

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE 跨文化对话

Monochromic and Polychronic Cultures

单一时间模式和多元时间模式

Dialogue 1

Mr. Paul Rosen is the international sales representative for his computer equipment company. His most recent trip takes him to China, where he is scheduled to meet with his Chinese counterpart, Patrick Chang.

Mr. Rosen and his training team arrived in Beijing three days ago for a scheduled appointment with Mr. Chang. However, Mr. Chang has not yet met with

Mr. Rosen or his team. Finally, a call to Mr. Rosen's hotel room indicates that Mr. Chang is prepared to meet with him. When Mr. Rosen arrives at the location, he is asked to wait outside Mr. Chang's office. As he waits, he notices many people entering and leaving Mr. Chang's office at a very quick pace. The hallways of this building are a hustle and bustle of activity, with people shuffling in and out of many rooms. Finally, after several hours, Mr. Rosen is called in to meet Mr. Chang.

Mr. Paul Rosen 是美国一家电脑公司的销售代表，他最近来到中国，按约定要和中国一家公司的销售代表 Patrick Chang 会面。

Mr. Rosen 和他的培训队伍已经在北京等了三天了，终于接到 Mr. Chang 的电话。Mr. Chang 准备和他会面了。到了指定地点后，Mr. Rosen 又在 Mr. Chang 办公室门楼等消息，他看见人们从 Mr. Chang 的办公室出出进进，走廊里人来人往，一幅忙碌的景象。大约过了几个小时之后，Mr. Rosen 被叫了进去。

Mr. Rosen: Ah, Mr. Chang, it's so good to finally see you. Gosh, I've been waiting for days. Did you forget our appointment?

Mr. Chang: Hello, Mr. Rosen. Please sit down. Everything is fine?

Mr. Rosen: Actually no ... (Phone rings) ... the problem is ...

Mr. Chang: Excuse me ... (Takes the phone call and speaks in Chinese. After several minutes he concludes the phone conversation) Yes, now ... everything is fine?

Mr. Rosen: Well, actually, I've got a small problem. You see, the computer equipment you ordered... (A staff person enters the room and hands Mr. Chang something to sign.)

Mr. Chang: Oh, excuse me... (signs the document) Yes, now, everything is fine?

Mr. Rosen: As I was saying ... all of the computer equipment you ordered is just sitting on a ship at the dock. I need your help in getting it unloaded. I mean, it's been there for two weeks!

Mr. Chang: I see ... This is no problem.

Mr. Rosen: Well, if it sits in the heat much longer, it could be damaged. Could I get you to sign a workgroupsto have it unloaded by Friday?

Mr. Chang: There is no need for that. The job will get done.

Mr. Rosen: Well, could we set up some kind of deadline? You see, I have a staff of people here waiting to train your people on the equipment. I need to let them know when it will be ready. How about this Friday? Could we do it then? My people are here now, and they're waiting to begin training.

Mr.Chang: Don-t worry. We have been living quite well without those equipment for years. If necessary, we could wait for several weeks. That's not the problem.

Mr. Rosen : 噢, Mr. Chang, 终于见到你了。天啊, 我等了好几天了, 你忘记咱们的约会了吗?

Mr. Chang : 你好, Mr. Rosen。请坐, 一切进展顺利吗?

Mr. Rosen : 事实上, 不大顺利...(电话铃响)...问题在于...

Mr. Chang : 抱歉...(拿起电话, 说汉语, 几分钟后挂上电话)噢...一切进展顺利吗?

Mr. Rosen : 呃, 实际上, 我遇到了一点困难, 你订购的那批电脑设备...(一个职工走进来递给 Mr. Chang 一个文件让他签字)

Mr. Chang : 噢, 抱歉...(签名)好的, 一切顺利吗?

Mr. Rosen : 我是说...你订购的所有电脑设备都在船上等着卸货呢, 已经等了两个星期了!

Mr. Chang : 我知道了...没事。

Mr. Rosen : 如果搁置时间过长, 设备可能受到损坏, 你能立即下指令在周五以前卸货吗?

Mr. Chang : 没必要那样, 我们会完成这一工作的。

Mr. Rosen : 呃, 你能给一个最后期限吗? 我的职工还在等着训练你们的员工使用这些设备, 我得让他们了解什么时候能准备好。这个星期五开始培训好不好? 我的人都在这里了。

Mr. Chang : 没必要那么急。这么多年了, 我们没使用那些设备, 照样过来了。有必要的話, 我们可以再等几个星期。这不成问题。

There is little chance that Mr. Chang will sign any kind of workgroups for Mr. Rosen. Mr. Rosen is also distressed by the constant interruptions. To Mr. Chang, Mr. Rosen is in too much of a hurry.

Mr. Rosen is monochronic, whereas Mr. Chang operates from a polychronic time orientation.

