English-background and non-English-background speakers' perceptions of gaze and bodily movements in academic interactions

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ABSTRACT

Behaviours accompanying speech such as gaze and bodily movements have been shown to play a significant role in everyday communication. It is widely accepted that they are to some extent culturally and socially learned. However, little is known about potential impacts that those influences may have in second language (L2) contexts. This study, therefore, explored perceptions of behaviours displayed by non-English-background speakers in an academic discussion task. Three groups of participants were involved: Chinese-background English learners who were the speakers, and respondents who were non-English and English-background speakers. All participants watched short video clips of the discussion and were asked to respond to four cues – eye contact, facial expressions, body position/movement and gesture. Results indicate that differences in perceptions, which were most pronounced between Chinese-background English speakers and English-background respondents, can have considerable impact on general impressions and readiness to initiate conversation. The analysis also pointed to eye contact, body position-

movement and gesture as the areas of greatest saliency. Pedagogical implications include the need for two-sided awareness raising.

INTRODUCTION

Second language acquisition settings have been increasingly viewed as sites of intercultural encounter, in which participants engage in sense-making and judgements by use of various resources. These resources are not limited to spoken language, but include a variety of modes such as gesture, gaze, facial expressions, body positions and movement utilized by the interactants in structuring particular communicative events. However, the acquisition of L2 across these different modes as well as their use in L2 communicative settings has only attracted researchers' attention relatively recently. The existing studies in the area mostly focus on the cognitive dimensions of L2 acquisition and interaction (see Gullberg, 2006; Stam, 2006), with minimal focus on the socio-pragmatic dimensions (see Orton, 2004a, 2004b, 2006). This study, therefore, explored this issue with regard to appropriateness perceptions of various behaviours and their potential interactional impacts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From nonverbal to multimodal

Gesture and other bodily actions have been traditionally referred to as nonverbal behaviours. They are often seen as produced by means other than words and thus distinct from speech (Knapp & Hall, 2002; Mehrabian, 2007). Other definitions include the notion of influence executed on the interlocutor intentionally or unintentionally through the nonverbal channel (Argyle, 1988). Scollon and Scollon (2001) note, however, that the distinction between what is considered verbal and what is nonverbal is not always clear. Indeed, research in the area has stressed the impossibility of separating these components, given the evidence for tight links between gesture and language (e.g., Kendon, 2004; McNeill, 1992, 2005).

Recent theoretical and methodological developments have resulted in the concept of 'multimodality' which recognizes the close relationship between gesture and language (Jewitt, 2009, LeVine & Scollon, 2004). Multimodality assumes that by being selected and configured by individuals taking part in interaction, all modes (e.g., speech, gesture, gaze, body movements) fulfil social functions, and they are shaped by the norms and rules influenced by the motivations and interests of the participants in a specific social context (Jewitt, 2009).

Multimodal aspects of communicative competence

The concept of multimodality is relevant to the notion of communicative competence which has played such an influential part in the SLA field. The framework developed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) takes into account the multimodal character of competence – as Quinn-Allen (1999) notes, even grammatical competence is concerned both with the rules of grammar and with kinesic and paralinguistic features such as intonation, facial expression and gesture. Sociolinguistic competence, on the other hand, caters for the use of resources such as eye contact, personal space, touch and gestures, and their successful execution and interpretation in the exchange of messages in particular social settings (Canale, 1983).

Other proposals also considered the multimodal aspects of communicative competence. Borden (1991), for instance, included the knowledge of the potential meanings carried by the use of various resources that accompany speech. Crozet (1996) goes further by presenting a model for instruction aimed at enhancing communicative competence that includes the teaching of norms of interaction. Within this framework, aspects such as kinesics, turn-taking rules, feedback devices, and communication breakdown management are taken into account. However, Crozet (1996) admits that there is little research to assist instructors in choosing which aspects to focus on in the language classroom (see also Jungheim, 2001; Nixon & Bull, 2005).

