

Sharon Talk

- I. I feel a bit uncomfortable talking before a group of cultural psychologists, as I hardly call myself an expert, or even a novice, in the area
 - A. Most of all I know about area has resulted from interactions with CY Chiu and Ying Yi Hong
 - B. Furthermore all the research in which I've been involved has been conducted in collaboration with Donnel Briley
 1. Indeed, almost everything I have to say is stimulated by collaboration with Donnel, and all of the studies I'll talk about are ones for which he has been solely or primarily responsible.

- II. My own perspective on culture is a byproduct of general information processing approach
 - A. Very generally, assume that judgments and behavior are guided by two types of knowledge:
 1. Procedural: cognitive productions of form "if [X], then [Y]", where
 - a. [X] is set of preconditions (situational or informational features) and [Y] is a sequence of behaviors that occur automatically when preconditions are met
 - b. in a sense, glorified version of "conditioned response"
 - c. productions activated and applied with minimal conscious cognitive deliberation—e.g., driving a car
 2. Declarative knowledge—body of concepts, knowledge that is acquired and stored in memory—called upon and used in more deliberate goal directed processing; e.g., to comprehend information, make inferences, behavioral decisions
 - a. knowledge can pertain to self, other persons, world in general
 - b. can include attributes, goals, motives
 - c. can also include expectations of how people will behave, consequences of behavior
 - d. norms concerning what behavior is socially appropriate, etc.
 - e. can also include procedures—strategies for attaining a goal
 - i. however, these procedures not applied spontaneously; are activated and used deliberately as behavioral guide
 - B. Cognitive productions (procedural knowledge) activated and applied spontaneously whenever preconditions are met
 1. In contrast, use of declarative knowledge depends not only on its applicability but also on its accessibility in memory

2. often, several alternative subsets of knowledge could be applied in interpreting information, making decision
 3. or, several different goals that one might pursue, or strategies for getting them
 4. to this extent, judgments and behavior may depend on particular subset of relevant concepts and knowledge that happens to come to mind.
 5. This, in turn, depends on
 - a. **chronic** accessibility-function of frequency of use in past
 - b. situational factors that have led it to be activated in immediate situation or in recent past
- C. This is a long way of getting around to culture
1. However, clear that cultural differences can exist in either procedural, declarative knowledge
 2. procedural knowledge could influence wide variety of culture-related behaviors
 - a. e.g., cognitive strategies of sort Nisbett et al. postulate
 - b. more mundane interaction behaviors, etc.
 - c. Bargh suggests that very large proportion of social behaviors governed by automatic processing
 - d. Although differences in procedural knowledge are acknowledged, however, haven't often been investigated
 3. Greater focus has been on cultural differences in use of declarative knowledge
 - a. Differences could result from differences in chronic accessibility of knowledge
 - b. however, other cultural-related knowledge may not come to mind unless characteristics of immediate situation cue its retrieval
 - c. furthermore situational factors may activate concepts and knowledge that override the influence of chronically accessible cultural knowledge that might otherwise come into play.
 4. Situation becomes more complex in light of fact that the same situational factors that activate cultural norms and values can simultaneously activate other goals and motive that compete with the effects of these norms.
- E. Perhaps the most intuitively obvious situational factors that might stimulate the retrieval culture-related knowledge are ones that call attention to one's membership in given cultural group
1. e.g., cultural icons may activate norms, values that are then applied in inferences, judgments, etc.—e.g., Hong & Chiu

2. However, these factors can sometimes have other effects as well.
3. for example, making one conscious of one's group membership could induce feelings of social responsibility
 - a. this, in turn, could lead people to be more conservative in decision making, more likely to make decisions that avoid risk of negative consequences for both self and others.
 - b. Note that this could be true regardless of cultural norms that might otherwise be involved

- F. Research I want to talk about makes salient the need to separate out the effects of these factors
1. i.e., need to separate effects of calling attention to one's cultural identity on activation of declarative knowledge, behavioral strategies that are guided by this knowledge, and its effects on feelings of social responsibility that result from thoughts about oneself as members of a social group
 2. Series of studies by Briley and his colleagues make salient the need to make this distinction
 3. want to describe it for purposes of making this point, also because of some intrinsic interest in its own right.