Mr. Rosen 从 Mr. Chang 那儿了解不到任何工作的进程安排, 他对不断有人打扰谈话也感到很反感。在 Mr. Chang 眼中, Mr. Rosen 办事太急躁了。两个人使用的时间模式不同, Mr. Rosen 具有单一时间导向, Mr. Chang 具有多元时间导向。

Dialogue 2 Working Late(加班)

Liu: We could finish this if we stayed late tonight.

Frank: Has the deadline changed?

Liu: I don't think so, but we're so close.

Frank: Yes, it will be nice to start a new project.

Liu: How late can you stay?

Frank: Me? I'm leaving at quitting time.

Liu : 今天晚上如果我们走得晚一点, 就能做完这个工作了。

Frank : 最后期限改了吗?

Liu : 没有, 但也很近了。

Frank : 我们快开始新项目了, 那会很好玩。

Liu : 今天晚上你留下来吗?

Frank : 我? 我下班就走。

Dialogue 3 Weekend Workers(周末工作者)

Wang: We got a bit behind on this. The deadline is wednesday.

Bob: Yes. We'll have to clear our calendar and work on it first thing next week.

Wang: That'll be cutting it a bit close, don't you think?

Bob: What other choice do we have?

Wang: We could come in on Saturday.

Wang: 我们的进度慢了一点。星期三是最后期限了。

Bob: 对。下个星期我们必须马上做这项工作。

Wang: 你不觉得那样一来时间会很紧吗?

Bob: 那我们应该怎么办?

Wang: 我们可以星期六来加班。

CONCLUSION 结论

Generally speaking, Chinese often follow polychronic time pattern, whereas Americans often follow monochronic time pattern.

通常而言，中国人遵守多元时间模式；美国人遵守单一时间模式。

FURTHER ANALYSIS 深入分析

People who follow M-time pattern usually engage in one activity at a time, compartmentalize time schedules to serve self-needs, and tend to separate task-oriented time from social time. People who follow P-time tend to do multiple tasks at the same time, tend to hold more fluid attitudes toward time schedules, and tend to integrate task needs with social needs. A person using a P-time orientation, for example, will stop a conversation with one person to take a phone call from another, especially a friend or relative. People who follow M-time schedules tend to emphasize individual privacy, schedules, and appointments. People who follow P-time schedules, in contrast, tend to emphasize the connection between people, fluidity, and the flexible nature of time.

遵守单一时间模式的人通常喜欢一段时间做一件事，按照自己的需要，他们把时间分为各个日程，工作时间和社交时间泾渭分明、各不相扰。遵守多元时间模式的人通常喜欢同一段时间里做几件事情，他们对时间的安排比较随意，工作时间和社交时间也没有严格的区分。多元时间导向的人可能打断正在进行的谈话，去接另一个人尤其是亲戚朋友的电话。单一时间导向的人重视个人的隐私、日程安排和约会。多元时间导向的人则重视人际关系，重视时间安排的随意性和灵活性。

The Chinese make little distinction between private and public life. They often work many hours beyond work time, especially if they believe that it is necessary. For some businesspeople, schedules in their non-business hours are much more hectic than during business hours. People in the Chinese commercial community even presume that a person's business will decline if they have nothing to do, or no one to deal with, after working hours. This can be seen in the following illustration.

中国人的私人生活与公共生活区别不大，如果需要，他们常常加班加点，一些商人的业余时间比他们的上班时间还忙。如果下班时间中国商人无事可做，那么他们会认为有损生意，下面这个例子表现这一点。

In 1994, a Chinese businesswoman tried to introduce a foreign company to a Chinese counterpart with a view to working together on a China-based project. She accompanied the managing director of the foreign company to Beijing for further business discussions after extensive long-distance negotiations. Like other Chinese businesspeople, the general manager of the Chinese company treated the foreign guest generously during his trip to China. However, the foreign managing director found that the Chinese general manager talked almost continuously on his mobile phone when he picked them up from the airport, at the hotel and during dinner in the evening. The foreign managing director asked the Chinese businesswoman, "Why couldn't the Chinese general manager finish his work within work hours?" and then commented that "the Chinese manager must not be an

efficient manager”. Although the reason for the behavior was explained at length, the foreign director was still confused. And made it very clear that he did not appreciate this Chinese manager’s behaviour. Ironically, while the Chinese manager was undoubtedly busy, his behaviour may have been partly intended to impress on his Western counterpart how important, essential, hardworking, diligent and above all efficient he really was. Clearly, there exists a marked difference between the two manager’s perspectives of what constitutes efficiency.