Impression formation in L2 interaction

One of the functions that needs to be taken into account when considering behaviours such as gaze or gesture is their role in impression formation. That is, the process of formulating internal judgements of others and events which is often associated with initial impressions. Impression formation is important in establishing attitudes and intentions of the interlocutors. First impressions often serve as a template, guiding the interpretation of subsequent information (Burgoon, Buller & Woodall, 1996). This process partially originates in stereotypes, and shapes interpersonal expectations, affecting the social judgement and behavioural processes simultaneously (Patterson, 2006, p.32). Behaviours that differ from the (culturally influenced) expectations can result in negative perceptions. Such behaviours can also determine the way learners' linguistic performance is assessed in L2 contexts (e.g., Jenkins & Parra, 2003; Nambiar & Goon, 1993; Neu, 1990).

This issue is relevant in an academic setting since it has now been well recognised that international students experience problems relating to more than their second language proficiency levels. Gallois (1992), for example, examined interactions between Asian university students and English-background lecturers in Australia. Students who accommodated to Australian politeness norms in academic interactions (e.g., maintained eye contact, nodded and smiled) were perceived more positively than students who were either under-accommodating (e.g., avoided eye contact) or over-accommodating (e.g., kept constant gaze, leant close to the lecturer).

A series of studies concerned with multimodal aspects of academic interactions in L2 context was also carried out by Orton (2004a, 2004b, 2006) in Australia. Orton looked at the responses of Chinese-background and English-background speakers to video clips of Chinese individuals speaking English. The results show differences in perceptions of behaviours such as gaze, gesture and body position-movement in particular. Body and hand stillness was often perceived by the Australian respondents as inappropriate. The

Chinese respondents, however, expressed their approval of a limited amount and volume of gestures and preferred a body held straight and upright. Orton (2006) suggests that involvement and immediacy are noticed through gesturing, open body position, and leaning into the conversation for English-background speakers, but were more often seen by the Chinese-background respondents as resting in facial expressions, smiling and focused gaze. Orton therefore concludes that such mismatch in expectations can lead to perceptions of being inappropriate and even irritating by both sides.

If behaviours that accompany speech can influence the way non-English-background speakers are perceived by others, and, in due course, determine the levels of their academic and interpersonal performance, it is important to explore the relationship between behaviours such as gaze and bodily movements and impression formation. This study aimed at addressing the issue by considering it from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

METHOD

This study investigated the responses of speakers from different language and cultural backgrounds to seven male Chinese-background English learners engaged in a discussion task. The following research questions were asked:

1. What are the Chinese-background, other non-English background, and English-background speakers' perceptions of appropriateness of various behaviours accompanying speech in an academic discussion task?

2. How do the differences in perceptions among the groups relate to overall impression formation and readiness to initiate conversation?

Participants

Two groups of participants were involved: Speakers and Respondents. The Speakers were seven Chinese males who were all,

at the time of data collection, international students enrolled in an English proficiency programme at a New Zealand university. They came from various areas of mainland China, and all spoke Mandarin Chinese as their first language. Their proficiency levels were in the IELTS 5.0-5.5 range.

The Respondent group comprised 15 non-English-background (NEB) and 15 English-background (EB) speakers. They were all university students. The majority of EB Respondents were New Zealanders, with one Briton and one North American (U.S.A.). The NEB Respondents came from various cultural backgrounds, mostly western European (Germany, France), but also Asian (Malaysia, Korea), and Latin American (Argentina, Mexico).

Materials

The materials comprised seven video recordings of Chinese males engaging in a discussion with one other student and the researcher who acted as the facilitator. The discussion was carried out in English. The topic was the Free Trade Agreement between New Zealand and China. It was an issue that was covered in one of the themes of the proficiency programme and was a current issue in the national media at the time of data collection. Therefore, it was expected to provide a good opportunity for the Speakers to express their opinion based on their knowledge and linguistic preparation.

The Speakers were encouraged to invite one of their classmates to take part in the activity in order to reduce stress levels and reflect a real setting, where students attending tutorials would be reasonably familiar with each other. The discussion partners were usually of a different cultural origin, apart from two Speakers who chose to interact with other Chinese students.