- III. Assumption underlying research is that chronic differences between Asians and Westerners exist in chronic disposition to focus on positive vs. negative consequences of their behavior
- A. This difference is traceable to differences in child-rearing practices
- B. Miller—conducted observational study of American and Taiwanese mothers interacting with their children in constructing a story about the child's misbehaviors
1. Shows that quite different attention is paid to positive and negative behavior in the stories that parents encourage their children to tell
 2. Taiwanese parents tend to make child's present misbehavior a central part of story, relate it to past transgressions
 - a. stories critical, focusing on child's responsibility for act
 - b. relation of present to past misdeeds encourages conception of undesirable behavior as having implications for child's moral character.
 3. In contrast, American parents encourage stories that focus less often on child's past transgressions
 - a. when they do, past transgressions treated humorously, and as natural occurrence
 - b. stories convey theme that to err is human
 - c. thus, preserve character of child as a good person who does good things despite occasional misdeed

4. Thus, Taiwanese parents stress negative behaviors, need to avoid them, whereas American parent for on positive events, treat negative ones as relatively unimportant

- IV. Not surprising to find that these dispositions persist into adulthood, lead to general dispositions in goal-seeking strategies, behavior
- A. Heine, Oishi, and others—Americans take responsibility for success, attribute failure to external factors; Asians take responsibility for failure, externally attribute success
 - B. May affect behavior in choice tasks
 - C. Briley et al. (2000)—Asked Western and Asian Ss to make choices between 3 alternatives, each described by features that varied in favorableness as follows:

	A	B	C
Attrib. 1	+3	-3	+1
2	+3	-3	-1
3	-3	+3	+1
4	-3	+3	-1

1. Ss who focus on positive outcomes choose A or B; those who focus on avoiding negative outcomes choose C
2. Found that if asked to make choice without giving reason, no difference as function of culture—apparently didn't think much about choice
3. when Ss asked to give reason, however, Western Ss increased choice of A or B, Asians increased choice of C
4. Thus, giving reason led Ss to activate culture-specific knowledge, decision strategies, based decisions on these strategies.

- V. In this study, however, Ss cultural identity not explicitly mentioned
- A. Ss may have activated, applied culture-related norm without consciously thinking about cultural identity per se
 - B. If activate consciousness of cultural identity, might have two opposing effects
 1. could activate normative values, standards for behavior
 2. could also induce feelings of belonging to group, social responsibility, etc.
 - C. Work by Hong et al. suggests the former
 1. e.g., exposed Ss to cultural icons (American flag, Great Wall, etc.)
 2. found that Ss' causal attributions were influenced in manner implied by these different norms—

3. Briley & Wyer—found that similar manipulation influenced the values that Ss reported in a questionnaire in manner consistent with these values
 - a. interesting manifestation—calling Americans attention to American icons stimulated them to define self independently of others, as manifested in not only greater value of indep, less value attached to winning, not being outperformed by others
 - b. correspondingly, priming Chinese icons increased Hong Kong Ss' willingness to sacrifice self interests for interests of parents and family, but also increased desire not to be outperformed, value of winning.
- VI. However, questionnaire responses may be guided by norms and values that happen to be salient, not motivational factors per se
- A. In situation where actual choices or decisions are made, different factors may arise
 - B. In an initial series of studies, B & W found that leading Ss to believe they were participating as a group in an initial task led them to express preferences in later situations for alternatives that minimized risk of negative outcomes
 1. i.e., more likely to endorse proverbs that emphasized equality and compromise
 2. also, more likely to distribute candy choices over available options, thus decreasing the likelihood of regret, etc.
 - C. If calling Ss' attention to their cultural identity makes them conscious of group membership, could have similar effect
 - D. In fact, this is true.
 1. Induced consciousness of cultural identity by exposing Americans and HK Chinese to cultural icons using task similar to that employed by Hong et al.
 2. validated assumption that this induced feelings of group membership on basis of sentence construction task that required use of either first person singular or first person plural pronoun
 - a. e.g., to go work I we
 - a. Ss exposed to icons of own culture used "we" significantly greater proportion of times than others, regardless of whether Chinese or US
 3. Gave Ss resource allocation task in which told they had responsibility of allocating resources to self and other, rank ordered preferences for several alternatives
 - a. Ss primed with icons of own culture had stronger preference of equality—outcome that minimized negative consequences
 4. Finally, gave Ss the product choice task used by Briley et al.

