Communicative Differences between Domestic versus Foreign Instructors

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to investigate college students' perceptions of their foreign and domestic classroom instructors. Two hundred and eleven college students participated in the study. The potential participants were approached and offered extra credit to participate, and all needed to have at least one domestic instructor and one international instructor during the semester of the research study. Participants filled out a series of measures first examining their personal levels of individualism/collectivism and ethnocentrism, followed by a set of questions related to the participants' perceptions of their international instructor and then about their domestic instructor. To ensure that participants perceptions were consistent, the Generalized Ethnocentrism Measure was given at the beginning of the survey and then after the international instructor section and before the domestic instructor section. Results revealed support for findings of previous research, which found that domestic instructors were perceived as more effective than their intercultural counterparts on a variety of variables. In contrast, foreign instructors were considered to produce more communication satisfaction among college students. The specific characteristics of instructors that are likely to account for more effective and satisfying communication are discussed. The results of this study are useful for instructors who would like to be more competent and effective in the college classroom.

Keywords: Communication, college students, professors, international faculty

Introduction

Some college students believe that foreign instructors are less capable of teaching in U.S. schools than are domestic instructors. Many researchers have made attempts to discover the various reasons why these accusations are made and whether or not they are true (e.g., Hendrix, 1997; Patton, 1999). Communication researchers, sociological researchers, as well as many others have dedicated much of their time to determining potential factors and attempting to find a solution to the problem that "domestic teachers of college classes are perceived as more effective teachers than are international teachers" (McCroskey, 2002, p. 74). The one very obvious difference between foreign teachers and domestic teachers is their culture.

Although Sellnow, Liu and Venette indicated that "[t]he instructional communication literature is rich with studies that have examined how cultural orientation affects teaching and learning outcomes" (2006, p. 259), recent data regarding the subject is limited. Communication researchers authoring this paper have chosen to examine this literature more closely and conduct studies and experiments to try and determine what factors affect teaching and learning outcomes. Many of the studies overlap and some conflict with others. For example, at a university with primarily Caucasian students, the students were more likely to question an African American

professor's authority and credentials than their Caucasian professors (Hendrix, 1997). However, Patton (1999) showed that students believed their African American professors, regardless of gender, were more credible than their Caucasian counterparts. These two studies show conflicting findings. There are many differences that can be found within cultural orientations and many of these may influence teaching and learning outcomes.

Review of Literature

Communication Skills

Different communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal, continue to be a problem in a number of fields, including education. Lee, Levine, and Cambra (1997) agreed with this statement in saying that cultural differences are extended into the classroom from general communication styles. These conflicting communication skills include language barriers, the teachers' reluctance to converse with the student at all, and the teachers' use of nonverbal communication. Although ethnicity is sometimes the cause for nonverbal immediacy, "student ratings were found to be associated more with teacher communication variables of nonverbal immediacy and clarity than teacher ethnicity" (Glascock & Ruggiero, 2006, p. 200). Nonverbal communication can be the tone setting factor of the classroom and, as expressed in the previous quote, ethnicity is not the single factor in nonverbal immediacy; however, the two are often related. In regard to nonverbal immediacy behaviors, and with concern to specific ethnic groups, research done by Powell and Harville (1990) concluded that there were only small differences between White, Latino, and Asian-American subgroups. However, Sanders and Wiseman (1990) conducted a similar study which concluded that affective learning was larger for Hispanics than Asian or Black groups.

It must be noted that "[e]ach distinct culture has its own norms and expectations for communication" (Roach, Cornett-Devito, & Devito, 2005, p. 88). Because many international teachers are more likely to suppress communication due to English being their second language or having come from a culture that is less communicative, it is possible that international teachers will be perceived more negatively than domestic teachers that are more communicative (McCroskey, 2002). English being a foreign teacher's second language can have quite a bit to do with the fact that they are less able to communicate effectively with students both verbally and nonverbally. For instance, Yule and Hoffman (1990) found a correlation between the negative feedback international teaching assistants received from students and lower test scores in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the verbal portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). However, Neves and Sanyal (1991) also found that foreign instructors tend to receive higher ratings in areas such as subject matter knowledge and social skills, but not in communicating effectively.