Each discussion was preceded by a short interview with the Speaker to collect background information after which the discussion partner was invited into the room. Each discussion took approximately 9 minutes. The Speaker was always sitting in the centre facing the camera with the researcher and the discussion

partner on each side. A video camera was put onto recording mode before the Speaker came into the room.

A short clip was extracted by the researcher from each discussion. The start of each clip was set at the beginning of the discussion and the finish within the next 4 minutes. The samples thus obtained were considered representative of behavioural patterns based on the 'thin slices' and impression formation theory (see Murphy, 2005; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992).

Task

The clips were used in the individual viewing sessions with the Speakers (each Speaker saw their own recording only), and group sessions with the Respondents, who viewed all seven clips. The Respondents were asked to provide their response to each clip in writing and not to consult each other. Both groups were provided with rating sheets that contained a five-point Likert scale for the appropriacy of each behaviour (eye contact, facial expressions, body position/movement and gesture), along with space left for comments. Additionally, the Respondents were asked to comment on their general impressions of each Speaker, and indicate how likely they would be to initiate conversation with them (see Appendix A). There was a two-minute pause between the clips to allow the Respondents time for writing. Both participant groups were given a short explanation of the behaviours listed on the rating sheet. In Respondent sessions, the researcher indicated the speaker they were to focus on in each clip. The participants were asked to focus on the Speaker but were free to observe other discussion participants and the way they interacted with each other. The clips were shown in random order in each session so that varied levels of attention could be taken into account.

Coding and analysis

Quantitative data

The appropriacy ratings provided information supporting the comments given by the participants. The ratings for each Speaker were compiled into a 'profile' that consisted of his own evaluation and ratings provided by the Respondents. Means were calculated for each item. Additionally, an overall mean for each Speaker consisting of all ratings obtained from the Respondents was derived.

Qualitative data

Two coders were involved in the classification of the qualitative data, the researcher and an inter-coder. Grounded theory approach was applied (Mackey & Gass, 2005), in which classification was derived from the data and particular instances of the actual behaviour coded from the video clips. Several general categories emerged: the presence of a particular behaviour (e.g., noting gaze, hand, arm and body movement and their intensity), the manner in which it was displayed (e.g., gaze, gesture or body shifts while carrying out particular actions such as speaking or listening; direction of gaze, the way hands are used while gesturing), its role in interaction (e.g., gestures enhancing the message; gaze perceived as facilitating/impeding the relationship between the interlocutors), and impressions relating to person (i.e., judgements about the person's character or emotional state) (see Appendix B).

The comments were further classified according to whether they were implying a negative, neutral, or positive observation of a particular mode. There was an overall agreement between coders in 87% of cases. Most of the discrepancies were concerned with the classification of the comments either as neutral or positive. They were resolved by referring to the rating provided by the particular Speaker or Respondent who made the comment.

RESULTS

Data presented here will focus on the most salient features that were identified in the analysis. Quantitative data presented in Table 1 shows the overall means of NEB and EB Respondents' ratings for each Speaker on each behaviour, the overall performance mean based on the average of the means for all behaviours, and means of conversation initiation ratings for each Speaker from each group of Respondents. Even though overall mean comparisons did not indicate significant differences between the groups, when analysed in more detail, eye contact was the area that reached significance in several cases (Speakers 2, 3, 4), along with body position/movement (Speaker 7) in terms of Respondent reactions (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
NEB/EB respondent ratings

Behaviour	Respondents	Speakers						
		S1	S2	S 3	S4	S5	S6	S7
Eye contact	NEB	3.80	4.00*	4.13*	3.20*	3.93	2.67	4.27
	EB	3.53	3.20*	3.40*	4.07*	4.20	3.13	3.93
Facial expr.	NEB	3.40	3.53	3.87	2.80	3.80	3.07	3.67
	EB	3.33	3.40	3.40	3.27	4.00	3.33	3.47
Body pos/mov	NEB	3.20	3.60	3.53	3.27	3.40	2.20	3.67*
	EB	3.53	3.27	3.13	3.20	3.27	2.60	3.00*
Gesture	NEB	3.33	2.87	3.93	2.13	3.47	2.87	4.00
	EB	3.53	2.80	4.00	2.67	3.13	3.00	3.87
Overall	NEB	3.43	3.50	3.86	2.85	3.65	2.70	3.90
	EB	3.48	3.16	3.48	3.30	3.65	3.01	3.56
Convers. init.	NEB	3.33	3.40	3.60**	2.53	3.53	2.87	3.27

*p<.05 **p<.10

Qualitative data also revealed a similar pattern, with gaze, body position/movement and gesture being the areas of greatest differences in terms of perceptions among the groups.