1994年，一个中国女商人，想撮合一家外国公司和一家中国公司共同开发一个项目，紧张的讨论之后，她陪同双方经理共赴北京进一步商谈有关事宜，中方经理非常好客。但是外方经理很快就发现这位中国经理不停地打手机。在机场、宾馆、甚至饭桌上都忙得不亦乐乎。他问中国的女商人：“中方的那位经理为什么不在上班时间完成工作？”接着推断说中国经理办事肯定没有效率。虽然这一问题最终得以解释，但是外方经理仍然困惑不解，他无论如何也不欣赏中方经理的工作方式。具有讽刺意味的是，中方经理实际上是想给外方经理留下勤奋、兢兢业业的形象，没想到适得其反，反而遭到误解。

According to Chinese business culture, if something cannot be discussed with an official or bureaucrat in the workplace or at a formal meeting, and an opportunity arises to talk to them in their home or during an informal occasion, then the above Chinese manager must seize the moment. According to the Chinese, this is truly an efficient use of their valuable time.

按照中国的商业惯例来讲，如果在正式场合或上班时间事情没有讨论完或工作没有做完，可以在家里或者是非正式场合接着讨论这些事情。上面例子里的这个经理就利用了这些时间。中国人认为，这是合理而有效率地利用时间。

Difference Between Monochronic People & Polychronic People

遵循一元时间模式和多元时间模式的人们不同之处

Mono: Do one thing at a time concentrate on the job.

Poly: Do many things at once are highly distractible and subject to interruptions.

Mono: Take time commitments (deadlines, schedules) seriously.

Poly: Consider time commitments an objective to be achieved, if possible.

Mono: Are low-context and need information.

Poly: Are high-context and already have information.

Mono: Are committed to the job.

Poly: Are committed to people and human relationships.

Mono: Adhere religiously to plans.

Poly: Change plans often and easily.

Mono: Are concerned about not disturbing others; follow rules of privacy.

Poly: Are more concerned with those who are closely related. (family, friends, close business associates than with privacy)

Mono: Show great respect for private property; seldom borrow or lend.

Poly: Borrow and lend things often and easily.

Mono: Emphasize promptness.

Poly: Base promptness on the relationship.

Mono: Are accustomed to short-term relationships.

Poly: Have strong tendency to build lifetime relationships.

一元：一段时间集中精力做一件事。

- 多元：一段时间做好几件事，可能终止一件事去做另一件。
- 一元：非常重视时间安排和期限。
- 多元：将时间安排和期限当成一种努力的目标。
- 一元：低情境交流需要大量的信息。
- 多元：高情境交流已经掌握信息。
- 一元：忠于工作。
- 多元：忠于人和人际关系。
- 一元：严肃地按计划办事。
- 多元：经常随意地改变计划。
- 一元：注意不去打扰别人；重视隐私观念。
- 多元：重视自己圈子里的人(家人、朋友、商业伙伴)；不太重视隐私。
- 一元：尊重个人财产；很少借还物品。
- 多元：经常借还物品。
- 一元：重视办事效率。
- 多元：效率建立在关系的基础上。
- 一元：习惯于短期合作关系。
- 多元：强调建立长期合作关系。

SELF-TEST 自测题

Assessing Time Orientation

The following scale is designed to measure one's monochronic and/or polychronic time orientation. In the blank before each item, indicate the degree to which you (1)strongly agree, (2)agree, (3)are neutral, (4)disagree, or (5)disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers, and many of the statements are similar by design. Work quickly and record your first impression.

1. I usually feel frustrated after I choose to do a number of tasks when I could have chosen to do one at a time.
2. When I talk with my friends in asgroupssetting, I feel comfortable trying to hold two or three conversations at a time.
3. When I work on a project around the house, it doesn't bother me to stop in the middle of one job to pick up another job that needs to be done.
4. I like to finish one task before going on to another task.
5. At church it wouldn't bother me to meet at the same time with several different people who all had different church matters to discuss.
6. I tend to concentrate on one job before moving on to another task.
7. The easiest way for me to function is to organize my daily activities with a schedule.
8. If I were a teacher and had several students wishing to talk with me about assigned homework, I would meet with the wholesgroupsrather than with one student at a time.
9. I like doing several tasks at one time.
10. I am frustrated when I have to start on a task without first finishing a previous one.
11. In trying to solve problems, I find it stimulating to think about several different problems at the same time.

12. I am mildly irritated when someone in a meeting wants to bring up a personal topic that is unrelated to the purpose of the meeting.

13. In school, I prefer studying one subject to completion before going on to the next subject.

14. I'm hesitant to focus my attention on only one thing because I may miss something equally important.

15. I usually need to pay attention on only one task at a time to finish it.

Scoring: For items 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, reverse your response (5=1), (4=2), (3=3), (2=4), (1=5), for example, if you response to item # 2 was 5, reverse it to 1. If you response to item # 3 was 4, reverse it to a 2. Once you have reversed your responses to those 6 items, sum the entire 15 items. Scores of approximately 30 and below indicate a monochronic orientation. Scores of approximately 42 and above indicate a polychronic orientation.