- a. dep. Var. = proportion of choices of “C” in previous example
(choices that minimized negative outcome)

b. results:

	Own culture	Other culture
Americans	.63	.45
Chinese	.62	.55

5. Thus, when other culture primed, HK Ss showed some tendency to avoid negative outcomes more than US Ss—might reflect normative influence
6. When own culture primed, however, difference disappeared; both groups preferred outcome that avoided negative outcomes

- VII. Thus, seems clear that consciousness of cultural identity can have both motivational and normative effects that must be taken into account in understanding cultural influences on behavior
- A. In some cases, which factor is operating is not immediately clear
- B. A more recent series of studies by Briley et al. provides example
- C. Studies were concerned with effect of language on the activation of cultural norms and values, and consequent impact on decisions
- D. The studies were performed using HK students, who are bilingual as well as bicultural
1. In one study, Ss were asked to perform the product choice task described earlier under conditions in which experiment was administered either in English or Chinese
 2. Seems reasonable to suppose that norms and values of a culture are most likely to be learned in the language of this culture
 - a. if so, language should activate these norms and values
 - b. in present case, Chinese language should activate concerns about avoiding negative outcomes, which are characteristic of Asians, but English should end to activate focus on positive outcomes
 - c. consistent with assumption, Ss were more likely to choose compromise option when experiment run in Chinese than in English.
 3. However, there are other explanations
 - a. for example, language may activate not only norms and values of culture, but also, may activate expectations for what sort of behavior is **expected** in situation at hand.
 - b. E.g., conducting experiment in Chinese may induce expectation that should respond in manner typical of Chinese, but conducting it in English may induce expectation that conformity to Western norms is desirable
 - c. This could also account for finding
 4. Alternatives hard to separate

5. two attempts to do this yielded intriguing results

E. One study replicated first under conditions in which Ss in some conditions were put under cognitive load by being asked to remember 8-digit number while they performed the decision tasks

1. If language has an effect because it activates cognitive production—automatic decision strategy, then cognitive load manipulation should have little effect.
2. however, if its effect results from deliberate tendency to respond in way that is consistent with expectations of audience, cognitive load might eliminate its impact
3. This is the case— dv = proportion of choices of C (compromise alternative) over set of 4 decision situations

	No load	Load
English	.25	.47
Chinese	.61	.41

4. Thus, although Ss in no-load condition made choices that minimized risk of negative outcomes to a greater extent when Chinese, adding load totally eliminated this difference

F. Second study produced some confirmation of this conclusion, with qualification

1. In this study, participants in some conditions were told that their responses would be used in seminar on decision making at either Chinese univ or American univ
2. thus, provided explicit expectations for social appropriateness of responses
3. Results

	Audience	
	US	Chinese
English	.54	.93
Chinese	.90	.71

4. Therefore, Ss were more likely to compromise if experiment was in Chinese and conducted by Chinese, than if experiment was in English and conducted by US.
 - a. i.e., similar to that observed when audience unspecified
5. However, even **more** likely to compromise when language, organization had conflicting implications
 - a. when conflicting expectations, Ss confused, more concerned about evaluation—thus, more conservative, inclined to take option that minimizes likelihood of negative outcomes
 - b. i.e., similar to making Ss conscious of cultural identity

- VIII. So what is the point of all this?
- A. Ss cultural background can come into play in numerous ways
 - 1. can influence daily interaction behavior that is performed automatically, with little conscious deliberation
 - 2. can have influence on norms and values that Ss report under conditions in which Ss may not be thinking of the source of these values, use chronically accessible knowledge
 - 3. however, when Ss are aware of cultural identity, can have motivational effects that override the effects of this knowledge
 - B. Challenge of future research is to be able to distinguish normative from motivational influences, and to articulate the conditions in which these influences predominate.

Choice Alternatives

	A	B	C
Attribute 1	+3	-3	+1
Attribute 2	+3	-3	-1
Attribute 3	-3	+3	+1
Attribute 4	-3	+3	-1

**Self-Reported Values as a Function of Cultural Background and
Cultural Priming (Briley & Wyer, 2001)**

Value	Own Culture Primed	Other Culture Primed	Difference
Individuality			
U.S. participants	1.51	1.21	0.30
Hong Kong participants	1.08	1.15	-0.15
Not being outperformed by Others			
U.S. participants	0.06	0.75	-0.69
Hong Kong participants	1.46	0.85	-0.10
Winning			
U. S. participants	-0.56	0.32	-0.88
Hong Kong participants	0.59	0.38	0.21
Sacrifice of own interests to parents'			
U. S. participants	0.27	0.16	0.11
Hong Kong participants	0.61	0.10	0.51

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**Proportion of “Compromise” Choices as a Function of
Cultural Background and Priming
(Briley & Wyer, 2002)**

	Own culture primed	Other culture primed
Chinese Participants	.63	.45
American Participants	.62	.55

**Proportion of “Compromise” Choices as a Function of
Language Used in the Experiment and Processing Load**
(Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2005)

	Information Load	
	Low	High
English language	.25	.47
Chinese language	.61	.41

**Proportion of “Compromise” Responses as a Function of Language
Used in the Experiment and Expected Message Recipient**
(from Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2005)

	Message Recipient	
	American	Chinese
English language	.54	.93
Chinese	.90	.71