From Meanings, Images, and States of Mind to Structural Commonality between Communication and Poetry and Communication Competence – A Xystematic Approach to Communication Study

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Abstract: Via the basis of meanings, images, and mind-states, this paper presents a xystematic study on the commonality between systems of communication and poetry through the transformations between spaces of meanings and images in the operational spheres of conflict, mutuality, centrality, and holistic advancement residing in the context of cultural systems of D*, X*, and Δ*. As such, human meanings are created from the presence of physical and spiritual entities and daily experiences with the use of words or signs, whereas human images are related closely to the particularization, actualization, symbolization, concretization, and visualization of what people perceive as messages transferred back and forth among them. Further, to deepen the understanding of human communication, an in-depth study of communication competence conditioned upon the cores of human meanings, images, and states of mind is also provided.

Keywords: Meaning, image, state of mind, xystematics, communication, poetry, iso-xystemism, communication competence

1. Introduction

Essentially, xystematics (or systematics, see Tonn, 2009b; 2010a; 2010b; 2011) is defined as the substantive, structural, qualitative, relational, differentiating-and-integrating, and holistic study of universal and human/cultural entities. Via this method of xystematics, in this paper, we shall study the following topics: (1) the space of meanings (i.e., the collection of all meanings of our concerns, in various operational spheres), the space of images (i.e., the collection of all images presenting in life worlds of, say, the West and China, in various operating fields) and states of mind (existing especially in the minds of the Chinese community), and the transformation between the space of meanings and the space of images, for paving the way to develop systems (actually xystems) of communication and poetry. Here, by "system" is meant a structured collection of entities, and "xystem" is meant the xystematic abstraction of (i.e., xystematic approach to) what would generally be called "system." (2) Systems or xystematic models of communication and poetry and the commonality between them, for better understanding the system of communication. (3) Defining conditions of four categories of the first and second levels of communication competence, for a deeper structural understanding of human communication embedded intrinsically in meanings and images.

In this paper, in the studies of meaning and images, the source of semiotic is incurred, since it is overlapping with our ideas of xystematics. And in the future, we shall delve deeper into the structural forms of meanings and images.[1]

The organization of this paper is as follows. In the second section, the spaces of meanings, images, and states of mind are studied. In the third section, a preliminary investigation into the issues of the transformations between spaces of means and images is conducted. In the fourth section, the attention of this paper turns to the xystemic structures of communication and poetry in the context of systems X^*, D^*, and Δ^*, with some further investigations into the transformational issues between meanings and images. Here, system D^* is the system of symbolic and tranquil culture together with working elements of cultures and practices, system X^* is the system of sciences and conflict culture together with working elements of cultures and practices, and system Δ^* is the system of dialectical culture together with working elements of cultures and practices (Tonn 2009a).

In the fifth section, the systemic (actually xystemic) conditions of communication competence embracing the intrinsic meanings and images emerging out of human existence and life experiences are formalized. At last, brief concluding remarks are provided to finish this paper.

2. Spaces of Meanings, Images, and States of Mind

By meanings we essentially mean what invoke emotions (or impressions, see Konjin & Van Vugt, 2008; or attitudes, see Kalyanaraman & Sandar, 2008; Sandar & Brown, 2003; Sandar, 2008), deep thinking, things transcendental and even mystical and religious in the mind of the human being, and/or what possesses potentiality to initiate human actions in the real world.

In communication, through the processes of encoding and decoding, meanings are constructed and interpreted (Askew 2007, p. 5). One of the most common forms of communication is the use of words. But "words do not possess exact meanings to all communicators" (Forrest & Olson 1981, p. 27). Thus, when people use words to communicate, there are various senses or dimensions of meanings as follows. (1) Meaning is the representation of objects, events, thought processes, or conditions by a sign or signs. This is an external definition of meaning, coinciding with Bühler's idea of meaning as representation (Bühler 1985, p. 75). In this line of thinking, meanings connect the entity/entities (the referent) to the person or persons (the person) through sign or signs (the sign). Here, by a sign is meant a referent (Littlejohn 1983,

