

Study of the Differences and Similarities of Classroom Behaviors Between Chinese and Foreign Teachers from the Perspective of Power-Distance Index

Mengsheng Qian, Xudong Liu*

School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, P. R. China

Email address:

lukelxd@163.com (Xudong Liu)

*Corresponding author

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Abstract: As one of the most prominent cross-cultural paradigms in the field of intercultural communication studies, the Five Cultural Dimensions pioneered by Professor Hofstede tried to explain how culture plays a key role in a business setting, which later was broadened to include any interpersonal communication. As a typical instance of intercultural communication, classroom discourse in a foreign language teaching context is suitable for a cross-cultural analysis within the framework of Hofstede's theory of Five Cultural Dimensions, especially the power distance index for this index deals with how the influence of culture on one's perception of power could mitigate or exacerbate the communication. The verbal and non-verbal behaviors exhibited by the teachers in a language classroom play an explicit and implicit role in the development of students' academic achievement. It is worthwhile to explore the similarities and differences of these features between Chinese teachers and their foreign counterparts in order to shed light on how cultural elements might function as an important role in foreign language teaching. A self-made corpus is created by observing seven British teachers and ten Chinese teachers responsible for teaching four courses in China. Verbal and non-verbal behaviors are recorded along with interviews both with students participating in the class and teachers. It turns out that in terms of classroom discourse, there are indeed some significant differences in both verbal and non-verbal behaviors. While foreign teachers tend to use a variety of formalities in conducting their courses, Chinese teachers adhere to a certain level of formality in their teaching. In terms of non-verbal communications, foreign teachers prefer to walk around in a classroom where the desks are arranged in a circular or asterisk manner so that students are able to perform some discussion with their mate as well as teachers. On the contrary, Chinese teachers like to have a class in a regular classroom, seldom leaving the platform. Together with other elements, it is helpful to draw the conclusion that the different perception of power distance to a certain extent determines what kind of communicative style Chinese and British teachers use in their interaction with their students. However, question still remains as to whether these different verbal and non-verbal behaviors might have any possible effects on teaching performance.

Keywords: Power Distance Index, Verbal Communication, Non-verbal Communication, Second Language Teaching Classroom, Chinese Teachers, British Teachers

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication has become a reality in modern daily life. Without a single moment could one not witness the interaction between people of different cultures, no matter through a face-to-face engagement, or over the phone or other media such as the internet. Even in the epoch of

pandemic in the 2021, modern world is teeming with intercultural interactions. These interactions originally were confined to diplomatic situations when two countries or regions were trying to enhance their relations by sending envoys to each other, later, business circles where

international trade began to boom, especially after WWII. Another important aspect of intercultural activity involves the training of diplomats and businesspeople when they are sent to other countries. Research shows that the first real training of intercultural practitioners took place during the 1940s and 1950s when the founding father Edward Hall worked for Foreign Service Institute, training a group of American foreign service personnel very practical surviving skills in a foreign context. The publication of *The Silent Language* in 1959 was considered as the birth year of intercultural communication as a discipline [1].

Ever since, many scholars from diverse backgrounds such as anthropology, psychology, communication, political science, foreign language teaching, linguistics, etc., began to contribute to the prosperity of this new research field. It is well acknowledged that language and culture are interconnected to each other. As a carrier of culture, language plays a key role in communication. Sometimes, however, language could also be altered by the specific context where the communication takes place. E. T. Hall [2], after decades of research, put forward one of the most pioneering and influential theories of analyzing the role context plays in communication by claiming that the world at large can be roughly composed of a cultural continuum in which high-context culture and low-context culture occupy each endpoint. In his analysis, a high-context culture relies on more than just the verbal tools in communication. Rather, a variety of means are employed besides language, such as social connections, physical context, suprasegmental features, even including long-term goals. In other words, language alone is not enough. On the contrary, a high-context culture usually downplays the importance of language. It emphasizes more than that. Opposite to this mode of society is a low-context culture where language is the most important if not the only tool used by people to engage in communication. As these two modes of communicative preference are two extremes of all cultural patterns in the world, there exists a cross-cultural continuum in which Asian countries such as Japan and China are more aligned with high-context culture while European countries including North America are more aligned with low-context culture. This cross-cultural paradigm is powerful and neat in explaining some of the most obvious phenomena both in the East and in the West. It is, for the first time in academic world to incorporate culture as an important element in analyzing conversation and communication [1]. However, as it turns out, even within one culture, both high-context culture and low-context culture co-exist. It follows that this theory seems to be too overgeneralized and thus oversimplistic in explaining cultural differences. Later, along with the development of economic globalization, researchers began to collect data from multinational companies such as IBM. Geert Hofstede is one of such prominent scholars in this field. His research findings helped to elevate cross-cultural communication research into a new level. Relying on more than 20 years of data collection, Professor Hofstede [3] finally arrived at the conclusion that five dimensions could be allocated to pinpoint nations in his cultural dimension map,

