conduct cultural practice activities, which are widely used in teaching and have achieved good results. For teaching Chinese and Vietnamese languages in colleges and universities, international student offices usually have specific cultural practice activities each semester, or cultural exchange activities. Travel experiences have played a good role in resolving communication conflicts between different cultures. Cultural practice activities for foreign students are organized regularly, including international cultural festivals, as well as specific tourism activities. In the international cultural festival, students from each country prepare carefully, displaying representative cultural characteristics of their own country, trying different foods, performing different costumes and dances, etc. to understand and integrate different cultures and resolve conflicts and contradictions between different cultures.

### 4.4.4    Methods to enhance intercultural communication skills for learners

(1) Enhancing intercultural communication ability

Xu, G., & Mei, L. (2002) argue that cross-cultural communication competence is the ability of communicators to perform appropriate and effective communication behaviors in cross-cultural contexts. During the communication process, communicators not only need to follow the rules, behavioral models, and values of the target culture but also achieve the communication goals set. The cross-cultural communication competence of language teachers can be reflected in the following four aspects:

- Language theoretical competence: At least proficient in one spoken language and able to compare and use language in communicative social contexts.

- Language communication competence: Having strategies to communicate successfully with limited language, having awareness of the use of intermediate language and grasping special communication conditions. According to cultural studies, with the improvement of the language proficiency of communicators, cultural conflict phenomena and cultural shock feelings will decrease. Therefore, the most effective way to avoid culture shock is to improve language proficiency.

- Effective communication competence: Having knowledge and mastery of different communication styles, able to recognize different styles and explain communication behavior phenomena in communication, using basic communication principles to avoid and clarify misunderstandings in communication.

- Mastering different cultures: For foreign language teachers, the ability to communicate in different cultures needs to be strengthened, they must study linguistics, comparative culture, foreign cultural studies, cultural communication theory, national studies, cultural communication strategies, and other related fields. At the same time, based on the nationality and culture of the teaching target, learning about cultural and linguistic differences, values, and communication styles is the fastest and most effective way to enhance intercultural communication ability.

It goes without saying that enhancing intercultural communication ability will bring many benefits to resolving intercultural communication conflicts, useful for teaching foreign languages to learners, and contribute to the development of a multicultural society.

(2) Developing a multicultural perspective, establishing a multicultural perspective, and improving individual cultural quality:

Chen, G. (1997) pointed out that "Culture is a summary of thoughts in the process of exploring the laws of objects, nature, human nature, and society. Due to different factors such as context, perspective, customs, thinking, geography, and other factors, different types of cultures have been created, so culture only differs in form, not in value." Culturalism, cultural imperialism, cultural supremacy, and cultural singularism are all narrower values without a multicultural perspective, which is not conducive to the

integration and development of cultural communication. Language teachers for foreigners are the leaders in this special teaching activity, so they should actively build a multicultural perspective, establish a multicultural perspective, face different cultures with an objective and open attitude, and face the cultural diversity of different ethnic groups in the world with fairness and tolerance. Only in this way can teaching proceed smoothly. For example, the etiquette of foreign students with teachers in China shows the casualness of Western students in stark contrast to the respect of Japanese and Korean students, but we should not have opinions about Western students because of Confucian culture. We should recognize and understand the cultural differences between the East and the West. Another example is the farewell greeting of Pakistani students at the end of their emails, which often wishes the recipient a long and healthy life, but cannot explain why they see the teacher as old and dissatisfied. Understanding and interpreting different cultures, improving individual cultural knowledge, and dealing with cultural differences and conflicts in teaching will be easily resolved.

(3) Igniting students' interest in culture:

Interest is an important motivation for learning. If students are interested in their learning goals, they will definitely learn with a positive attitude, understanding and integrating into the cultural learning environment. To stimulate students' interest in learning, teachers can use various methods to stimulate students' interest. For example, when teaching Western students to learn Vietnamese, teachers can discuss topics related to Vietnam's traditional music, introduce traditional musical instruments such as the đàn bầu, đàn nhị, đàn Tơ-rưng, đàn nguyệt and other types of folk music. Teachers can also introduce some folk music genres, such as cải lương, hát chèo, hát dân ca, to arouse students' interest. When explaining traditional costumes of Vietnam, teachers can introduce students to the áo dài, áo tứ thân of the Vietnamese people, etc.

(4) Developing students' awareness of using culture consciously in foreign language learning:

The mother culture deeply influences the learner. Teachers need to encourage learners to apply the thinking and problem-solving approaches of that culture in communication. Teachers need to convey awareness of culture in many aspects of learners' lives and learning. While the cultural differences between the West and the East are significant, teachers convey cultural knowledge and encourage students to develop intercultural awareness. Students need to maintain a fair, objective, and integrating cultural attitude, accepting the culture of their country, in order to use culture consciously in communication.

