

CULTURE AND PERCEPTIONS OF POWER IN TEACHER-STUDENT
COMMUNICATION

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>The objective of this study was to find out if national culture impacts the phenomenon of power as it is found in teacher-student communication at the University of Jyväskylä. The study is pertinent and relevant because of the increasingly rapid internationalization that is happening in the Finnish higher education system. Understanding aspects of intercultural teacher-student communication will be important for the future.</p> <p>A qualitative research process was chosen for this study and the data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with 10 international students. They were asked about their experiences, perceptions and feelings while communicating with Finnish professors. Analysis and interpretation of the data indicated that the cultural background of students did impact their expectancies and interpretation regarding teacher power. They experienced expectancy violations with respect to the unanticipated informality of Finnish professors characterized by informal methods of address, friendliness and an apparent lack of authority. The results were analyzed primarily by using Hofstede's and Schwartz's cultural dimensions, face negotiation theory and politeness theory by Brown & Levinson and Scollon & Scollon and with Expectancy Violations Theory by Burgoon.</p> <p>The overall conclusion is that the cultural differences between Finnish professors and international students do have an impact on power in teacher-student communication. Expectancy violations of this power led to negative feelings of frustration, disappointment and lack of motivation in the respondents. On the other hand, some of the respondents indicated that they also felt more comfortable with the Finnish system and their expectations had changed.</p>	
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INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity and internationalism are becoming progressively more important factors in our increasingly global world. The extensive internationalism of society is also spreading in Finland, especially in the higher education system.

In 2005 the Helsingin Sanomat reported that higher education institutions in Finland are, to a greater extent, interesting and attracting international students, and consequently the number of international students coming to Finland has increased. In 2003, for example, there were 4,427 foreign students in Finland (Helsingin Sanomat 2005), and in 2009, a scant six years later, more than 14,000 international degree students and almost 9,000 exchange students were studying in Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences (CIMO 2011).

The University of Jyväskylä is no exception to this trend. At the moment, the University of Jyväskylä offers a numerous academic exchange opportunities and programs, a number of undergraduate degree programs in English and 16 International Master's Degree Programs in English. Each year hundreds of international students come to the University of Jyväskylä on student exchanges, as visiting students or as degree students. The amount of international students is increasing every year and the university aims to attract more in the future.

This influx of international students presents a vast array of opportunities and challenges to the higher education institutions in Finland. One particularly important factor that may require some

assessment is the relationship between Finnish professors and the international students. Relationships such as these are created through communication and they are essential to the overall success of an educational experience.

1.1 Motivation for this Study

I am personally interested in studying teacher-student communication between Finnish professors and international students for a number of reasons. First of all, I studied for my Bachelor's Degree in the United States at Macalester College, a college which focuses upon multiculturalism and internationalization. This focus can be seen in its curricula, guest lecturers, incredibly diverse student body and in its heavy emphasis on student exchange programs. Macalester College, despite being relatively small and in the middle of the United States, boasts a student body comprised of U.S. Americans and 20 percent international students. Living, studying and socializing with these international students allowed me to hear many of their experiences and feelings regarding interacting with professors and students from different backgrounds. In addition, Macalester also has a diverse faculty so I was able to study under professors from different cultures and I also was able to experience this more fully on my first experience as an exchange student at the University of Edinburgh in the United Kingdom.

After graduating I went, as a US Peace Corps teacher, to the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan). I was an English teacher in Kyrgyzstan for over two years and this experience provided my primary motivation for this study. As a teacher I was expected to fulfill a specific role and certain behaviors, interaction methods and communication styles were expected of me. These expectations, however, were completely foreign

to me. I adapted to some of them and my students adapted to my style of interaction as well. I noticed that the largest disparity in our experiences and expectations was the way that power worked in our teacher-student interactions. Kyrgyz expectations were a lot more formal, structured and strictly defined than the relatively informal style I was used to. The amount of power I was accorded and expected to use felt very uncomfortable and authoritarian to me. On the other hand, my 'improper' use of power seemed disconcerting to many of my students as well. Over time we reached a balance that worked, on the most part, for me, the students and the school administration in Kyrgyzstan.

After my experiences at Macalester College and in Kyrgyzstan I became increasingly interested in intercultural communication. I noticed that many misunderstandings, mistakes and other issues had occurred as I had interacted with people from different cultural background over the years. In order to better understand the reasons and causes of these phenomena I enrolled in the University of Jyväskylä as a student in the International Master's Degree Program in Intercultural Communication.