i.e., individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, small vs. large power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long term vs. short term orientation. Each country in the world within his research scope has an index in each of the above-mentioned dimension, combined together to become the cultural coordinates of that country. Without doubt, this new cultural dimension is much more in detail than high-low context paradigm, rendering nuances among those culturally connected countries such as the UK and the USA. In this classic cross-cultural paradigm, language as well as other parameters plays a key role in determining how a specific culture is positioned in each dimension. In the dimension of individualism vs. collectivism, the participants' reliance on language is measured against how much each one values the importance of language to influence one's identity and his or her connectivity with the community. Professor Hofstede claims that a society that is more inclined to collectivism is dependent on its members to use language as well as other symbols to cherish the tradition. When there is a conflict between personal interest and that of the community, the preference of each individual is always for the prosperity and unity of the community rather than protecting personal well-being. The opposite phenomenon can be observed in an individualistic community where personal identity and interest is prioritized over communal well-being. His second dimension involves the treatment toward uncertainty, i.e., how much tolerant a society could be when confronted with unclear situation. Research in psychology as well as sociology shows that people from different cultural backgrounds tend to tackle with unknown situations differently though it is common that such unclear situations should be dealt with effectively. In some communities, it is ultimately necessary to eliminate uncertain elements whereas it is perfectly acceptable to coexist with uncertain phenomena. The third dimension is about how members in a community behaves, whether they are aggressive and ambitious or whether they are cooperative and sympathetic, the former being termed as masculine while the latter feminine. Social structure also tends to exhibit itself differently in different countries, which is the centerpiece of the fourth dimension. A community with a long power distance is perceived as the one which social structure tends to be quite hierarchical with varied social strata. The opposite is a community with a short power distance where members of such a society tend to have less varied social status. The last dimension deals with how people perceive their goals, whether their emphasis is on the immediate outcome or whether they take long-term goals into consideration. Along these five dimensions, Professor Hofstede mapped out a cross-cultural distribution by pinpointing major countries and cultural communities in the world. His pioneering findings have paid way for further study in business management, educational development, cultural exchange, diplomatic relations management, and so on.

Therefore, the current paper aims to add to the repertoire of intercultural research by exploring the possibility of analyzing the classroom teachers' discourse from the perspective of cultural dimensions in a second language classroom.