Many different cultures believe that interaction and discussion with the instructor is a type of disrespect. As a result, some foreign teachers may be under the assumption that their communicating excessively with the student can lead to disrespect for both parties.

Lack of Understanding

Another problem that may arise in the classroom concerning communication is the students' lack of understanding due to language barriers. According to McCroskey, "[a] common criticism heard on campuses across the U. S. is that domestic students cannot understand

international instructors" (2003, p. 76). This is an assumption most U.S. students can make. Whether it is at the office, grocery store, or classroom, there have always been language barriers which seem to disrupt the flow of communication. McCroskey added that "[t]here is little doubt that international teachers teaching in English as a second language may have an accent and/or employ translations that tend to confuse domestic students rather than being clear to them" (2002, p. 80). The research implies that, a student's inability to understand the teacher's instructions and lectures because of an accent can hinder the student's learning.

Cultural Stereotypes

Cultural stereotypes are something every ethnic group faces from day to day. Some scholars suggest that classroom perceptions are often connected to cultural stereotypes relating to ethnicity (Alexander-Snow, 2004; Pratto & Espinoza, 2001). These stereotypes can be placed in students' minds by their parents, siblings who have attended collegiate classes instructed by foreign teachers, and society in general. At a university with primarily Caucasian students, the students were more likely to question an African American professor's authority and credentials than their Caucasian professors (Hendrix, 1997). It is acceptable to assume that these students were more likely to question the African American professor's authority than their Caucasian professor because cultural stereotypes have given them the assumption that African-Americans are less educated than Caucasians. Cultural stereotypes exist for all cultures and this is something that each student should try to set aside while evaluating the effectiveness of their teacher.

Student Willingness and Motivation

Something that must be taken into account while studying the effectiveness of international teachers is the students' willingness and motivation. McCroskey stated that "…highly motivated students may perceive less problems with international (as well as domestic) teachers and, as a result, perceive international teachers' effectiveness more positively than will less motivated students" (2002, p. 67).

Studies show that students are less willing to enroll in classes instructed by international teachers (McCroskey, 2002). Students often believe that they will learn less if they have an international teacher. If students enter their classroom with the mindset that their teacher will be ineffective because they are from a different country, they are less likely to receive the full potential of the class. Studies conducted by McCroskey (2002) have shown that students who are less willing to enroll in classes instructed by international teachers are less likely to learn from the teachers because they are not as willing to communicate, often making this attitude a self-fulfilling prophecy. If a student believes they will not learn from their instructor for any reason, they are not likely to learn very much due to their attitude about the situation. The students' attitude is very influential on their opinions of the teachers and the class, but often times, parents have negative attitudes that are forced upon their children. McCroskey (2002) stated that "the assumption of many college students, and even more parents of college students, is that if one has an international instructor for a class, the probability that one will learn the information in the class is greatly reduced" (p. 63). Whether it is right or wrong, the fact exists that many parents question their children's education because if ethnicity and cultural differences. These opinions can easily be transferred to their children.

Research also suggests that anxiety is common in intercultural communication contexts (Gudykunst, 1988). According to McCroskey, "[t]he presence of an international teacher in the classroom is likely to produce anxiety in some learners" (2002, p. 65). If students are unable to get over their anxiety, it may affect their willingness to participate and learn. It should also be noted some researchers have found some students are simply unwilling to study under the guidance of foreign instructors. For instance, Bresnahan and Kim (1993) found that many students welcome interactions with foreigners "unless they find themselves on the low end of a power asymmetric relationship[,] … [in which case, they] are reluctant to entrust their education, which they see as key to their future success, to someone not like them" (p. 356).