My first semester was spent on an exchange program in Switzerland where I had teachers from Switzerland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Estonia, the UK and Finland. I then continued my studies in Finland, during which time I was an international student myself and then I was international student tutor for four groups of degree and exchange students at the University of Jyväskylä. As an international student and a former exchange student myself I became increasingly interested in the experiences of other international students.

My choice of topic, however, was decided after my personal thoughts

and perceptions regarding my interaction with Finnish professors. I had not expected to find interacting with Finnish professors difficult or challenging, but I noticed that there were instances which indicated that we did not have mutual expectations of teacher-student interaction. I realized that a crucial phenomenon in our interactions was the manner in which power was managed between us. I decided, therefore, to study the way that power works between Finnish professors and international students to see how they felt and what they experienced.

1.2 Area of Study and Research Questions

This study will look culture and power in teacher student communication as its main research area. The culture of individuals is commonly mentioned as a key determinant of power relations and communication style, and this study will seek to demonstrate how it affects the power and communication present in teacher-student interactions. The main aim of this study is to question how culture matters in teacher-student interaction between Finnish professors and international students.

In order to address this issue, it is necessary to first define a more manageable area of study, to narrow down the field. The focus of this study, therefore, will be made more specific. The research will be concerned with teacher-student communication between Finnish professors and international degree students at the University of Jyväskylä. The main research question of this study is:

- How are the feelings, experiences and perceptions of power in teacher-student communication influenced by the differences in culture between Finnish professors and international university degree students?

To help answer this question a few sub-questions have also been developed to answer certain areas of the main question. These sub-questions are:

- What kind of expectations do international students have about power and teacher-student communication?
- How are perceptions of power, especially in teacher-students relationships, influenced by culture?
- How do international students feel about and experience power in teacher-student communication with Finnish professors?

1.3 Justification for the Study

Investigating teacher-student communication between Finnish professors and international degree students is justifiable because Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences are becoming increasingly international. In 2009, almost 7000 international degree students were enrolled in Finnish universities and there was roughly 7100 studying in Finnish universities of applied sciences (Takkinen 2010). The international student population in Finland is growing rapidly and more effort is being made to provide the appropriate services and support for these students so that their educational experience in Finland is as satisfying as possible (CIMO 2011, HERA 2010).

Takkinen (2010) says that the importance of attracting international students to Finland has been recognized by the government, and in 2009 it developed a strategy in order to increase the internationalization of higher-education institutions in Finland. This plan aims at “increasing the strengths, quality and attractiveness of the Finnish higher-education system.” The government’s strategy is apparently

working because the number of international students is on the increase, and studying here is facilitated by the nearly 300 degree programs taught in English (Takkinen 2010).

From an academic point of view, the subject of power relations between teachers and students from different cultural backgrounds has been studied in the past. These studies deal with many aspects of these situations, expectancies especially. Both teachers and students expect each other to act in certain ways, but their expectancies are culturally determined and that can cause some challenges (Burgoon et al. 1995). While research on the influence of expectancies in academic situations has been done before, most of these have focused upon the expectations and experiences of teachers (Koermer & Petelle 1991). Given the increasing number of international students coming to Finland, it makes sense that their expectancies, perceptions and experiences should be studied.

This study is extremely pertinent to the issues at hand. More international students are coming to Finland all the time and efforts are being made to attract them and make their experiences here more satisfying. Understanding possible issues that may arise from teacher-student communication is essential to supporting the international students as they study in Finland.

2 POWER

2.1 Power and Social Sciences

Power has long been recognized as an extremely important phenomenon in social sciences. It has, in fact, been called the most vital concept in social sciences (Barraclough & Stewart 1992) and has been described as the social phenomenon vital to “any explanation of the human experience” (Russell 1938 cited in Berger 1994: 450). The importance of power in social sciences has made its conceptualization particularly difficult. Scholars and writers from psychology, anthropology, management, communication, organizational behavior, sociology and other disciplines all have their own particular take on power. Writers within the same field and discipline often have divergent theories on the nature and characterization of power. Due to the wide-ranging applicability of power to social sciences there will perhaps never be a conceptualization or explanation that is universally accepted. This lack of agreement and consensus regarding power is evident in the literature dealing with power.