2. Literature Review

It is well acknowledged that in a foreign language teaching classroom, the communication between the educator and his pupils could be termed as taking place in a cross-cultural setting [4]. The reason is quite straight-forward. Cross-cultural communication usually takes place between people of different cultural backgrounds. It also means the comparison of different participants in similar settings. In a spoken English class, the tutor usually is a foreign expert, thus creating a perfect example of cross-cultural communication. Research shows that in such a situation when the tutor is a foreigner, the practice of language points is to be emphasized [5]. A multitude of teaching measures are taken in order to boost the interest of the students so as to increase their motivation of speaking English in public. Besides, professor Zhong Suhua [6] finds that though some foreign experts can employ novel teaching methods, creating a comfortable learning environment and carrying out effective interaction with the students, their lack of knowing in depth students and systemic teaching methods and goals renders their class not as effective as people thought. Professor Nunan [7], a renowned second language researcher, discovered that foreign language teachers can attract students' attention for a short period of time because of their new faces and sometimes even bizarre looking. More interestingly, students usually are attracted to some unusual teaching methods such as total physical engagement, among others [8]. However, after two- or three-months' engagement with foreign teachers, students usually would lose their initial interest, thus the temporary elevated motivation would regress to the original level unless foreign teachers take some measures to re-engage their students. Therefore, the teaching and learning effect drawn from novel experience tend to last for a short period of time. Foreign language teaching in other subjects such as intensive reading, grammar, English composition, etc., usually involves the teaching and learning between a Chinese professor and some Chinese students. Though the participants are all from the same cultural background, as the Chinese professor has been engaged in English teaching for many years, their behavior inevitably would have been influenced by British or American culture. Therefore, the classroom interaction in this sense would exhibit a certain degree of interculturalness. Still, researchers [9] on classroom teaching discovered that a lot of times Chinese language teachers put too emphasis on linguistic form rather than practical communicative competence, which results in the adoption of one teaching method, i.e., translation teaching approach. The communication between students and professors, therefore, is usually reduced to the minimum. The only chance for students to express their ideas is when they are asked to check the answers to language exercises. As the majority of English language teachers in China are native Chinese speakers, without taking their linguistic ability into consideration, it is worthwhile to compare and contrast foreign language teachers and Chinese language teachers to uncover some possible similarities and differences in order to shed light on the second

language teaching in China.

3. Theoretical Foundations and Research Questions

As illustrated in the first part of this paper, Hofstede's paradigm of Five Cultural Dimensions is a sound hypothesis that can be used to explain how culture plays a role in social interaction [10]. Professor Hofstede initiated his research with identifying culture as a programming software that determines human brain, or mind. In other words, it is because of cultural differences that lead to variation in outward behaviors among people of different cultural background [11]. Among the five dimensions, the one that is closely related with face-to-face interaction is power-distance index. According to Hofstede, society is composed of various institutions and organizations that are composed by individuals with certain rules and laws. Power distance index is used to measure the degree to which each individual is willing to accept the fact that power in one's society is distributed unequally. A high-power distance culture thus can be described as the one in which members of that society is willing to admit and even expect to witness a hierarchical structure of the society. On the contrary, a low-power distance culture would negate and try its best to eliminate any inequality in a society because members of such a society deem power distance should be reduced to the minimum or even zero. Numerous studies are carried out to test or explain the role of individualism and collectivism in influencing people's behaviour in different situations [1]. Only a small number of researchers are trying to uncover some possible explanations in business management field from power distance perspective. Besides, as power usually is negatively associated with bureaucracy. Most people tend to argue that a democratic community should attempt to reduce the monopoly of power within one person as much as possible, thus confounding the political sense of "power" with that in the field of intercultural communication. Therefore, the adoption of "power distance index (PDI)" in this research entails the reassessment and clarification of "power distance" and its assessment caliber.

Researchers over the past several decades have struggled to provide a unanimous conception of "power" and its distinction with other related terms such as "dominance", "status", "authority", among others. So far, six aspects of power have been identified [11]. They are "the ability of obtain desirable outcomes", "shared concept rather than individual property", "fluid in nature rather than rigid", "involving both action and affection", "unbalanced rather than reciprocal", and "multifaceted rather than unitary". In this sense, a full understanding of "power" would fail to be captured without taking as many factors as possible. For example, gender is a social construct reflecting human's understanding of their roles in the world. Obviously, one's gender role has something to do with one's power. It is also well acknowledged that occupation also influences the degree of power that one possesses. As is the case with one's morality. Clearly put,

“power” in this paper is defined as “any exercising of control over something, often with a stress on forcefulness or strength”. In other words, it simply refers to the ability to choose, understand or control. As employed in communication studies, the emphasis is more on its understanding aspect rather than anything else. As in most of the circumstances, understanding involves at least three components: keen observation, shared bases, and clear outcome, all of which have their foundation in verbal and non-verbal communication. Each component, to a great extent, is all mediated in culture.