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the act of perceiving the world through the perspective of one's own culture. Although this is not always the way a person should view the world, it is often times the case. McCroskey (2002) believed the best predictor of a students' perceived teacher effectiveness is ethnocentrism. This is to be expected. College students are rarely able to venture out to different countries and experience life from a different culture's perspective. As Bresnahan and Kim pointed out, "often the only experience of cultural diversity that a U.S. undergraduate will have is her or his exposure to an international teaching assistant or a friend's report of that experience" (1993, p. 356). It is because of this that students enter the classroom with the expectation that the instructor will teach in the same way a domestic teacher would. As Rojas Gomez and Pearson suggested, "students perceive American teaching assistants to share similar attitudes, beliefs, and values; and to think and behave similarly to themselves" (1990, p. 60). Many students are naïve in a sense, because they are unable to see beyond their own cultural norms.

Behavioral Alteration Techniques

BATs (Behavioral Alteration Techniques) are also known as compliance-gaining strategies. Liu, Sellnow, and Venette (2006) have defined compliance-gaining strategies as "strategic processes used by a speaker in an attempt to change people's attitudes and behaviors toward a predetermined goal" (p. 210). These compliance-gaining strategies can be used either anti-socially or pro-socially. Lee, Levine, and Cambra (1997) have said that teachers who use anti-social BATs are more likely to be resisted by students than those who use pro-social BATs. Lu (1997) stated that Chinese instructors are much less likely to use reward-based BATs (pro-social BATs) than American instructors. Lu also found that Chinese teachers are collectively more appealing to students. Instead of using statements like "if you are good, you can get out of class early," they would say something along the lines of "you are expected to do well by others."

Positive Opinions

While research has indicated that international professors often have problems with American students in the US classroom, it is important to keep in mind that the perceptions of and communication with international teachers is not completely negative. For instance, Neves and Sanyal (1991) found foreign instructors tend to receive positive feedback from older students, non-Caucasian students, and students with higher grade point averages (GPAs) and previous contact with other international instructors. McCroskey (2002) found that 54.4% of students are willing to communicate with international teachers. This statistic is a prime example of the fact

that not all students are intimidated or discouraged by foreign teachers and that they do not let stereotypes and miscommunication get in the way of their education. As can be assumed with any study, it is inaccurate to assume that the overall census generalizes to the entire population in which you are testing. In McCroskey's (2003) study, she found that "Many (approximately 30 percent) of the students in this study rated their foreign instructor more positively than they rated their domestic teacher" (p. 87). This statement is a primary example that not all foreign teachers are ineffective.

The Solution

Many researchers have come to the conclusion that the majority of the problems that exist in the classrooms of foreign instructors can be solved through training. A study conducted by Liu, Sellnow, and Venette (2006) found that "nonnative teaching associates can adjust their verbal compliance-gaining strategy use to be effective in the United States educational system" (p. 215) Although the Liu et al. study focused on teaching associates, it can also be applied to the primary teachers. Furthermore, McCroskey (2003) found that foreign teachers should be taught to utilize the same communication behaviors that are effective for domestic teachers. These researchers believed that the main concern is miscommunication and with training, foreign teachers will be more capable of reaching the students at the same level their counterpart domestic teachers do.

Not only is communication an issue, but some researchers think that the negative opinions of foreign teachers can be corrected by changing their ideals and expectations. Rojas Gomez and Pearson (1990) believed that the effectiveness of international teaching assistants can increase with their attempt to raise their homophily, "[t]hey can be encouraged to learn about the values, customs and expectations of American students" (p. 61). Some people might find this unethical that a person should change the way they have learned things in their country to fit the needs of Americans, when America is based on diversity. Those people also believe that students should have open minds to learn from ethnically different people.

Hence, the research question for this study was posed:

RQ1:   Do college students perceive their foreign and domestic instructors differently?