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[1] Due to the limitation of space, further development of the theories of meanings and images along the line of xystematics, by expanding well beyond any semiotic approach (for example, delving into in-depth foundations of meanings in aspects of chi-tao rationality and spirituality and Juist/Confucian psychology) is not pursued in this paper. Furthermore, in the future, one may investigate human meanings and images according to their inward and outward relationships with other aspects of human life experiences, with either material or spiritual orientations. That means, to be specific, the theory may be developed to be inclusive of the meanings, images, and states of mind existing in the (conventional) philosophical, tao-chi, aesthetic and poetic, and transcendental and religious fields of intelligence.

p. 95) or a substitute of an entity (Chao, 2010). (2) Meaning represents the content of human communication through the language of words or signs (Chao, 2010). It is what is embodied in messages in the process of encoding and decoding. It carries with it several levels: phonemes/ sounds, alphabets/characters, words/phrases, grammar/semantics, and textures/ discourse. (3) Meaning relates to vital forces existing in the human mind that induce deep emotions and a profound process of reasoning or create significances for individuals or groups. The meaning connects person(s) to persons, objects, and events which connect intrinsically to human, social, and natural motions in general. This is what lies behind human actions, inspirations, and relations; and it fundamentally affects the life, aspirations, and orientations of the human being.

That is to say, arising from real-life experiences, external stimuli and connections, or internal speculations and reflections, human meaning creates dimensions of potentiality to stimulate or affect the deep-seated feelings, attitudes, beliefs, intentions, or behaviors of the human being.

With multiple dimensions embedded in various operational spheres and operating fields, the human meaning includes those of life, death, love, hatred, benevolence, revenge, and others such as searching for human rights, beauty, and ultimate concerns for the individual. Naturally, the life meanings include as well those of struggle, conflict, equality, harmony, mutual assistance, and others such as group activities for cultural and spiritual ascendency, economic prosperity, political freedom, and social stability of the nations (Tonn 2011, Chapter 9).

Below, we come to the space of images. By images is essentially meant the particularization, spatio-temporal actualization, symbolization, concretization, and visualization of what people perceive as messages transferring through channel(s) of communication between the sender/ receiver and receiver/sender (with the same person operating both as sender and receiver at approximately the same time).

To some, images present symbolic realms in which, for instance, politics becomes the issues of "voters' feeling good or bad about the candidates" (Jhally 2007, p. 331.)

Concerning the issues of images, caring about but not to be restricted to the traditions of semiotics, one may touch upon the concepts of message (à la semiotics) and sign in the context of icon (or a sign without rendering any interpretation), index (or a sign rendering meanings jointly with other objects), and symbol (or a sign carrying interpretations by itself).

To Barthes (Innis 1985, p. 191) a fusion of perceptual knowledge and cultural knowledge exists in the images, and thereby by sorting out the semiotic structure of the images emerging out of the messages received and perceived, several signifying systems are to be derived. Therefore, all images are polysemous and occasionally dysfunctional in commanding, under their signifiers, a floating chain of signifieds. To clarify the meaning implied, for example in advertising, "literal messages are provided to present an anchorage out of all possible meanings of the image/object by recourse to a nomenclature (e.g., while showing a plate of something in an *Amieux* advertisement, a captioning of rice and tuna fish with mushrooms is provided) to guide the receivers to the correct (intended) perception." Here, this function of linguistic message, as compared to the symbolic message or intended images embodied directly in it, "does not guide identification but interpretation" in the sense of "constituting a kind of vice which holds the connoted meanings from proliferating" (Barthes, 1985, p. 197.)

Messages can be classified into three proto-types. The base of images could be a series of

discontinuous and yet mutually related signs embraced in the forms of *linguistic message* (for instance, "title, captioning, accompanying press article, film dialogue, comic strip balloon," etc. in movies). This linguistic message is the first type of message serving as a medium or vehicle carrying intended images from the sender to the reader. According to Saussure (1985, p. 37), the linguistic sign has two intimately united elements: concept and sound-image. Here, we would interpret this "concept" as the "message" which creates perception and the "sound-image" simply as the "sound."