Due to the widely recognized importance of the phenomenon of social power in social sciences, it is to be expected that there are a large number of definitions and descriptions which have been proposed by various authors and scholars. The lack of consensus among theorists about the definition of power has resulted in an uncertain terminology for this phenomenon. It has been noticed that various researchers have used words and terms such as *power*, *control*, *influence*, *dominance*, and *authority* almost interchangeably. There are, in fact, even some definitions that seem to be diametrically opposed to each other. Lasswell and Kaplan (1950 cited in Berger 1994), for example, describe

power as the utilization of influence, whereas French and Raven conceive of power as potential influence (1959 cited in French & Raven 1976). The incompatible and mutually exclusive nature of a number of these definitions, coupled with the lack of a firm terminology, causes considerable difficulty in forming an adequate explanation or definition of power.

Many definitions of power indicate that it is not an attribute of a particular person, but that it is a phenomenon found in the relationship between people. It is described as a relational phenomenon (Berger 1994). If power is a relationship-based phenomenon then it cannot be a commodity that somebody owns. It will be mentioned many times in this study that a person *has* power or *wields* power, but the perception of having power or wielding power is dependent upon the relationship, not the individual.

There are, however, many commodities and capabilities that are perceived as indicating power. The accumulation or control of resources, rewards, wealth, or raw materials, as well as physical strength, beauty, social or institutional roles, and more abstract ideas such as intelligence, prestige, fame, success, and charisma are examples of things which are often perceived as resulting from or attributing power to an individual (Kanter 1983 and Morgan 1986 cited in Barraclough & Stewart 1992, Davidov et al. 2008). While these may be assets that result from power or confer power on people, they, in and of themselves, do not constitute power. Many of these attributes and materials have been classified as components of power, but not defining characteristics (Barraclough & Stewart 1992). The aforementioned list is only relevant when they are present in some manner of relationship with other people. An individual who is alone, for example, does not have any power. A person does not hold any power until interaction

with another person takes place. At this point, the person may be able to attempt influence, control, or alter the behavior of the other participants, but until that interaction the first person does not hold any power. Power cannot exist in a void. Interaction with some other agent is necessary for power to exist.

2.2 Relational Nature of Power

Weber's concept of *Macht* is one of the first definitions of power that places it inside of a relationship. Despite some debate over the correct translation of *Macht*, it is commonly translated as meaning power, and a central feature of Weber's definition is that power must take place within a social relationship (Ng 1980, Weber 1947). Other theorists have agreed with Weber's assertion that power is relational concept, and subsequently they have posited that it affects the way that people interact with their social environment and is rooted in relationships (French & Raven 1976, Richmond & Roach 1992, Spitzberg & Cupach 1989). Barraclough and Stewart, for example, explicitly state that "power is clearly a relational phenomenon, and should be more fully examined in the context of relationships among communicators" (1992: 10) and Richmond and Roach (1992) claim that power is found in any relationship. Berger (1994), in addition, states that power results from the interaction between people and it is not the product of one person's wish to dominate another.

With this in mind, it is clear to see that power will be found in communication since relationships require communication. People are active in process of forming relationships and communicating; a person cannot communicate alone (Martin & Nakayama 2007). Power found in relationships, therefore, is contingent upon both people. Recognized as a crucial factor that needs to be examined in order to fully study and

explain interpersonal interaction and behavior, power is often described as a continuum that orders the relationships between people (Berger 1994, Charon 1999 cited in Samovar & Porter 2004). Power cannot exist in a social void, power is a social phenomenon. Berger states that:

dimensions related to power and dominance are crucial to our understanding of the dynamics of social relationships and the communication that both takes place within them and acts to define them. (1994: 451)

Clearly put, power is a social phenomenon that is central to personal relationships and the interaction and communication in those relationships. Consequently, for the purposes of this study, power will be understood as a relational concept, as social power.

2.3 Sources of Power

As can be seen, there are many definitions and conceptualizations of power that are vying for acceptance. Many authors have chosen to explain and define power by its sources. They assume that if you can uncover where power comes from then you will be able to give it a definition. There are many differing views in this vein of thought as well.

2.3.1 Organizational Power

McCroskey (1992) claims that there are two main source of power in educational institutions, one source is interpersonal relationships and the other comes from the position of a person in that institution. Power from these sources may compliment each other or contradict each other, but they are both significant depending on the context of the situation.