Method

Procedure

Research participants were undergraduates at a large Southwest university in the United States taking a range of communication courses. The potential participants were approached and offered extra credit to participate in the current study. All participants needed to have at least one domestic instructor and one international instructor during the semester of the research study. Once participants agreed to participate, they were directed to download and print a copy of the study survey and return the completed document to the researcher. Participants filled out a series of measures first examining their personal levels of individualism/collectivism and ethnocentrism, followed by a set of questions related to the participants' perceptions of their international instructor and then about their domestic instructor. To ensure that participants perceptions were consistent, the Generalized Ethnocentrism Measure was given at the beginning of the survey and then after the international instructor section and before the domestic instructor section. A paired

t-test was conducted using the first measure of ethnocentrism (M = 33.42, SD = 8.50) and the second measure of ethnocentrism (*M* = 34.53, *SD* = 8.41) and a significant difference was not noted, *t* (208) = -1.73, *p* = .09.

Participants

The study included 211 participants with an average age of 20.84 (*SD* = 2.68). The gender breakdown for the study included 49.5% females (*N* = 106), 49.1% males (*N* = 105), and 3 who didn't respond. Next, participants were asked about their ethnicity. 84.1% (*N* = 180) of the sample was Anglo-Saxon/Caucasian, 7% (*N* = 15) was Hispanic/Latino, 3.3% (*N* = 7) was African-American/Black, and the rest of the sample fell into a range of other ethnicities. To ensure that the results measured United States student perceptions, the participants were required to indicate citizenship status. 97.7% (*N* = 209) of the sample was made up of US citizens. The non-US citizens and those who did not answer the question were not utilized in the study analysis.

Participants were then asked to provide some basic demographic information about the instructors being examined within the study. For the international instructors, 57% (*N* = 122) were male, 36.4% (*N* = 78) were female, and 6.6% (*N* = 4) did not respond. Participants also reported a range of ages for the international instructors: 5.6% (*N* = 12) under 25, 43.9% (*N* = 94) 25-30, 27.6% (*N* = 59) 31-40, 29% (*N* = 13.6) 41-50, 5.6% (*N* = 12) 51-60, and 1.9% (*N* = 4) 61 years of age or older. Lastly, participants were asked to provide the ethnicity of the international instructor: 2.8% (*N* = 6) African, 12.1% (*N* = 26) Anglo-Saxon/Caucasian, 48.1% (*N* = 103) Asian, 7% (*N* = 15) Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, 7.9% (*N* = 17) Indian, 15.4% (*N* = 33) Middle Eastern, and 6.8% (*N* = 14) Other or didn't respond.

Participants then provided the same demographic information for their domestic instructors. 49.5% (*N* = 106) were female, 44.9% (*N* = 96) were male, and 5.6% (*N* = 12) did not respond. Participants also reported a range of ages for the domestic instructors: 5.1% (*N* = 11) under 25, 34.6% (*N* = 74) 25-30, 33.6% (*N* = 72) 31-40, 19.2% (*N* = 41) 41-50, 2.3% (*N* = 5) 51-60, and 0.9% (*N* = 2) 61 years of age or older. Lastly, participants were asked to provide the ethnicity of the international instructor: 2.8% (*N* = 6) African-American, 60.7% (*N* = 130) Anglo-Saxon/Caucasian, 18.2% (*N* = 39) Asian, 5.6% (*N* = 12) Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, 1.9% (*N* = 4) Indian, 3.3% (*N* = 7) Middle Eastern, and 7% (*N* = 15) Other or didn't respond.

Measures

For the purposes of this study, the researchers utilized a range of different measures from the field of communication. Table 1 presents the alpha reliabilities, means, and standard deviations for both the international instructor ratings and the domestic instructor ratings.