The second type of message is the *perceptual message* (or *signifier*). This perceptual message denotes "non-coded iconic message or literal message, as is opposed to symbolic and coded messages," for example, the one in photos in "elucidating the images of being-there/here-now rather than having-been-there/there-then"). This is close to our ideas of perception. The third type of message is the *cultural/symbolic/connoted message* (or *signified*, denoting coded iconic message). This type of message belongs to our categories of images. In order to decipher the underlying meanings out of these sometimes ambiguous images, the background systems of cultures need to be clearly revealed (Barthes 1985, pp. 192-197).

According to Peirce, the sign could be classified into icon, index, and symbol. "An icon is a sign indicating what is in existence," but "it does not afford any interpretation." "An index is a sign which would, at once, lose the characteristic which makes it a sign if its object were removed; but it would not lose that characteristic if there were no interpretant." "A symbol is a sign that would lose the characteristic which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant." (Peirce 1985, p. 9). Following this line of thinking, an icon is a sign or object of presentation which does not provide any interpretation, an index is a sign rendering meanings of interrelationship between objects of presentation, and a symbol is a sign of interpretation carrying vivid and lively meanings.

According to Barthes, there are four types of images: practical, natural, cultural, and aesthetic images (Barthes 1985, p. 201); and the language (that carries meaning) is composed of idiolects, lexicons, and sub-codes (Barthes 1985, p. 202). To him (Barthes 1985, p. 204), in the system of image, "connotation (cultural or the signified) is the structure of system defined in paradigmatic terms, while iconic denotation (perceptual message or the signifier) is only the syntagm as associated elements of the system. Here, the connotators are discontinuous; and they are connected in meaning by syntagms of denotation."

In communication as in poetry, in terms of signs, one may sense that images operate as a set of semantic objects (somewhat in the spirit à la Shapiro, see Meyer Shapiro 1985) eventually leading to a set of meanings of presentation, a field (i.e., a set composed) of icons and concepts (embracing images), or a vehicle for the presentation of meanings.

There are conventional images of basic existence, daily lives, security, belongings, and self-actualization which correspond closely to various operational spheres; and furthermore, there are images related closely to various operating fields as well. One may conceive these conventional images as more closely associated with Western thinking. To incorporate the Chinese way of thinking, for example, emanating out of the world of Chinese poetry with foundations of humanities deeply seated on that of Chinese meanings, there is a need to extend the world of both images and states of mind to a new level.

In the process of forming sophisticated images, the most basic primitive image can be

treated as the most basic element or the constituting unit of the system of images. Human knowledge may be considered as being created by the basic process of external stimulus, internal perception/cognition, encoding, retrieval, memory, etc. and by the complex process composed of conceptualization and metacognition, cognitive representation (enactive representation, iconic representation), symbolic representation, and others (Chao, 2010). Thus, one unit image (or primitive image) can be connected with another unit image (together with impactors or operational forces in xystematics, etc.) in forming a subsystem (or low-level sophisticated image) which can also be a subsystem that can be organized with other subsystems (together with necessary impactors and environments) into a system (or medium-level sophisticated image). And then, systems can be grouped into a grand system (or high-level sophisticated image), and so on.

In the process of forming sophisticated images, Chao (2010) approaches this by expanding from perception to symbol (sign, signifier, signified; myth, connotation, denotation), then to narration, and finally to discourse. Similar to this just-mentioned process, one could construct a sequence: sign (embodying a primitive image or basic element of images), symbol (embodying a sophisticated image, or basic system of images), narration (embodying a grand system of images) and discourse (embodying a complex of grand-systems of images, even supported by a multitude of variationally fragmented and distorted images).

In the above, we explored and explicated the dimensions of meanings and images. Now we turn to the states of mind. The state of mind essentially points to the world built in the mind containing strata and layers of emotions, orientations, inspirations, spirituality, and rationality.