Eye contact

As noted above, eye contact was the area which reached significance in terms of Respondent perceptions for several Speakers. All groups noted continuous or consistent lack of eye contact as inappropriate. However, there were differences in terms of the perceptions of the intensity and frequency of eye contact. In general, the NEB group preferred more constant and intense gaze that was held equally with both interlocutors, whereas EB Respondents perceived occasional lack of eye contact as more natural, rating higher those Speakers who looked away.

More 'focused' gaze was seen as positive by the Speakers. Speaker 4, for instance, was satisfied with his '*really focused*' eye contact that he held at times, but expressed his preference for it to be more frequent. The NEB Respondents' need for more sustained gaze also appeared in their reactions to the eye contact of Speaker 4, who was rated second lowest by that group ($\overline{X}$ = 3.20). They commented that he was '*avoid*[ing] *eye contact when speaking*' and saw it as disrespectful. However, they noted that he was '*look*[ing] *at* [the] *person who is talking* and *paying attention when listening*' which seemed to moderate their perceptions. English-background Respondents, on the other hand, rated this speaker much higher ($\overline{X}$ = 4.07). Furthermore, as the highest-rated on this aspect by this group, Speaker 5 ($\overline{X}$ = 4.20) was noted as having '*very good eye contact*' since he '*glances to think but that's understandable*' thus his behaviour was perceived in general as '*not too intense or unnerving*'.

The case of Speaker 2 further reinforces the differences in perceptions of gaze patterns. He was observed by NEB Respondents as having '*strong* [eye contact] *with experimenter* [and] *less with the other* [discussion participant]' and seemed to '*look at* [the researcher]

most of the time'. This aspect of his performance was rated as mostly appropriate by this Respondent group. However, this behaviour caused several EB Respondents to perceive Speaker 2's eye contact as '*slightly awkward*' as he '*seem*[ed] *to stare*', and have '*fixed*' eye contact. A closer analysis of his actual behaviours revealed certain features that might have caused such impressions. Speaker 2 positioned himself to face the researcher, with his back slightly to the other discussion participant. When he spoke, he tended to look away at the beginning of his utterances and during hesitations, but tended to hold his gaze on the researcher for several seconds after finishing a sentence. When listening, he turned to look at the other person, but often shifted his gaze back to the researcher.

Body position and movement

Body position and movement was the lowest-rated aspect of the Speakers' performance, and generated the largest amount of negative comments both from NEB and EB Respondents. It was also the area of second lowest individual rating (Speaker 6, NNS $\overline{X}$ = 2.20).

The differences emerged as Speakers' preference for a straight body position and more stillness that was counter-balanced by Respondents' positive perceptions of Speakers who were '*leaning into*' the conversation, displaying an '*open body position*', such as Speakers 2, 4, and 5. The Speakers, however, commented negatively on this phenomenon. Speaker 5, for instance, rated his own behaviour here as mostly inappropriate and the only reason provided was in regard to his leaning into the conversation, which he noted as causing a negative impression since '*when people listen to other people you must keep straight*'.

English-background Respondents also focused more on the body orientation. Speaker 1, who received the highest rating in this respect ($\overline{X}$ = 3.53), was seen as '*open, quite relaxed, attentive and inviting'*. This Speaker sat with his legs open, arms resting on the sides and hands

between the knees. He maintained this position most of the time, but whenever he engaged in a conversation with one of the interlocutors, he shifted his body slightly to face that person. The need for an open body position directed at both interlocutors is reinforced by the case of Speaker 6 - not facing either interlocutor, fidgeting and having a closed body were the reasons given by both Respondent groups for his low rating.