Organizational power, resulting from a person's position in an institution, is separate from interpersonal power in many ways. Power in organizations, for example, is explicitly defined and impersonal (Ng 1980). Social power does not require an institutional sanction, but power in organizations and institutions requires a formalized structure and this structure is usually the creation of a hierarchy. Hierarchy is a defining feature of organizations and it is a method ordering relationships in an institutional setting (Sias 2009). It has been mentioned that social power, viewed as a continuum, is used as a way of ordering interpersonal relationships, this is true in organizations as well, but the relationships are formalized.

Workplace relationships are interpersonal relationships, but they are significantly different than social relationships because there is no ambiguity as to who has more power. The power in these relationships are dependent upon formal roles, which are defined as the behaviors that are expected from people dependent upon the position they hold in an organization (Biddle & Thomas 1996 cited in Raven & Rubin 1976). Two examples of common role dichotomies that are often studied in organizational communication are supervisor-subordinate and teacher-student relationships. Although roles are formed by organizational hierarchy, they still constitute an important part of social relationships. For instance, when a teacher gives rules and grades, the power is not only coming from the individual teacher, but it is also coming from the role that is being enacted (Martin & Nakayama 2007).

The power of teachers, despite being attributed by the institution and being an intrinsic part of their role, is by no means absolute. The social power in a teacher-student relationship is still a factor and must be negotiated because the explicit and impersonal power from the institutional hierarchy may not agree with the personal and informal

side of the relationship (Ng 1980). This concept will be elaborated upon later on.

2.3.2 Typologies of Power

Social psychologists French and Raven (1976) investigated the interaction between individuals and their social environment, meaning their interactions with other people. Power, as defined by French and Raven, is the ability to potentially influence the behavior of another (1976). They expanded their conceptualization of power by formulating six distinct bases of power: information, reward, coercion, expertise, reference and identification, and legitimacy (French & Raven 1959, Raven 1959 cited in French & Raven 1976).

All of these bases of social power are seen as relational and are seen as sources of power that would allow one person to influence another. The bases, according to Raven and Rubin (1976) are explained as follows:

- informational power: the social power derived from the persuasive content of communication.
- reward power: the ability to grant rewards or benefits
- coercive power: derives from the ability to punish the other person in communication
- expert power: refers to a person's superior knowledge or capabilities
- referent power: the identification or perception of commonality between the social actors
- legitimacy: formed by the consent to one person's right to influence and the obligation of others to comply to that right

While this typology of power is well-known and often cited, it is

limited. Limiting the sources of power to merely six bases ignores the countless contextual and situational factors which influence it in any given situation. French and Raven themselves realize that distinguishing which bases of power are working is extremely difficult because it is possible that any number of them maybe be working individually or concurrently to give an individual power (1976).

McCroskey (1992) expanded upon these bases of power and put them in an educational setting. In addition, he also made them more relational so that they dealt explicitly with the teacher-student relationship. Reward power, for example, came directly from the teacher and was rooted in the behavior of the teacher, how the teacher interacted with a student (McCroskey 1992). McCroskey's seven bases of power are: reward, punishment, legitimate, expert, referent, relational and moral responsibility (McCroskey 1992). The first five of McCroskey's bases are effectively the same as French and Raven's bases. Relational power deals directly with the rapport between teacher and student, with the negative or positive aspects of their relationship, while moral responsibility is the rule, responsibilities and accountability of a person (McCroskey 1992). These bases do not add a lot to French and Raven's theory; it mainly puts them in another context and roots them more firmly in the teacher-student relationship.

One significant aspect to note, however, is that McCroskey ties his bases directly with communication. He claims that "Power and communication are closely interrelated. Power that is not used, for all intents and purposes, is power that does not exist. The use of power requires communication" (McCroskey 1992: 175). Power in the classroom, therefore, is based upon the teacher-student relationship and requires their communication.

Overall, the main benefit from typologies of power is that they unmistakably show that interpersonal power can come from a variety of different sources depending on the context and participants. Pennington (1989) has also investigated these typologies of power and finds them to show that power varies vastly from context to context and culture to culture. She concludes that the most important thing to realize is that power comes from many sources and in a variety of ways, but the important issue in intercultural communication is realize what types of negotiations may occur when different varieties of power are in competition with each other (Pennington 1989). These varying typologies of power may be useful in summarizing some possible sources of power, but they are by no means exhaustive. It is important to note that a large amount of the literature utilizes these bases of power and they may help us understand the complexities of power, but “they do not constitute explanatory theories of social power” (Berger 1994: 454).