The state of mind is naturally the co-product of human activities, associated with physical and biological objects, events, and even super-natural and pure imaginary entities like unicorns and Pegasus. In economics, the so-called utility and equilibrium are, although useful, the products of pure speculation by the human mind-set.

There are several categories in the states of mind: humbleness, mediocrity, sublimity, sorrow, happiness, ruefulness, heroism, "spiritedness" (Yang, 1991; Chapters 67, 68), indirectness, (feeling) carefree, lengthiness and vastness, powerlessness, and desolation, etc.

3. Preliminary Discussions of the Issues of Correspondence between Spaces of Meanings and Images

The process of correspondence between the spaces of images and meanings may be multiple-faceted. It involves the sequence including perceptions, fragmented or primitive images, forms of images or sophisticated images, and constructing new images through restructuring (or decoding and encoding) perceived images. And corresponding to this sequence of image construction and reconstruction, there is the sequence of meanings: primitive or basic element of meanings, sophisticated or basic system of meanings, grand system of meanings (or meaning system of multiple dimensions), and system complex of meanings (or complex meaning system of multiple meanings with varieties of deep/shallow layers, high/low levels, and dominant/subordinate strata, etc.). Logically, there is a cross-boundary feedback effect in this correspondence, and it is possible that any form or state of the construction-reconstruction of images could be mapped to multiple phases of meaning formation and correspondence.

As is commonly comprehended, this correspondence between images and meanings does not necessarily need to occur in a one-to-one fashion. A basic element of meaning could correspond to a basic element of image (or primitive image), and yet a basic element of meaning could correspond to a system of even complex of images (or a "sophisticated image"). For example, "There may be alternate words for the same meaning" (Lange 1985, p. 100.) For another example, in the case of communication between the scholars of the West and those of China, even though they may share more or less the same experiences, their basic value systems are independent and quite different. This is to say, although their ideas may have some reasonable degree of commonality at the level of symbolic presentation, they may not share the same standards and conventions at the level of connotation and meanings. Western scholars may even reason with appreciation the appearance and presentation of the Chinese philosophy, literature, and arts, but they may not comprehend their true meaning and discern the intrinsic charms inherent in deep structures. One way to remedy this is to create a common denominator for these two language and cultural systems at both levels of presentation and connotation (Li, 2003, p. 77-78).

In the society, more than individual meanings, there are social meanings. That is, meanings, beyond the individual one, further involve the society. In addition, beyond the reality of life, meanings even invoke the life experiences of virtuality and spirituality (Innis 1985, p. 68).

In light of xystematics, meanings are defined to encompass nine dimensions of values: individual creativity, balance/conflict, mutuality, centrality, holistic advancement, fairness, happiness, beauty, and ultimate concerns. The first five dimensions exist in the operational spheres (OS) of meanings, while the last four dimensions exist in the operating fields (OF) of meanings. For simplicity, perhaps one could assert that the culture of the West is more concerned with the worlds of individual creativity, conflict (or balance in conflict), happiness, beauty (in a way more toward a state of tension), and ultimate concerns (in a way more firmly associated with human will), whereas the Chinese culture is more concerned with those of mutuality, centrality, holistic advancement, fairness, beauty (in a way toward a state of tranquility), and ultimate concerns (in a more natural fashion).

In our proto-type theory, the Westerner lives in the world of conflict (i.e., OS conflict); for example, the meaning of dragon (Serpent, Satan, perhaps partially derived from The Bible) entails evil, and not good luck. In contrast, the Chinese person lives in the world of mutuality (i.e., OS mutuality), the image of dragon carries with it the meaning of good fortune (related to The Iching), but not evil.[2] Therefore, before each person enlarges their own OS to incorporate other's OS, the meaning that one endeavors to communicate may not be comprehended by the other in the case of significant differences existing in their cultural backgrounds.