As culture becomes a rather important medium for interpersonal communication, it follows that foreign experts and Chinese professors in language teaching might exhibit different traits resulting from different cultural orientations. However, in what way do they differ or share if any? How do those features affect the learning outcomes? Before answering these questions, several related concepts need to be clarified. The total number of language teachers surveyed amounts to 15. Table 1 is a collection of some of their features. Foreign experts in this paper refers to seven native speakers of English coming from the UK, five of whom are female and the rest male. Their average age is 31, ranging from 25 to 33, with an

average of teaching experience of five years. Chinese language teachers in this paper do not mean teachers responsible for teaching Chinese language; they refer to English language teachers of Chinese nationality. The corresponding 8 Chinese language teachers, seven of whom are female and the rest male, have an average age of 33, ranging from 29 to 37, with an average of seven years’ teaching experience. In order to make it easier to discuss in the later part of this essay, all the participants from the UK are addressed as foreign teachers while those Chinese language teachers are referred to as Chinese teachers. The courses involved are Spoken English (taught by foreign teachers and supplemented by Chinese teachers), Integrated English (taught by Chinese teachers and supplemented by foreign teachers), English literature (co-taught by Chinese teachers and foreign teachers), and English Composition (co-taught by foreign teachers and Chinese teachers). Foreign teachers are responsible for two thirds of Spoken English, one third of which is taught by Chinese teachers. Chinese teachers are responsible for two thirds of Integrated English, one third of which is taught by foreign teachers. As for English literature and English Composition, Chinese teachers and foreign teachers assume half of the courses’ hours.

Table 1. Participants in current research.

Nationalities	Sex		Average Age	Teaching experience	Education level	Average Duration in China
	Female	Male				
The UK	5	2	31	5	Master’s degree	3
P. R. China	7	3	33	7	Master’s degree	N/A

As is discovered by Professor Hofstede and his associates, language plays a key in determining one’s social status and identity. It is thus interesting to have noticed that “the language of high PDI cultures is more sensitive to hierarchical distinctions; Chinese and Korean languages, for instance, have separate terms for older brother, oldest brother, younger sister, youngest sister, and so on”[12]. If it is true that a person from a high PDI expects and accepts commands from others without seeking justifications or reasons underlying such commands, and if it is also true that a person from a low PDI tries to minimize the social inequalities, questioning the authorities, and justify commands from others if there are incompatibilities, then it is likely to bring out possible conflicts in the communication between people coming from PDI. In order to make it easier for researchers to compare the PDI of different countries and regions, Professor Hofstede devised methods to measure the PDI. In his findings, China has a PDI of 94, whereas the UK has a PDI of -113. The larger the figure, the larger the power distance in that culture. In this sense, people from China and UK would have quite different perceptions toward social hierarchy. In an educational setting where the teacher occupies a central role in classroom teaching, how the teacher makes himself understood through verbal and non-verbal cues is one of the most important factors in making the instruction effective [7]. Besides, what kind of the instructive language is preferred by the professor is also influenced by the culture where he or she comes from.

Therefore, it is hypothesized in the current study, Chinese teachers and foreign teachers would exhibit different linguistic and non-linguistic behaviors in coping with teaching and their relationships with their students in the classrooms. Chinese teachers are expected to give more verbal commands because they are coming from a high PDI culture, while foreign teachers are expected to give less verbal and non-verbal commands. Instead, they tend to be more cooperative. Their teaching approaches tend to engage students rather than dictate because they are from a low PDI culture.

4. Data Collection and Discussion

The current research was carried out between September 2020 and June 2021, with the written consent of each teacher and their students in a local university in Hangzhou, People’s Republic of China. Each teacher conducted their teaching a 40-minute session each week for one of the four courses, which lasted 34 weeks, which means, there are 34 sessions for each course per teacher altogether. In order to reduce the burden of observation and to avoid bias caused by personal preference, a random selection method was used to make sure each teacher will be selected only twice to be observed while they are teaching. Therefore, the number of research observations amounts to 17 (teachers) × 2 (sessions) × 4 (courses)=136, totaling approximately 90 hours. For each observation, the participants and their students agreed to be

observed without prior notice. During the observation, the researcher usually sat quietly at the back of the classroom, making notes on the verbal and non-verbal behaviors of the teachers. Speeches and behaviors from students would only be noted down only if they are engaged in teacher-students communication. After each observation, the teacher conducting the teaching would receive a face-to-face interview of 10 min with the researcher, who asked the teacher questions related to teaching principles and teaching effectiveness. The number of interviews with teachers amounts to 136, totaling approximately 22 hours. The main purpose of doing interviews with teachers is to elicit the design principle of teaching procedure and to confirm the meaning of some of the non-verbal behaviors. Besides, two students are also randomly selected to receive face-to-face interview of 10 min with the teacher each time right after the class. The number of interviews with students amounts to 272, totaling approximately 45 hours. The main focus of doing interviews with students is to evaluate the effectiveness of verbal and non-verbal behaviors in transmitting information in addition to students' preference in terms of those behaviors.