2.4 Outcomes of Power

Another way to gain an understanding power is to see what it does, to see what results from power. By recognizing that power is a relational phenomenon, it stands to reason that the affects of power will be seen in the interactions between people. The most common viewpoint, shared by authors and scholars from many fields and perspectives, and that is emphasized by the majority of definitions in the literature, is that power is a phenomenon which produces changes in the behavior or affects the other participant(s) in some way. There is, however, a bit on disagreement as to which effects result from the exercise of power.

2.4.1 Intentionality of power

Some authors contend that power is realized only when the behavioral alteration or effects are those which were specifically intended by the participant(s) who wielded the power (Brown & Levinson 1987, Hook 1979 cited in Barraclough & Stewart 1976, Roach, 1995, Russell 1938 and Winter 1973 cited in Berger 1994, Weber 1947, Wieman & Kelley 1981 as cited in Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989). These authors contend that power is only achieved when achieves the intended outcome of its exercise. They believe that an unintentional behavioral alteration or other effects are not examples of true power being wielded. Power, in their way of thinking, is contingent upon a person being able influence others to do or behave as they want.

2.4.2 Non-intentional nature of power

On the other hand, other authors often do not mention intentionality but claim that any effects or behavioral alterations are evidence that power has been exercised (Barraclough & Stewart 1992, French & Raven 1976, Hurt et al. 1978 cited in McCroskey & Richmond 1983, Lasswell & Kaplan 1950, Licht et al. 2007, McCroskey 1992, Mintzberg 1983 cited in Barraclough & Stewart 1992, Pennington 1989, Plax & Kearney 1992, Simon 1957 and Dahl 1957 cited in Berger 1994). These authors do not believe that an absolute control of the outcome is necessary to demonstrate power. If one person is somehow influenced by another person then that is a demonstration of power. Consequently, a number of the authors from this side support the idea that participants may unknowingly or subconsciously alter the behavior of other participants. They believe that social situations are not clearly defined arenas of interaction, so any change or alteration of behavior that results from another person is an incidence of power.

2.4.3 Resisting power

The ability of less powerful participants to resist an expression of power is also an area of contention in the extant literature. The idea of powerful participants being able to unilaterally alter the behavior of less powerful participants against their will is supported by many authors (Davidov et al. 2008, Hurt et al. 1978 cited in McCroskey & Richmond 1983, Licht et al. 2007, Pennington 1989). These authors believe that power is irresistible. If another person has more power than you then you are helpless at resisting it.

Other authors, however, indicate that power may influence a person to do something they may not have done without the exercise of power, but they do not suggest a complete inability of less powerful people to resist that influence (Dahl 1957 cited in Berger 1994, Kearney et al. 1984, Wheelless et al. 1983). When looking at power in an educational setting, McCroskey (1992), for example, clearly states that power is used “not as a capacity to force others to give one her or his own way” (115). These authors say that the use of power may influence a person to do something they would not have done otherwise, but it has not forced them to do it. They view power as the capacity that has the *potential* to affect change, not as an absolute force that always enacts change. This crucially important characteristic of social power, potential influence, is a common theme in much of the literature (Barraclough & Stewart 1992, French & Raven 1959 cited in French & Raven 1976, Plax & Kearney 1992, Weber 1947).

The disagreement to whether power can be resisted seems to rest upon the idea of degrees of power. Power is not conceived of as a neutral phenomenon, there is always the mention of terms such as powerful, more powerful and less powerful. The issue of irresistible power or

potential power is dependent upon the idea of asymmetry.

2.5 Asymmetrical Power Relations

Asymmetry of power relations are another important issue of considerable debate among scholars. Asymmetrical power relationships are those in which the distribution of power is not equal between the participants (Ng 1980). The disparity in power can range from high to low. Whether or not they explicitly state it, much of the literature focuses on asymmetrical power relations because the relative inequality in power is what allows people to order relationships along a continuum of power, as is mentioned above.

Ng (1980) observes that unequal distribution of power is a seemingly ubiquitous feature of many societies as is seen through social stratification and other inequalities. If, however, power is a relational phenomenon rooted in a relationship instead of in individuals, it makes sense that people would be able to simultaneously exercise power over each other (Berger, 1994). The mutual use of power indicates that a struggle for supremacy may occur. This struggle for power will most likely result in one person having more power than another, so the relationship would be unbalanced and asymmetrical.