In many cases, images and meanings may not match well. The same image for different people may convey different meanings. Likewise, for different people, the same meaning may be connected with different images. That means among people of significant differences in their background cultural systems, the correspondence between meanings and images are not

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[2] In the New Year, dragon dance represents fortune and good luck to the Chinese community. Thus, when a Chinese sender tries to communicate the image of dragon to a Westerner who is not familiar to the Chinese customs, the image of fortune may not be transmitted.

one-to-one, and the rules of correspondence and transformation are not straight forward (but are determined by specific and concrete cultural context). Thus, it may appear to be ideal to classify images according to their variety of relationships with meanings.

As for the spaces of social meaning and social images, there may be some kind of mismatches. An example of this is related to Hollywood movies. Hollywood movie makers pursue profits by producing movies and yet, in their products (i.e., movies), heroes are in most cases "good men without much property" (Powdermaker, 2002).[3]

4. Xystematic Models of Poetry and Communication and Some Further Issues of Correspondence between Meanings and Images

The most basic system of communication comprises the sender and the receiver in encoding and decoding (or decoding and encoding) the messages delivered through channels of communication with some feedback effect.

To understand the essence of communication with its base rooted in meanings and images, it may be insightful to investigate poetry as a quasi-communication system (in the sense of a weak form iso-xystemism). As such, the poet acts as the sender of messages encoded in the language of poetry, with meanings explicitly or implicitly embodied in poems. In contrast, readers act as the receivers of messages through poetic images and/or states of mind; they decode (very likely in some imperfect ways) the images and/or mind-states rendered by poetic languages. Besides, with their own interpretations and personal reflections, they also add more images, change the states of minds, and even delete unwarranted (perceived by them) images in reading poems. Thus this is essentially a system of one-way communication conveying meanings without much feedback and with resultant actions leading very often to an ineffective way of interpersonal communication.

In general, the writing of poems is an interactive process comprising activities involving transformations between the worlds of meanings and images. For this purpose, in the following, let the world of poetry be one with the poet creating poems and the readers appreciating the beauty of poems. As a result, in the perfect case (of communication), there is an "iso-xystemism in a reverse order" between the poet and the readers.

Furthermore, in a non-rigorous way, it can be shown that the system of appreciating poetry is iso-xystemic to the system of The Iching existing in the world of fortune and evil (Tonn 2010a). It may be reasonable to state that, in the world of poetry, "complete communicative competence" means that the readers successfully translate the images or states of mind perceived backward into the true meanings intended by the poet (structurally equivalent to the position of the "state of fortune") while "non-communicative competence" means that the readers fail to

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[3] Here is another example of creating an intended mismatch between meanings and images. Advertising is a field of skillful manipulations of images through mass media in order to convey and imprint to the mindset of customers specifically designed meanings. According to Meenakshi Gigi Durham (2007, pp. 238, 243), in the case of teen magazines, images and texts may appear to represent a "real" referent but in fact are greatly manipulated to their appearance in print.

translate the images or state of mind correctly (equivalent to the position of the "state of evil.") Of course, "complete communicative competence" may not be the only goal or even the goal of the creative writing of poetry. If, in the case of non-communicative competence the readers derive extra values out of the creative work, then this may be very desirable for its own sake.

The simplified world of poetry is composed of the poet and readers in instituting a quasi-system of communication. The poet, as the sender of messages, attempts to communicate the images (or mind-states) and especially the meanings one way to the readers (with no feedbacks, for simplicity). Here, the "messages" convey especially the meanings, beauty, and ultimate concerns, etc. of the poet, "channel" is represented by the works of poems or even some other communication conduits between the poet and the readers, "encoding" processes the messages from the world of meanings of the poet and transforms them into the world of images and states of mind of the readers, and "decoding" reverts the process of encoding. In terms of human dimensions, these processes of encoding and decoding constitute a quasi-interpersonal network of the poet and readers.