Table 1. *Measure psychometrics*

Measure Name	International Professors			Domestic Professors		
	α	*M*	*SD*	α	*M*	*SD*
Teacher Clarity (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998)	.90	33.38	7.56	.78	37.75	6.61
Teacher Self-Disclosure (Cayanus & Martin, 2004)	.87	52.83	10.76	.80	57.28	9.92
Interactional Justice (Chory-Assad & Pausal, 2004)	.90	33.82	5.46	.91	34.53	5.44

Student Affect (McCroskey, 1994)						
Affect Towards Class Content	.80	21.21	4.21	.63	22.30	5.03
Affect Towards General Content Area	.93	18.82	7.06	.95	20.94	6.38
Affect Towards Instructor	.87	21.41	5.14	.93	23.01	4.76
Affect towards Taking Future Courses	.97	18.07	7.69	.91	21.88	6.63
Learner Empowerment (Weber, Martin, & Cayanus, 2005)						
Impact	.74	16.87	4.12	.52	18.06	4.13
Meaningfulness	.89	12.85	3.90	.87	13.52	3.33
Competence	.67	28.99	4.43	.72	29.04	4.50
Homophily (McCroskey, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2006)						
Background	.83	25.93	6.11	.86	29.64	5.92
Attitudinal	.90	51.97	9.30	.91	47.19	9.31
Student Motivation (Richmond, 1990)	.91	21.94	7.13	.93	24.37	6.88
Relationship Satisfaction (Beatty & Dobos, 1992)	.95	23.52	6.32	.96	25.93	6.00
Credibility (McCroskey & Teven, 1999)						
Competence	.89	33.67	6.61	.74	34.46	6.50
Caring/Goodwill	.88	29.02	7.16	.87	30.04	6.31
Trustworthiness	.88	33.31	5.89	.89	33.50	5.86
Perceived Understanding (Cahn & Shulman, 1984)						
Understanding	.88	26.79	5.57	.88	26.75	5.08
Misunderstanding	.84	16.16	5.35	.86	16.29	5.29
Affinity Seeking (Bell, Tremblay, & Buerkel-Rothfuss,1987)	.84	51.30	9.79	.87	50.18	10.26
Communication Satisfaction (Hecht, 1978)	.82	80.21	15.12	.86	76.40	16.85

Results

In order to examine if students perceived their international and domestic instructors differently, the researchers decided to conduct a series of repeated measures analyses of covariance. For the repeated measures aspect, researchers utilized the scores from the participants relating to international instructors as the first reporting and the scores from the participants relating to the domestic instructors as the second reporting. As a further issue for clarification, researchers decided to include ethnocentrism as a covariate to partial out any of the effect participant scores on ethnocentrism had on their perceptions of both their international and domestic instructors. To achieve a global ethnocentrism score, researchers averaged the participants' scores from both measurements in the study and averaged them using this average as the covariate.

Overall, the results from this study were mixed (Table 2). The current study noted significant differences between student perceptions of international and domestic instructors on teacher clarity, teacher self-disclosure, affect towards taking future courses with the instructors, learner empowerment-impact, both types of homophily, and communication satisfaction. With the exception of communication satisfaction, all of the differences favored domestic instructors over international instructors. However, the eta-squares reported that these differences were minimal. As for the ANCOVA results, ethnocentrism only appeared to affect communication satisfaction.