4.1. Summary and Analysis of Students' Interview

Overall, students who are interviewed showed their satisfaction of teaching effectiveness towards both Chinese teachers and foreign teachers. About 73% of students claim they love foreign teachers' teaching style, including their class plan, interactivity during the class, and diction. Within these three elements, about 67% of students rated foreign teachers' teaching styles as high; 89% of students favored the interactivity in the class directed by foreign teachers; 48% of students thought sometimes foreign teachers' diction, i.e., the choice of words, might be too difficult for them to understand, the rest considering it appropriate.

Students held quite different attitudes towards teaching effectiveness in class directed by Chinese teachers. While on the whole students also liked Chinese teachers (their teaching plan, classroom activity and diction), over 91 percent of students interviewed regarded the classroom activity as too rigid in a college class. Some students even claimed there was no difference between college English courses and high school English course in that Chinese teachers all focused too much on language points. Even in a literature course, one student complained, "sometimes our teachers highlighted only the text per se, ignoring the historical context and other related information, without which I found it is rather difficult to decipher the literary work." About 92% of students considered the diction and speed adopted by the Chinese teachers as appropriate. Likewise, 91% of students thought highly of the teaching plan of Chinese teachers. But five students did mention the rigidity of teaching plan in Comprehensive English courses used by Chinese teachers.

The comments from two of the students interviewed served as typical of students who took part in the study. Student A is a lovely girl of 19 years old who likes an easy-going lifestyle. She commented:

"Overall, Chinese teachers mainly explained the passages

from the text, focusing on language points such as word usage, grammar. Sometimes, they would provide supplementary learning materials, all of which are about how to consolidate our linguistic knowledge, not necessarily linguistic competence. All our Chinese teachers are easy-going after class. I'd love to make friends with them. Though the task during class was rather onerous as we are required to do so many drilling exercises, most of which are just the repetitive and thus boring ones, I like the pep talk in the very beginning of the class and the overall atmosphere is encouraging. As for the foreign teachers, they seemed to have clearer steps in teaching, or rather in guiding us to fulfill each task. Even in a comprehensive English course which is supposed to aim at language training, foreign teachers love to add some cultural elements to make the class quite easy. Besides, as foreign teachers used English in class all the time because they didn't know Chinese, it was a good chance for us to practice our listening ability as well as spoken competence."

Student B is a boy of 19 years old who loves sports. The following is what he commented:

"The Chinese teachers adopted a teaching method of encouragement with severity, edutainment with intensive drill. Though it is rather stressful during the class, I still liked this kind of teaching pattern because the teaching effect is very satisfactory. In the class directed by foreign teachers, however, things would be quite different. Sometimes the foreign teachers tend to dominate the whole class simply because our fellow students didn't cooperate with him. I like him very much because he is quite charming. But honestly speaking, his teaching method is not unacceptable. I doubt that I learned something useful from his class. His way of instruction simply doesn't suit me."

These are just two typical students who hold quite different opinions toward the teaching methods and teaching effectiveness done by Chinese teachers and their counterparts. The next part will be focused on the detailed discussion of classroom observation data from the perspective of power distance.

4.2. Summary and Analysis of Classroom Observation

4.2.1. Summary and Analysis of Verbal Communication

Generally speaking, language includes two aspects: diction (i.e., choice of words) and syntax (i.e., sentence structure)[13]. Research shows that the choice of words does not only determine the difficulty of the speech, but more importantly reflects the style of speakers, including how much the speaker wants to dominate the conversational turn [14]. As it is impossible to recapitulate the features of each teacher in class in terms of their deliberate choice of words, it is after all meaningful to probe into the specific teaching scenario in order to shed light on how the diction differs from person to person, especially between Chinese teachers and their foreign counterparts, within the framework of power-distance dimension.