In light of xystematics, the system of communication is defined as the one with two or more persons (each being a universal element with human characteristics as both sender and receiver of messages), conditioned upon the cultural complex (of the system, i.e., the cultural xystems X^*, D^*, and/or Δ^*, etc.), pursuing, fermenting, and creating meanings within the confine of systemic structures in which meaning-embodied images are created and transformed back and forth (in the processes of encoding and decoding) through channels of communication in the course of mutually stimulated and enforced inter-activities of the real world (for example, daily activities, spiritual and cultural pursuits, economic, social, and political actions, etc.). Note that these meanings and images are also embedded deeply in real world cultural systems (for simplicity, in the forms of tradition/D^* and beyond, democratic capitalism/X^* and beyond, and socialism/Δ^* and beyond, etc.). Here, these spaces of meanings and images are intimately connected to operational spheres of individual creativity and conflict (or balance/conflict and creative dominance) for the cultural system of democratic capitalism; of mutuality and holistic advancement for the cultural system of traditions; and centrality for the cultural system of centrality/socialism) and operating fields (of spirituality, and so on).

To proceed beyond the cultures of the West, in the general communication system, new dimensions of meanings and images need to be incorporated into its cultural base. For the basic communication system (for example, of Taoism-Confucianism), the added dimensions of communication cultures are Taoist tranquil, natural meanings and state of mind, Juist/Confucian harmony and group orientation, and the mutually interacted activities of the senders and receivers (with the sender behaving also as the receiver of the messages and the receiver also as the sender).

For the issues of mismatching images with meanings in the process of communication, it is certainly constructive to scrutinize the process of encoding of images and mind-states. This usually involves the transformations among different images within the mind-sets of the sender and the receiver, the transformations among different states of mind, and the transformations between images and states of mind. To the same kind of image or mind-state, different people may associate it with different meanings. Thus, in order to receive correct meanings from the sender, the receiver may have to convert the images or mind-states into others so that the

meanings intended by the sender are conveyed to the receiver reconfiguring the images or mind-states through the receiver's knowledgeable and self-conscious efforts.

For a simple illustration, suppose the sender, living in the operational sphere of individual creativity and operational sphere of conflict, delivers the image of independent human interaction A; but to the receiver living in the operational sphere of mutuality, this image A is actually empty (i.e., an empty entity or system). It simply does not exist (assuming that, the receiver is living only in the world of mutuality, so there is no such thing as independent individuality). But suppose the sender (living in the operational sphere of conflict delivers the image B (human interaction). Then, to the receiver (living in the operational sphere of mutuality, this B means γ (conflict; negative human interactions to the receiver, not just human interactions).

That is to say, this image B intends to mean "human interactions" (for people living in the operational sphere of conflict). And yet it creates the new meaning of "conflict" for people living in the operational sphere of mutuality (with negative value judgment). Therefore, for this receiver, "negative human interactions" means γ (conflict), and it is corresponding to the image of C, $C \neq B$. Here to the people sending this message, D represents the image of positive association of people (corresponding to positive value judgment, which is actually empty for the sender) and C represents the image of negative association of people (corresponding to negative value judgment). In this case, for the receiver, the meaning corresponding to the image of positive valued-association of people is "Δ". Hence, this receiver, in order to receive a positive valued-association of people, this image has to be converted into D (or D', something close to D).

Similarly, to receive correct information (clear images with correct implications of meanings), the receiver may have to transform even the meanings of the sender. This is because different persons may have different opinions toward the same "meaning": the meaning α to the sender may not be the same as the meaning of α to the receiver. What is valuable to others may not be valuable to oneself.

5.   Two Levels of Communication Competence

Below we shall present one more aspect of the xystematic model of communication with regard to conditions of communication competence. One would define communication competence as "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behavior to elicit a desired response in a specific environment." Thus, communication competence ascertains the conditions of the "abilities to formulate and achieve objectives," "to collaborate effectively with others," and "to adapt to situational or environmental variations" (Chen & Starosta 1998). Littlejohn (1983, pp. 70, 243-246) differentiates the concept of communication competence into three categories: minimal competence (referring to "the inability to co-manage meanings with others in a system within which one must exist"), satisfactory competence (referring to what enables a person to "communicate effectively in the system at hand, usually achieving coordination with others"), and optimal competence (referring to "the ability to understand the boundaries, strengths, and weaknesses of a system in comparison with other systems and to actively choose whether to become enmeshed in a particular system or to remain outside"). Furthermore, Littlejohn and Foss (2009) introduces the concepts of fundamental competence,

social competence, linguistic competence, interpersonal competence, and relational competence.