Table 2. *Perceptions of domestic and international professors*

Variable	Professor Type	M	SD	Repeated Measures Summary Table				ANCOVA Summary Table			
				df	F	Sig.	η²	df	F	Sig.	η²
Teacher Clarity	International	33.33	7.50	(1, 202)	9.41	.002	.05	(1, 202)	3.16	.07	.02
	Domestic	37.58	6.45								
Teacher Self-Disclosure	International	52.83	10.66	(1, 195)	4.25	.04	.02	(1, 195)	1.20	.28	.01
	Domestic	57.09	9.97								
Interactional Justice	International	33.83	5.47	(1, 201)	0.14	.71	.00	(1, 201)	0.01	.94	.00
	Domestic	34.51	5.49								
Student Affect / Affect Towards Class Content	International	21.20	4.22	(1, 199)	1.07	.30	.01	(1, 199)	0.14	.71	.00
	Domestic	22.39	4.99								
Affect Towards General Content Area	International	18.79	7.06	(1, 201)	1.16	.28	.01	(1, 201)	0.78	.78	00
	Domestic	20.93	6.41								
Affect Towards Instructor	International	21.35	5.16	(1, 202)	3.34	.07	.02	(1, 202)	1.11	.29	.01
	Domestic	22.98	4.80								
Affect towards Taking Future Courses	International	18.01	7.70	(1, 199)	4.95	.03	.02	(1, 199)	1.03	.31	.01
	Domestic	21.85	6.72								
Learner Empowerment / Impact	International	16.88	4.09	(1, 202)	4.51	.04	.02	(1, 202)	2.18	.14	.01
	Domestic	18.06	4.20								
Meaningfulness	International	12.94	3.85	(1, 202)	.48	.49	.00	(1, 202)	1.38	.24	.01
	Domestic	13.54	3.25								
Competence	International	29.09	4.40	(1, 201)	.64	.43	.00	(1, 201)	.63	.43	.00
	Domestic	29.13	4.48								
Homophily / Background	International	25.99	6.03	(1, 200)	11.12	.001	.05	(1, 200)	3.72	.06	.02
	Domestic	29.82	5.76								
Attitudinal	International	51.99	9.37	(1, 200)	5.96	.02	.03	(1, 200)	1.83	.18	.01
	Domestic	47.21	9.46								
Student Motivation	International	21.85	7.11	(1, 200)	1.82	.18	.01	(1, 200)	0.17	.68	.00
	Domestic	24.54	6.78								
Relationship Satisfaction	International	23.53	6.27	(1, 190)	2.55	.11	.01	(1, 190)	0.39	.53	.00
	Domestic	26.07	6.02								
Credibility / Competence	International	33.68	6.64	(1, 200)	3.19	.08	.02	(1, 200)	2.46	.19	.01
	Domestic	34.27	6.24								
Caring/Goodwill	International	28.93	7.21	(1, 196)	0.15	.70	.00	(1, 196)	0.65	.42	.00
	Domestic	30.10	6.35								

Trustworthiness	International	33.33	5.91	(1, 201)	1.35	.25	.01	(1, 201)	1.14	.29	.01
	Domestic	33.56	5.87								
Perceived Understanding	International	26.81	5.57	(1, 200)	0.52	.47	.00	(1, 200)	0.60	.44	.00
	Domestic	26.75	5.39								
Perceived Misunderstanding	International	16.13	5.111	(1, 200)	.46	.50	.00	(1, 200)	0.63	.53	.00
	Domestic	16.29	5.29								
Affinity Seeking	International	51.21	9.82	(1, 197)	0.10	.75	.00	(1, 197)	0.64	.42	.00
	Domestic	50.13	10.32								
Communication Satisfaction	International	80.16	15.37	(1, 190)	8.74	.004	.04	(1, 190)	5.93	.02	.03
	Domestic	76.50	16.88								

Discussion

Several studies have found that intercultural teachers are often rated as more ineffective than domestic teachers (McCroskey, 2002; Meyer & Mao, 2014; Paige, 1990; Rojas Gomez & Pearson, 1990; Smith, Strom, & Muthuswamy, 2005). However, as presented in the literature review, many of these studies also show that differing communication skills, cultural stereotypes, student and parent willingness and motivation, ethnocentrism, and differing BATs are the primary reason for the negative association between intercultural and domestic teachers.

The current study supported the findings of previous studies by determining domestic teachers were considered more effective than their intercultural counterparts on a number of variables. Domestic teachers were found to demonstrate more clarity in their instructional communication than intercultural teachers which may be indicative of the ability to more competently use the language. As noted by McCroskey (2002), international teachers may be less communicative because of their lack of competence with the English language. In addition, international teachers may be viewed as having less clarity in their instruction due to their accents and translations which may confuse students (McCroskey, 2002, 2003). According to Meyer and Mao (2014), undergraduate students in the US tend to report confusion and misunderstandings in classes conducted by foreign instructors (citing Clayton, 2000; Fitch & Morgan, 2003; Smith, Boyd, Nelson, Barrett, & Constantinides, 1992; Tyler, 1992). International teachers were also perceived to disclose less to students in this study, which could be closely related to their competency with the language and students' ability to understand them when they are self-disclosing.