Asymmetrical relationships are those in which the participants have an unequal amount of power in relation to each other, and the relative difference in these amounts of power can fluctuate over a wide range, from negligible to extreme (Ng 1980). Asymmetrical relationships are vitally important to this study because the exercise of power, the creation of influence, is often conceived of as a direct result of the inequality in the power relationship. Ng (1980) claims that, in asymmetrical relationships, “somewhere, along the variation scale,

there is a critical region in which the amount of power inequality is just sufficient to enable the superordinate unit to induce change in the subordinate unit" (190).

The importance of understanding asymmetrical relationships is crucially important due to the varying levels of stratification that are evident in society. These stratifications due to power are distributed throughout and seemingly ubiquitously in all aspects of society. The differentiation of individuals and groups can be made along many different continua comprised of, but not limited to, social, economic, political, and cultural factors. The factors from which power may be derived, as mentioned above, are consistently determined by context and situation. These factors, therefore, are potentially limitless due to the complex nature and vast amounts of situations in which interactions occur. The ubiquity of possible power inequalities resulting from these differences does not mean that there is always an inequality in power between participants, but it must be understood that power inequality is "a relevant and important component in the mosaic of interpersonal relations" (Ng 1980: 192).

2.6 Perception of power

When interaction takes place, how does power work? It is a potential, but how is it realized and exercised? To answer these questions, it is necessary to realize that the first thing that needs to occur is the mutual perception of power. Regardless of where power comes from, if a person does not perceive or notice the power of another then the power will be useless. Mutual perception of power requires that both parties in an interaction recognize the power, but in order for power to become an actuality instead of a potential, the power difference must be accepted by both parties. Power is, therefore, not a commodity that is owned, it is

granted by one participant to participant in an interaction (Barracough & Stewart 1992). The granting of power is, basically, the agreement of the so-called less powerful participant to “go along” with the idea that the other is more powerful. Social power is not owned; it is perceived, agreed upon, and then granted (Richmond & Roach 1992).

2.7 Communication as the medium of power

The construction of power is a dynamic, bilateral process of interpreting the relationship of the participants and negotiating the relative power between them (Barracough & Stewart 1992, Martin & Nakayama 2007, Staton 1992,). This negotiation of relationships requires interaction and communication. Many previous authors and theorists have recognized that communication acts as a medium through which power can be negotiated and exercised (Berger 1994, Schrodt & Turman 2007, Staton 1992, Turman & Schrodt 2006).

In addition, the literature also indicates that the original perceptions of power are influenced by and dependent upon different communicative behaviors (Berger 1994, Seibold 1994). Communication is, therefore, both a prerequisite and a result of power. Overall, it is clear, from examining the background literature, that power and communication are inextricably related to each other and to use power requires communication (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). In the classroom this link between power and communication is not any less. In fact, in the group of studies put into the book, *Power in the Classroom: Communication, Control, and Concern*, it is stated that “it is through teacher-student communication that power is developed, attributed, and maintained” (Staton 1992: 173). In conclusion, it is clear that exercising and expressing power requires communication.

3 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

3.1 Power

After the careful evaluation and assessment of the aforementioned theories and ideas regarding power, my conceptualization of power is that it is the *relationship-based potential or capacity to influence the behavior of others that would not have otherwise occurred*. The expression of power, like its origin, is a crucial and highly variable aspect. The interpersonal nature of power, however, means that communication is the medium through which power is expressed and exercised. The development, perception and manifestation of power are dynamic processes in which the power relationship of the participants is being negotiated through interpersonal interaction and communication (Barraclough & Stewart 1992, Staton 1992).

This process of negotiating power helps in the ordering of relationships, and in order for power to be effective, it must be mutually perceived and accepted by the parties involved in the communication (Richmond & Roach 1992, Tannenbaum 1950 cited in Barraclough & Stewart 1992). If power is not clearly perceived, it is not going to have any effect. Power in communication is not owned, but rather it is agreed to and granted to a participant by the other participant(s) involved (Richmond & Roach, 1992). This is done both consciously and unconsciously, but whether it is known or not, power is always present in interpersonal communication. Power is often recognizable from its observable outcomes rather than by other means.

3.2 Influence

The result of power being successfully and effectively expressed or

exercised through communication is influence. Influence, as the active result of power, is observable in the interaction and behavior of the participants. A person who is influenced may, for example, change, alter, or maintain behavior(s) that would not occur without the influence. This influence need not be a forceful or negative event, as is commonly assumed, it may be to merely provide motivation or guidance.