In the previous section, we studied the issues of correspondence between meanings and images/mind-states in the context of the operational sphere (OS) of mutuality (with the operational sphere of individual creativity as a base). By such endeavor, we have extended the backgrounds of communication system to cover those transformations operating in the OS of conflict, mutuality, centrality, and holistic advancement in the context of cultural systems X*, D*, and Δ*.

That is, we are deeply concerned with the concept of communication competence from the perspective of matching the operational spheres and operating fields of the sender/receiver with those of the receiver/sender. It follows that, the conditions embracing the intrinsic meanings and images emerging out of human existence and life experiences are to be provided.

Naturally, the operation of communication is said to be ineffective (or ineffectively competent) in the sense of xystematics (i.e., in addition to the conventional conditions of communication competence and/or incompetence), if and only if, in the course of communication, the sender and the receiver of the message exist in different operational spheres and/or operating fields. For example, the sender of the message lives only in the operational sphere of conflict (or balance and conflict/creative dominance) and the receiver lives only in the operational sphere of centrality. By the theory of the unity and holistic integration of knowledge and actions (chi hsing he yi, advocated by the celebrated philosopher Wang Yangming of Ming Dynasty, see Wang, 1992, pp. 41-46; Chou, 1976, pp. 424-426), without the living experiences of the other operational sphere, the person is in no position to understand and appreciate any other operational sphere. Thus, people existing in different operational spheres and operating fields posit no effective way of communicating to each other in any meaningful manner.

Therefore, we shall introduce two levels of communication competence, with three categories of communication competence and the fourth category of communication incompetence.

For the first level of communication competence, first, the operation of communication is said to be completely competent (i.e., complete communication competence) if and only if, in the course of communication, the following conditions hold:

(i) The sender/receiver and the receiver/sender exist in the same operational spheres (OS) and same operating fields (OF), or both of them have extended from their own OS and OF to include those of the other.

(ii) The core of images/mind-states (through encoding) emanating from or delivered by the sender is the same as the core of images and/or states of mind (I/S) perceived (through decoding) by the receiver.

(iii) The core of meanings (M) emanating from or delivered by the sender is the same as the core of meanings perceived by the receiver. In symbols, it follows:

(1) (i) $\mathcal{I}/S_O \approx^{\text{iso-xys}} \mathcal{I}/S_i$ (iso-xystemism in a reverse order between I/S of the sender and I/S of the receiver, $o \neq i$),

(ii) $M_O \approx^{\text{iso-xys}} M_i$ (iso-xystemism in a reverse order between M of the sender and M of the receiver),

with "$\mathscr{I}/S_O$" and "$\mathscr{I}/S_i$" denoting the images and/or states of mind of the sender and those of the receiver, respectively, "M_i" and "M_i" depicting the meanings of the sender and those of the receiver, respectively, and "$\approx^{\text{iso-xys}}$" referring to the symbol of iso-xystemism (meaning, roughly, two corresponding systems share the same architecture of structures).

Secondly, the operation of communication is said to be reasonably competent (i.e., reasonable communication competence) if and only if, in the course of communication, the following conditions hold:

(i) The sender/receiver and the receiver/sender exist in the same operational spheres and same operating fields, or both of them have extended from their own OS and OF to include those of the other.
(ii) The core of images and/or states of mind received (through decoding) by the receiver is reasonably the same as the core of images and/or states of mind delivered (through encoding) by the sender.
(iii) The core of meanings perceived by the receiver is contained in the core of meanings delivered by the sender. In symbols, for the above (i) and (ii), it follows:

(2) (i) $\mathscr{I}/S_O \approx^{\text{iso-xys}} \mathscr{I}/S_i$ (iso-xystemism in a reverse order between I/S of the sender and I/S of the receiver, $o \neq i$),
     (ii) $co(M_i) \sqsubseteq co(M_O)$ (the core of meanings perceived by the receiver is contained in the core of meanings intended by the sender).