This study found that students were less willing to take future courses with international teachers than with domestic teachers. This supports findings by authors such as Bresnahan and Kim (1993) and McCroskey (2002) that revealed students may perceive international teachers as less effective and therefore the students are less likely to achieve through a self-fulfilling prophecy. It also extends this concept, by showing that students who have taken courses from international teachers did have experiences that make them less likely to take future courses from other international teachers.

Domestic instructors were found to have a stronger learner empowerment-impact than international instructors. Students in this study deemed international teachers as providing less meaningful instruction and being less competent than their domestic counterparts. This lack of student empowerment and confidence with international teachers supports the findings of Hendrix (1997) and McCroskey (2002).

Both background and attitudinal homophily were found to be more positive with domestic teachers. This indicates that the international teachers in this study were not adjusting their communication behaviors to make themselves more effective and appealing to domestic students. This supports the lack of self-disclosure on the part of international teachers who through some selective self-disclosure might assist in alleviating some of the perceptions regarding different backgrounds and attitudes that might exist.

The fact that international teachers were found to produce more communication satisfaction supports the findings by Lu (1997). Lu found that Chinese instructors more frequently used reward-based BATs than American instructors and were also found to be more appealing to students. The findings from the present study may indicate that the international teachers in this study may be using more pro-social BATs than their domestic counterparts. The teachers in Lu's study were Chinese nationals teaching Chinese students and the international teachers in this study were teaching predominantly domestic students. It could also indicate that domestic teachers in this study were using more anti-social BATs than the international teachers which would make the international instructors more appealing by default. The international teachers in this study could be using very few BATs in general due to difficulties in their language competencies or cultural perspective, which could make them more appealing and increase communication satisfaction when compared to domestic teachers who used some anti-social BATs. For communication satisfaction, this explanation would contradict the explanation posed by McCroskey (2002), which indicated that international teachers who communicated less would be perceived more negatively than domestic teachers who communicated more. The key difference being in the frequency with which domestic teachers used prosocial or antisocial BATs.

Limitations

There are a few limitations that must be discussed in this current study. First, the sample that was used came from a conservative large southwestern university. Although, there was diversity present at the university, other universities may have had more foreign instructors. It is entirely possible that this study did not yield a representative sample of the entire population of students who have had exposure to a foreign instructor.

The second major limitation in this study was the overall sample size that was collected. While the sample only consists of 211 participants, the overall data points per predictor variables examined in this study is within reason. While clearly the results of this study would have been stronger with a larger sample, the sample size attained was within statistical reason.

The last major limitation to this study concerns the measures used in it. As initially stated, the measures used in this study have been used in instructional contexts. Other methods of gathering data, such as interviews and focus groups may have provided a more thorough understanding of the dynamics of this relationship.

Future Research

Future studies should focus on the diversity among students and their foreign instructors. Examinations should focus on other variables that can potentially affect students' perceptions of their domestic and foreign instructors such as instructor-student ratios, frequency of various types of communication such as verbal, nonverbal, written, electronic, etc., size of student instructional groups, etc. In addition, future studies might look specifically at graduate student perceptions of their instructors. Researchers have shown that graduate and undergraduate students have different perceptions about their educational experience (Punyanunt-Carter & Wrench, 2008). Future studies should also look at variables other than classroom instruction in the educational context, such as college students' perceptions of foreign and domestic advisors. It is evident that more research can be done in this area to understand the impact it can have on college students' retention and graduation rates.

Conclusion

Results from this study provide an exploratory look at college students' perceptions of their domestic and foreign instructors. Overall, the study supported the findings of previous research, which found that domestic instructors were perceived as more effective than their intercultural counterparts on a variety of variables. The results of this study are useful for instructors who would like to be more competent and effective in the college classroom.

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