Control, on the other hand, is influence at a much more absolute level that results in compliance. A large amount of power, for example, may produce a surplus of influence which would cause a less powerful person to automatically and irresistibly comply with the more powerful, regardless of what they would prefer to do. Also, because power is only a potential, it must be communicated in order to result in influence. McCroskey and Richmond say that if power is not used then it does not exist, and, in order for it to be utilized in a relationship, there must be communication (1983).

Influence, control and dominance can be said to originate from power inequalities. There is, however, no firm or universal limit at which point a power inequality will result in any of the aforementioned phenomena. Their appearance is contingent upon many factors, including, but not limited to, personality, context and culture. The amount of power difference that results in influence may not be influential in another similar situation because of the possible difference in the separate perceptions and acceptance of the power difference. Perceiving a display or claim to power may cause some people to accept and act accordingly to the power inequality, but it has to be accepted. A person will not be influenced, controlled, or dominated if they do not perceive and accept the power inequality. This acceptance can be explicit (i.e. "you're the expert, tell me what to do") or more subtle ("that's just the

way it is, he's in charge").

The importance of culture in the expression and perception of power cannot be understated. It holds true that in order to be effective, the methods of using power need to be consistent within its cultural context (Licht et al. 2007). Examples of this are given in a study of Chinese teacher-student methods in Lu (1997), comparisons between Finnish, Australian, Puerto Rican, and US Americans teaching (McCroskey, et al. 1996) and in the analysis of US American and French methods of power use in educational contexts (Roach, Cornett-DeVito & DeVito 2005). Methods of using power that are not perceived as normal could result in misunderstanding and difficulties.

3.3 Teacher-Student Relationships

The teacher-student relationship is the relationship central to this study. It is indeed an interpersonal relationship, because relationships are defined as by "repeated, patterned interaction over time" (Sias et al. 2002, cited in Sias 2009: 2). In addition, it is also similar to supervisor-subordinate relationship found in organizational communication due to the clear-cut level of institutional authority. The teaching process itself depends heavily upon communication and McCroskey and Richmond (1982) have observed that power must be used in their interaction with students because power management is an integral part of the teaching process. It is, therefore, clearly evident that communication is a central aspect of teacher-student relationships as is supported by the literature (Roach et al. 2005).

The power in this relationship, as in all interpersonal relationships, is constantly negotiated. The teachers are responsible for using social power to influence and motivate students to participate in activities

which facilitate learning. Indeed, it has been quantitatively demonstrated that the type of power use through different communication strategies has a strong correlation to the learning of students.

Students also hold power in these relationships. An aspect of teacher-student relationships that cannot be overlooked is that fact that the power of teachers is wholly dependent on the perception and acceptance of the students, if students do not accept and grant the power, there is no power (McCroskey & Richmond 1983). You cannot convince a person of your relative positions if the other person chooses or is unable to believe you. If a student does not perceive or accept a teacher's power, then the power is useless and the student cannot be influenced. Teachers rely on a number of communication strategies to effectively influence their students and convince them to accept their position.

Another factor is that as students increase in age and experience they become much more adept at resisting the influence of teachers (Lee, et al. 1997). At many points, for example, the teachers may grant power to students, which, in many cases, helps the students feel more confident and at ease in their situation (Mottet et al. 2005, Roach et al. 2005). This is a prime example of how power is negotiated in an interpersonal relationship. The teacher first tries to influence the student, the student resists, and then the teacher adjusts by granting the student power which also results in the students granting the teacher additional power. Overall, the quality of teacher-student relationships is dependent on the perceived rapport between them (Barraclough & Stewart 1992, Golish & Olson 2000, Kerseen-Griep & Hess 2008). Both teachers and students have used many methods to further enhance the quality of their relationships.

4 CULTURE

Power is an important factor in ordering relationships and it is a central feature in teacher-student interaction. It has been mentioned that power is made manifest when it is exercised through communication and the ability to successfully use power is dependent upon power being mutually perceived and agreed upon by the participants involved. What happens if there is no mutually understood perception of power? What happens if power is perceived differently or not perceived at all? These difficulties could arise from many different reasons, but the reason most significant to this study is culture. People communicate differently in disparate contexts, and culture constitutes a context because it affects the social reality of the participants (Martin & Nakayama 2007). This study will focus on the use of power in the communication between Finnish teachers and international students. It will focus on intercultural communication and interactions in the Finnish university education system.