Gesture

Gesture was the mode rated second-lowest by the Respondents, with the lowest individual rating (Speaker 4, NNS $\overline{X}$ =2.13). Several trends became apparent: the Speakers' and NEB Respondents' preference for more restricted gesture, EB Respondents' positive reaction to more frequent and pronounced gesture, and a general perception of gesture's role as a device for enhancing the message.

Perhaps the best illustration of Speakers' preferences is provided by Speaker 6's comments and his actual behaviour in terms of gesture. He tended to nod and shift his head diagonally when speaking – these movements seemed to replace hand and arm gesture, especially in the first half of the conversation. When asked about his decision to rate it as neutral, he stated the following:

I don't move too much about my arm movement, this is only three people talk and the movements shouldn't be too obvious, too big.

After a closer analysis of the video recordings of all Speakers, it became apparent that Speakers 1, 3, and 7 were the only ones who used gesture continuously throughout their utterances. The first two used their hands, moved their forearms, and occasionally whole arms. Speaker 7, however, gestured less frequently and mostly used his hands with only several instances of forearm movement. He rated his behaviour as mostly appropriate, commenting on the limited use of gesture:

I think I use my hand [showing when he's counting], *that's good, not all the way but just one minute.*

Both Respondent groups often perceived the lack of gesture less positively. This was the most prominent reason given for the low rating of Speaker 4:

Not much movements / Hardly any gesture / Looks nervous, doesn't make any gestures.

However, gesture that was displayed more continuously was seen as more appropriate by EB Respondents, whereas the NEB group reacted with positive comments to those Speakers who used gesture in a more controlled manner.

As has already been mentioned above, Speaker 1, 3, and 7 were the ones gesturing consistently throughout their interaction. Although some NEB Respondents perceived this phenomenon positively, there were also some negative observations made, stemming from the movement being '*very disruptive, too much*' as the Speaker '*use*[d] *the gestures all the time while speaking*' (Speaker 3).

Furthermore, gesture was often seen by the Speakers as facilitating the understanding of the message:

I try to use my body language with explain something, maybe my hands and my arms. (Speaker 4)

Several NEB Respondents also noted the facilitative character of gesture used by Speaker 1, who '*use*[d] *hands to emphasize points in conversation* and to *express intensity* [of] *his ideas'*.

Similarly, EB Respondents commented on Speaker 3 using gesture '*to convey meaning and to help illustrate the point*' or '*reinforce what he was saying*' and Speaker 7, who '*used expressive hand motions to help show semantic* [meaning] *of words used'*.

Impression formation effects

The effects of perception differences on impressions and willingness to initiate interaction are best illustrated by the case of two Speakers who received the lowest ratings from both groups of Respondents.

Speaker 6 was rated lowest in general (see Table 1) and that was reflected in the comments made by the Respondents. He displayed limited eye contact, but perceived it as sufficient, noting his attempt to '*focus*' on the speaker, marking his own performance as mostly appropriate. The Respondents saw him as being intimidated, reserved, and disengaged. Some also noted the fact that he '*did not fit in*', and even perceived him as '*ignorant*', although the majority attributed his behaviour to shyness or lack of confidence. Subsequently, he was also among the speakers with whom both EB and NEB Respondents indicated they would be least likely to initiate conversation.

A similar case was observed with Speaker 4. Even though his gaze was rated very highly by EB Respondents, he was rated lower in other modes (see Table 1). He rated his gesture as mostly inappropriate, stating excessive movement that revealed his nervousness. He also commented on his perception of appropriate gesture as being limited, controlled, and used only in cases of linguistic deficiencies. Both Respondent groups perceived his behaviour as equally inappropriate, but for a different reason: the majority of the comments relate to the lack of gesture and its subdued character.