Firstly, the study of diction can be approached from the meaning it intends to convey. Geoffrey Leech [15] put forward his classic theory of meaning, claiming there are

seven types of meaning, i.e., conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflective meaning, collocative meaning, and thematic meaning. Among the five associative aspects of meanings, social and affective meanings are directly related to power distance. The former refers to the analysis of meaning from social perspective, such as “idiosyncrasy, formality, regional variation, modality etc.” [16] 213-217. For example, “domicile” is more frequently used in an official document, while “abode” invokes a poetic sense. It is claimed that the choice of expressions and how they are delivered at least are determined by three factors: the teaching goal, language proficiency, and personality of the instructor, among which, cultural elements play a decisive role in shaping one’s personality. This idiosyncratic choice of words, to a great extent, reflects one’s understanding of power distance in an instructive setting. Data shows that foreign teachers tend to choose commonly used expressions to get their ideas across to students, even in such courses as English Literature which supposedly would be directed in a rather academic way. Sometimes, very idiomatic expressions such as slangs, expressions with English characteristics, can be heard in a spoken English class instructed by foreign teachers. On the contrary, the Chinese teachers tend to choose formal expressions in explaining the passage in Integrated English course, or as what professor Nunan termed “teacher talk” [7]. As one of the institutional conversations, teacher talk exhibits certain distinctive features, one of which is its being formal. It is admitted that this difference can be ascribed to the different teaching purposes held by foreign teachers and Chinese teachers. While the former aims to explain the language in an easy-going manner, trying to create a relaxing learning atmosphere, the latter, on the other hand, plans to familiarize students with a variety of linguistic phenomena in a strictly guided manner. At the same time, that these two different methods are adopted to achieve the similar goal reflects how the cultural element plays a role, especially the different understanding of power distance as held by the British nationals and Chinese nationals. According to Professor Hofstede et al. [3], formal language tends to dominate in a culture with a large PDI and vice versa.

Another important feature reflected in verbal communication is the difference in syntax, i.e., sentence structure. From the cross-cultural perspective, Chinese natives tend to use periodic sentences, i.e., “a usually complex sentence that has no subordinate or trailing elements following its principal clause” (Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary-Online). The opposite is the loose sentence where the main clause precedes the subordinate one, which is preferred by English speakers [17]. As Chinese is a language that contains much more periodic sentences than English language, it would be natural for Chinese teachers to use such complex sentence structures even in an English class. However, it cannot be claimed this would create some difficulty in students’ understanding. After all, as Chinese students learning English, they are supposed to be quite familiar with periodic sentence structure. Interestingly enough, our data shows no such difference can be elicited as to the

preference in sentence structure. both Chinese teachers and their foreign counterparts used many periodic sentences in conducting their lecture. It can be explained that Chinese teachers are well versed in English language and sensitive to cultural difference. In order to create an authentic linguistic environment, they purposefully chose loose sentences as much as possible. One Chinese teacher proved this in his interview with the researcher. Therefore, cultural element does exert a certain influence on teachers’ choice of sentence structure. Yet it helps to narrow the cultural difference rather than the other way around.

4.2.2. Summary and Analysis of Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication can be classified into three broad areas: body language including gesture, facial expressions, and touching; spatial language including the arrangement of the desks in the classroom and the distance between students and teachers; object language including dress, make-up, and aroma [12]. Overall, foreign teachers showed more hand gestures than their Chinese counterparts. Their facial expression tends to be less serious. Smiling expressions were often observed in a class lead by foreign teachers. Seldom did they choose to sit in front of the classroom. Foreign teachers stood more often than Chinese teachers. Sometimes when they did sit down, they choose to be with students, but keeping a certain distance of about 1 meter. As mentioned above, Chinese teachers preferred to behave in a solemn manner with less smiling on their faces. They used fewer hand gestures. Sometimes they walked among students, patting them on their shoulders in order to encourage them if they made mistakes or progress, which was hardly observed in foreign teachers’ classes. In the terms of spatial language, foreign teachers would ask students to sit in a roundtable or in a star-shaped table, so no one was directly facing the blackboard but each other. In this way, foreign teachers would talk around the classroom, joining in the students during the discussion session. Chinese teachers, on the other hand, tend to stand or sit in front of all the students, very much like doing a lecture even in a Spoken English course. In the category of object language, foreign teachers were dressed in a casual way though every foreign teacher wore perfume. Chinese teachers were dressed in a formal way. Both Chinese and foreign ladies did make-ups.