Related to Formula (2), condition (iii) means that, in the process of interpreting and reconstructing the messages intercepted, the perceived images and/or states of mind do not deviate from those delivered, and by reversely tracing the original meanings, the receiver does not eliminate and add too much to the original meanings.

Thirdly, the operation of communication is said to be at the lowest degree of acceptability (i.e., at the lowest degree of communication competence) if and only if, in the course of communication, the following conditions hold:

(i). Given that the sender/receiver and the receiver/sender exist in the same operational spheres and same operating fields, or both of them have extended from their own OS and OF to include those of the other, the deviation of the images and/or states of mind perceived by the receiver is partially acceptable to the sender.
(ii) The core of images received (through decoding) by the receiver is reasonably the same as the core of images delivered (through encoding) by the sender. Here the term "somewhat" is conducive to condition (iii) in the following.
(iii) The core of meanings perceived by the receiver and the core of meanings delivered by the sender overlap so that this degree of overlap is at least equal to the minimal degree of acceptability.

In symbols, it follows:

(3) (i) $\mathscr{I}/S_O \approx^{\text{Partial-iso-xys}} \mathscr{I}/S_i$ (the iso-xystemism of images and/or states of mind in-between the sender and the receiver is partially acceptable to the sender),

(ii) $[co(M_i) \sqcap co(M_O) \sqsubseteq co(M_i)^{\text{min-acpt}}$ (the intersection of the core of images/mind-states of the receiver and that of the sender being contained in the minimally acceptable core of meanings delivered by the sender),

with "$\approx^{\text{Partial-iso-xys}}$" denoting a partially acceptable iso-xystemism in a reverse order, "$co(M_i)$" referring to the core of meanings M_i, "$co(M_i)^{\text{min-acpt}}$" referring to the minimally acceptable degree of $co(M_i)$, and "$\sqcap$" indicating the symbol of "union." In this case, we have the core meanings constructed by the receiver being somewhat related to the core meanings of the sender.

Fourthly, the operation of communication is said to be not competent (or incompetent) if and only if, in the course of communication, all the conditions of the above three categories of communication competence are not met. This is the fourth category of communication competence, or the category of ineffectively communicating competency of the first level.

For the second-level communication competence then, we shall define four categories of it as those fulfilling the conditions of first-level communication competence together with the additional conditions of achieving strategic and operational competence (associated with communication). Note that in our model of communication, the communication process exists hand in hand with the accompanying strategy-actions of the sender/receiver (i.e., the sender as the receiver at approximately the same time) and receiver/sender (i.e., the sender as the receiver at approximately the same time) in the parallel system of co-actions. That is, our model of communication is: (sender-receiver with meanings-images, messages through encoding-decoding, channels with underlying cultures, strategies/actions associated with messages), which at the same time coexists with the strategic actions of the sender/receiver and receiver/sender in the process of actualizing and realizing meanings of mutual significance through co-actions and continual feedbacks.

6. Concluding Remarks

This paper addresses the commonality of the systems of poetry and communication by treating the former as a weak form iso-xystemism of the latter. This commonality is revealed as sharing essential structural sameness (in a weak form), or the one-way communication mechanism emanating from the poet to the readers on one hand and the messages emitting from the sender to the receiver on the other hand (for this purpose, the feedback loop of a communication system being "essentially" omitted). Further, this paper addresses the issues of communication competence by introducing a few conditions related to human meanings, images, and states of mind existing in operational spheres and operating fields. In the future, for further developing the theory of xystematics, a detailed investigation it warranted into the operational mechanisms of the infusion and amalgamation of the complex-chains of meanings, images, and states of mind, and even their advanced forms of mutually interactive transformations.

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