DISCUSSION

The results reveal several features that should be taken into account. First of all, patterns of appropriate eye contact expressed by the Speakers can be considered in terms of the role of gaze in interaction as noted by researchers investigating communicative phenomena among Chinese-background speakers. It appears that the relatively consistent gaze directed at a person that was demonstrated by the Speakers when listening might stem from 'listening-centeredness' (Yang, 2007, p.11), which associates gaze with the display of a high level of attention and involvement in the conversation (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Yang, 2007). Such behaviour, however, was met with negative reactions from some EB Respondents in the current study, who preferred less intense eye contact in general. One of the possible

interpretations of these results could be explained by the fact that increased eye contact can be viewed as an indicator of assertiveness (Romano & Bellack, 1980). These findings, therefore, suggest possible discomfort caused by different gaze patterns on both sides, with a potential for English-background speakers to misinterpret more intense eye contact displayed by Chinese-background English speakers.

As far as body position/movement is concerned, it is worth noting that 'leaning into' the conversation was also a feature seen as positive by English-background respondents in Orton's (2006) study. Forward body lean has been identified as an indicator of attraction and involvement (Jenkins & Parra, 2003), and might be one of the features triggering positive impressions and enhancing communication with members of Western cultures.

The view of gesture as a resource enhancing understanding suggests that the Speakers in the current study might have relied on it as a strategy to overcome difficulties (Krauss & Hadar, 2001). This feature seems to be reinforced by the need to display gesture in a controlled manner expressed by the Speakers. English-background Respondents, however, showed preference for more sustained and frequent gesture, which might be explained by the higher importance placed on gesture in general by some cultures (Burgoon *et al.*, 1996). This supposition is corroborated by the fact that EB Respondents also pointed to the role of gesture in emphasizing the messages when commenting on those Speakers whom they rated highly.

Expressiveness and cultural influences

The results of this study can be considered in terms of differences in patterns of expressiveness between cultural groups. Matsumoto (1991) notes that differences in the intensity of self-expressions between different cultures may be attributed to the effect of collectivism (which emphasises group over individual needs and autonomy) and power distance (the level of acceptance of unequal

distribution of social and institutional power). Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998, p.6) assert that in Chinese culture, the primary functions of communication are to maintain existing relationships among individuals, to reinforce role and status differences, and to preserve harmony within the group. This predominant goal of interaction is achieved through certain speaking practices, including containment and reserve.

This feature seems to be in contrast with the Respondents' preferences in the current study, and of English-background speakers in particular, whose positive impressions can be attributed to immediacy cues (behaviours aimed at reducing social and psychological distance between people), which are most often associated with gaze behaviours, body leaning, smiling, nodding, and gesture that are employed in the display of engagement and affiliation (Richmond & McCroskey, 2003).

Expectations and effects of differences

This study, aimed at exploring appropriateness perceptions among individuals of differing cultural and language backgrounds, took into account their possible effects on impression formation and readiness to initiate interaction. The results confirm the predictions made by studies related to communication expectations (Matsumoto & Hee Yoo, 2005), and expectancy violation theory (Burgoon, Coker & Coker, 1986). Both studies point to a set of culturally and socially developed norms that are accompanied by emotional reactions to rule violation. Since much interaction activity is habitual and routinized, these reactions are activated when something goes wrong (Burgoon *et al.*, 1996). In this setting, those Speakers in the current study who seemed to display behaviours considered most divergent from what the Respondents perceived as appropriate, were also the ones making the least positive impression and with whom the Respondents indicated they would be least likely to initiate interaction.

The results presented in this paper confirm the interactional role of behaviours accompanying speech, especially in intercultural settings. They also suggest possible areas in which awareness raising through directed or self-observation might enhance the communicative abilities of both English-background and non-English background speakers engaged in intercultural encounters.

Pedagogical implications

Training vs. awareness-raising

First of all, the issue of enhancing learners' global communicative ability development through noticing and understanding versus training needs to be raised. There are numerous publications which lay down principles for training in effective communication (e.g., Jungheim, 1991; Schneider, 1985) but the majority assume a direct relationship between overt instruction and behavioural change. 'Training' and 'instruction' imply transferability of certain behaviours from the target culture onto the behaviour patterns of non-English-background speakers resulting in their replication. They do not, however, seem to take into account problems such as resistance that might arise from identity issues. Therefore, it is advisable that learners should be given an opportunity to become aware of certain phenomena first, and given the choice to decide the extent to which they are willing to accommodate to the patterns. They also need to be provided with opportunities for observation and reflection, whether guided or independent, through which they would be able to enhance their socio-pragmatic competence which requires the ability to recognize behavioural patterns displayed in a particular language community (Jungheim, 2001).