It is shown from the dimension of PDI that the culture Chinese teachers and their British counterparts plays a key in influencing their difference in verbal and non-verbal behaviors in class. For a person coming from a high PDI, authoritative linguistic performance is not to be challenged or questioned; social hierarchical structure and inequality are considered not as detrimental but beneficial to the community as a whole [3]. As China and the USA are considered as country with high PDI, people from these countries tend to believe that power and authority are an integral part of life. In such a culture, authoritative figures such as superiors and teachers are respectable. In public places, especially, in an institutional setting, other people will win favor by praising authoritative figures as well as some non-verbal behaviors.

These authoritative figures, at the same time, feel easy and relaxed when they are paid attention to. Sometimes they are likely to defend their authority if challenged. Our data and interview both show that Chinese teachers tend to ignore those students who wanted to give comments or put forward questions by raising their hands. More often than not, the hand gestures used by Chinese teachers tend to confirm their claim rather than inviting comments. Even when students were invited to utter their opinions, Chinese teachers are more likely to guard their viewpoint. Even after class, more often than not students would initiate the greeting when they meet with their Chinese teachers. Students rarely address their Chinese teachers with the latter's last name; instead, surname is always used to show their respect. Sometimes, students will use intimate appellation such as first name followed by elder brother or elder sister, but this is usually confined to young or middle-aged teachers. All of these indicate that the conversational pattern preferred by Chinese teachers is greatly influenced by their perception of high power distance in China.

In comparison, people from a low power distance tend to believe social equality as an ideal that has to be achieved. Therefore, challenging the authority and eliminating social hierarchy are welcomed with the aim of limiting the power within proper area. From people coming from a country of low power distance such as the United Kingdom, subordinates and their boss tend to establish a close rapport with each in the workplace. When they are not at the office, personal relationship between boss and their subordinates tends to be not very close. In the class directed by the foreign teachers in our corpus, the foreign teachers are likely to tell jokes in order to boost the learning atmosphere. They greeted the interruption from students with pleasure. They encouraged students to express their different opinions in public. During and after the class, it is quite common for students to address foreign teachers with their first name. All of these indicate that the conversational pattern preferred by foreign teachers is greatly influenced by their perception of low power distance in the UK though they are teaching in a culture of high PDI.

5. Conclusion

So far, the two broad aspects of human communication, i.e., verbal and non-verbal communication are analyzed, each further dissected from several different parts. The whole research lasted ten months, from September 2020 to June 2021, including face-to-face interview with college students and Chinese or British teachers responsible for four courses. Two students are chosen as representative of other students who either support Chinese way or British way in class. Generally speaking, Chinese teachers are more formal in conducting their lectures, which is shown in their choice of expressions and non-verbal behaviors such as classroom arrangement and serious facial expressions in class. This is in conformity with Hofstede's theory of power distance, i.e., British culture tends to have shorter power distance while Chinese people are

familiar with long power distance [3, 18].

In order to improve teaching performance, both Chinese teachers and their counterparts can learn from each other. For instance, Chinese teachers should pay attention to enhance their English competence by using different types of syntax and diction in order to provide authentic language material for students to practice their English. At the same time, British teachers could also try to systemize their teaching by adopting a method that is suitable in a large power-distance culture. On the whole, the research findings are conducive to second language learning in China. However, teaching performance should also be evaluated from learners' perspective, i.e., how much second language learners have accumulated their understanding of English language in terms of four skills. It is also important to explore the possible individual differences such as degree of motivation, purpose of study, learning styles, etc., all of which would exert great influence on the learning outcome. Therefore, these could set the agenda for the further exploration in this field.

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