

Cultural Expectations behind Korean and Chilean Social Greetings and *Proxemics**

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1. The more connected we become, the more misunderstandings seem to arise.

This paper will focus on the different concepts of space as a basic and essential cultural code in social greetings between Koreans and Chileans. Robert Moran, Philip Harris and Sarah Moran (2007:153) clarified in *Managing Cultural Differences* that "Over the past 100 years, and especially during the last 25, culture and nations have remained unique but have become increasingly more interconnected in complex and nonobvious ways." As the world's political and economic exchange increase, intercultural communication among different cultures is inevitable. However, the more intercultural communication occurs, the more difficulties in communication have been recognized. Political and economic exchange is usually accompanied by cultural shock before mutual understanding can be achieved. Chile and Korea are not

* This paper is supported by Fondecyt (Chilean National Funds for Scientific and Technological Development) Project N° 1120159. Earlier version of this paper was presented at a conference at the 23rd International Conference on Korean Language Education, August 10-11, 2013.

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exceptions.

Since the 2004 Free Trade Agreement between Chile and Korea, both countries are recognizing the need to understand how cultural code differences may strengthen or weaken relationships between people from different countries and backgrounds. Between Chileans and Koreans getting the message straight requires overcoming not only geographical but cultural distance as well. However, how much do both know and understand their cultural differences? Both countries have different historical, political and sociocultural backgrounds as well as ethnic and linguistic factors. Evolving out of such different frameworks, cultural codes determine how communication should take place properly.

Before talking about the different concepts of space as one of the basic communication channels, it is important to define what we mean by "culture" and "communication". Most of the many abstract definitions of culture have been suggested by anthropologists. The two most often cited in intercultural (or cross-cultural)¹⁾ research are those of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), and Triandis (1972, 1977). After reviewing over 150 definitions, Richard W. Brislin (1981) chose Kroeber and Kluckhohn's central idea of culture as the one "now formulated by most scientists":

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive

1) "In French the only possible adjective for this field is "intercultural", whereas in English there are both "intercultural" and "cross-cultural". Many English speakers favor "cross-cultural", some almost avoiding "intercultural" as if it were a case of vocabulary interference with French. Others use the terms interchangeably." (Susan Fries, "Cultural, Multicultural, Cross-cultural, Intercultural: A Moderator's Proposal", <http://www.tesol-france.org/articles/fries.pdf>, p.2. Retrieved June 12, 2013. Here the author of this study uses the term "Intercultural" which implies interaction while "Cross-cultural" applies to a theme which covers more than one culture.