(5) Creating a cross-cultural communication environment in teaching:

The language environment has a significant impact on language learning. If the learner is in the target language environment, they will progress faster, have more opportunities to communicate in the target language on a daily basis, and the learning process will be more natural and faster. From this perspective, when teaching a foreign language, the teacher can divide the learners into several groups for teaching and for learners to practice speaking in the small language environment created by the teacher. In addition, the teacher can organize "Language Corner" activities to create more learning and communication opportunities for learners. The activities of "Language Corner" can be very diverse, such as drama performances, literature and arts, presentations, traditional costume performances, and other activities for learners to deepen their understanding of the national culture they are learning.

## 5    Conclusions

The research article has identified differences in cross-cultural communication between Western and Eastern cultures. These differences are evident in the perception of objects and the world view. Differences in object perception specifically refer to differences in value and ethical standards, as well as differences in objective world perception. Cultural differences in daily communication mainly relate to differences in

social skills, perceptions of time, expressions and gifts, table manners, forms of address, polite speech, and notions of privacy. The article points out the causes of cross-cultural communication conflicts in foreign language learning. Differences in cross-cultural communication have posed challenges in foreign language teaching, especially when teaching students from different cultural backgrounds.

The research article suggests that eliminating cultural prejudice and bias is necessary to address cross-cultural communication conflicts. Additionally, principles that can help teachers and learners to resolve cross-cultural communication conflicts in foreign language learning are provided, such as principles of fair and objective communication, seeking common ground while preserving differences, being adaptable, and respecting knowledge and avoiding easy judgments.

The research article analyzes and proposes solutions to cross-cultural communication conflicts in teaching, such as cultivating cross-cultural communication skills for learners, enhancing cross-cultural communication competence, establishing a multicultural perspective, improving personal cultural qualities, arousing learners' interest in culture, improving learners' awareness of using culture consciously, creating a cross-cultural communication environment in teaching, and finding appropriate teaching methods to ensure effectiveness.

## 6 Meaning of the study

This study provides an overview of intercultural communication and the differences between Western and Eastern cultures, especially in foreign language teaching.

The study also provides teachers with knowledge and experience to teach foreign languages more effectively to learners from different cultural backgrounds.

This research also has social significance because respecting and understanding each other's cultures is necessary in a diverse and globalized society like today.

This study may also support organizations, businesses, and managers in managing and promoting cultural diversity in the workplace.

## 7 Declarations

### 7.1 Study Limitations

The limitations of this study: This study focuses on presenting the differences in intercultural communication between Eastern and Western cultures, which are manifested in many aspects. At the same time, it provides principles to help teachers and learners resolve intercultural communication conflicts in foreign language learning and has analyzed and proposed measures to address intercultural communication conflicts in teaching. However, the time frame is short and within the scope of a small study, it is difficult to present all the writer's ideas. If there is more time, the writer will further investigate the influence of cultural factors in the process of learning subjects such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and writing. This is a long and difficult task that requires synthesizing many research results in foreign language teaching.

### 7.2 Acknowledgements

## 7.3　Publisher's Note

AIJR remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in institutional affiliations.

## References

Bonvillain, N. (2019). *Language, culture, and communication : the meaning of messages*. Rowman & Littlefield.
https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Language_Culture_and_Communication.html?id=cyyKDwAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y

Byram, M. (1989). *Cultural studies in foreign language education*. Multilingual Matters.
https://books.google.com/books/about/Cultural_Studies_in_Foreign_Language_Edu.html?id=rUaz-565duUC

Chen, G. (1997). *关于对外汉语课中的文化教学问题 [On the Issue of Cultural Teaching in Chinese Language Courses]*. 语言文字应用 [Language and Literature Application], 1, 79.

Dodd, C. H. (1994). *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication* (Fourth Edition). Brown & Benchmark Pub.

Duranti, A. (1997). *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press.

Gu, J. (1988). *文化与行为: 文化人类学巡礼 [Culture and Behavior: An Anthropological Tour]*. 四川人民出版社 [Sichuan People's Publishing House], 108.

Gao, Y. (1995). *文化定型"与"跨文化交际悖论 [Cultural Stereotyping and the Paradox of Intercultural Communication]* - 百度学术. 外语教学与研究 [Foreign Language Teaching and Research], 2, 52.

Foley, W. A. (1997). *Anthropological linguistics : an introduction*. Blackwell Publishers.
https://www.wiley.com/en- us/Anthropological+Linguistics%3A+An+Introduction-p-9780631151227

Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (1997). *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication - William B. Gudykunst,Young Yun Kim - Google Books*. McGraw-Hill.
https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Communicating_with_Strangers.html?id=lsSnQgAACAAJ&redir_esc=y

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*.
https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Context_and_Culture_in_Language_Teaching.html?id=73rFnM6qlrwC&redir_esc=y

Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public Opinion*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Sapir, E. (1921). *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* . Harcourt, Brace.
https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Language.html?id=ofgrAAAAYAAJ&redir_esc=y

Xu, G., & Mei, L. (2002). *文化差异与跨文化交际能力的培养 [Cultivating Intercultural Communication Skills through Cultural Differences]* - 百度学术. 重庆大学学报（社会科学版）[Journal of Chongqing University (Social Science Edition)], 6, 39.
https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=e3463d11dcbf1b1bcd74d64d3023a33f&site=xueshu_se