Providing opportunities for all interaction participants - language learners and native speakers - to observe and understand diverse behavioural patterns seems valuable. This can be done through pairing international and domestic students, as Eisenchlas & Trevaskes (2003) did in their program which was based on discussion and reflection during which participants created their

own 'cultural space' that allowed them to make comparisons of the values underlying certain behaviours.

Intercultural competence

The 'cultural space' pointed out above is relevant to the notion of intercultural competence defined as the ability to notice, interpret and critically understand the behaviours and relationships between different cultures (Byram, 2000). The critical aspect allows individuals to step outside their expectations of certain behaviours as 'natural' and see them as culturally determined and relative. With English being an international language that is 'no longer linked to a single culture or nation but serves both global and local needs as a language of wider communication' (McKay, 2002, p.24), enhancing awareness of cross-cultural differences in communicative behaviours such as those explored in this study may result in greater understanding and appreciation across cultures using English for communication.

CONCLUSION

The study explored perceptions of various behaviours accompanying speech while performing an academic discussion task among Chinese-background, other non-English, and English-background speakers. The analysis revealed several areas of differences in perception of appropriacy, which were most pronounced between the Chinese-background Speakers and EB Respondents. The results also suggest the potential influence of lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviours displayed by members of different cultures, and its impact on general impressions and readiness to initiate interaction.

The main contribution of the present study lies in exploring an area that still lacks well-informed theoretical and practical bases, and distinguishing certain aspects of the dimension of communication in second language contexts that should be given more attention by future studies. The study also highlights the need for more interest in the dimensions of communication between non-English and

English-background speakers that go beyond speech, since they could potentially shape levels of satisfaction, relationships, and general cultural adaptation of all communication participants.

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APPENDIX A: RATING SESSION MATERIALS AND DATA

	Speakers	**Respondents**
Materials	4min video clip of a Speaker's own performance	4min video clips of all Speakers
Quantitative data	Ratings of four cues: eye contact, facial expressions, body position/movement and gesture using Likert scale (1 = inappropriate, awkward, disruptive, causing negative impression; 5 = totally appropriate, smooth and causes positive impression) * not included in the self-rating sheet	

Nonverbal cue	Rating	Comments	
		Why did you decide to rate this behaviour this way?	What are your impressions of this person?*
Eye contact	1 2 3 4 5		
Facial expressions	1 2 3 4 5		
Body position	1 2 3 4 5		
Gesture	1 2 3 4 5		

How likely would you be to initiate a conversation with this person?*

1	2	3	4	5
not likely at all			very likely	

	Indicated likelihood to initiate conversation using a Likert item
Qualitative data	Oral statements regarding own performance and appropriateness perceptions	Written comments regarding speakers' performance, appropriateness perceptions, and general impressions

APPENDIX B: QUALITATIVE DATA CODING CATEGORIES

Main category	Sub-categories	Examples
Presence	Display or lack of display	Doesn't make eye contact/No facial expression
	Intensity	Good but not too intense or unnerving / Restrained, subdued (gesture)
	Focus (eye contact only)	Changes object of focus rapidly / So if you talk to people, you must see people's eyes
	Variety (excluding eye contact)	He did a lot of different gesture/Didn't notice much change in expression
Manner	Manner depending on action	Little [eye contact] made when speaking/Use the gestures all the time while speaking
	Position/movement of particular parts of the body	Shifty eyes, sideways glance to make eye contact
	Range	Good eye contact with both speakers
Role in interaction	Enhancing understanding of the message	Use of gesture to carry across the point
	Emphasizing message	Reinforcing of what he is saying
	Facilitating relationship between interactants	Smiling to indicate his satisfaction that the listener understands him
Person	Personality	Good listener / Dominant
	State relating to performance	Seems engaged, interested / Relaxed
	Impression made on the respondent	Not as encouraging in face expressions / Gesture distracting