4.1 Culture and Perception

Culture is, like power, an intricate and complex phenomenon which has been defined time and time again, but it is still debated. For the purposes of this intercultural communication study, culture will be understood as “a pattern of perceptions that influence communication” as described by Martin and Nakayama (2007: 81). In order to reduce the number of possible restrictions, Martin and Nakayama do not limit themselves to any singular definition of culture, but they draw from different views. The social sciences view of culture used by Martin and Nakayama will be used in this study. This will complement the wide

range of social sciences that have been drawn upon to conceptualize power and influence. Culture is defined as *a way of perception that is learned and shared and which influences communication* (Martin & Nakayama 2007: 84). The importance of perception in this definition means that cultural differences can have a potentially substantial influence on the phenomenon of power in teacher-student communication. It is known that culture influences communication (Martin & Nakayama 2007: 93), and it has been already been explained that communication is inextricably linked with power. This study will endeavor to see how cultural norms of power usage and power relationships affect intercultural teacher-student interaction.

4.2 Cultural Units

Cultures in this study will be categorized into units by nation states. Classifying countries as cultural units has some flaws and poses some problems since they are not homogenous and have many individual and distinct cultures and subcultures within themselves (Schwartz 1999). Nonetheless, categorization into these units will be used because, to be perfectly honest, it is the most convenient way to distinguish cultures in this study. In addition, research pertaining to intercultural communication has often conceptualized national culture as a relatively understandable and stable way of delineating a culture-sharing group (Lindhof & Taylor 2002). The use of nation states as cultural units also allows for straightforward compatibility with some the following cultural dimensions that will be use employed, and the majority of literature dealing with power between cultures using the same nation-states as cultural units.

4.3 Cultural Dimensions

Researchers such as Geert Hofstede (1997, 2001) and Shalom Schwartz (1999, 2006) have conducted large-scale studies of different cultures. One outcome of these studies is their conceptualization and construction of cultural dimensions. These dimensions seek to classify certain tendencies and patterns found in different cultures. The construction of cultural dimensions relies upon the use of nation states as cultural units, which has proven to be useful in many contexts. The use of these units has been criticized, but a suitable alternative has not been found. It is important to keep in mind that the analysis of the following cultural dimensions uses mean values to represent national cultures instead of the rating of values by individuals in these cultures. These values are, therefore, culture-level rather than individual-level dimensions (Schwartz 1999).

4.3.1 Hierarchy/egalitarianism

The importance of roles in teacher-student relationships was discussed earlier, but it is also extremely necessary to recognize that these roles are often based in culture and tradition (Raven & Rubin 1976). The manner in which cultures deal with the existence of power will, therefore, have an impact on how power is perceived in the teacher-student relationship. Schwartz's cultural dimension of hierarchy/egalitarianism sets up a dichotomy which may be used to help explain the importance of culture in determining the nature of power in interpersonal relationships (2006). Schwartz produced seven cultural value dimensions in total, but hierarchy/egalitarianism is only one relevant in this study.

His dimension defines hierarchy as the “cultural emphasis on obeying

role obligations” within unequal power relationships which are perceived as legitimate, while egalitarianism, on the other hand, is seen as voluntarily emphasizing the equality of others and not focusing on selfish interests (Licht et al. 2007: 662). Hierarchy puts a strong emphasis on the existence, legitimacy and submission to an unequal distribution of power, roles and resources in society while egalitarianism is the concept that all people are equal social actors who do not need to submit to anyone (Davidov et al. 2008; Licht et al. 2006; Schwartz 1999, 2006).

Schwartz’s dimensions explain that there are distinct differences in cultures and their views of power, and these views will affect the way that roles will be treated. Finland is high on the egalitarianism side of the dichotomy (Schartz 1999, 2006), therefore it is clear to assume that cultures that fall on the other side will most likely view the importance of roles and power in interaction differently.

The analyses of Schwartz hold particular relevance in relation to this study because of the respondents he used for his survey. The cultural values that Schwartz puts forward are a result of data collected from urban school teachers and a parallel analysis which was performed with data from college students (Schwartz 1999). His use of teachers and students as subjects is fortuitous because their responses will undoubtedly shed light upon the teacher-student relationships in the countries that are studied. Values which come from teachers and students will be useful in formulating an idea of what students from different countries might expect. Another thing that is important to remember is that this dimension is very similar, and follows similar patterns, to Geert Hofstede's power distance cultural dimension.

4.3.2 Power Distance Index

Hofstede's Power Distance Index (PDI) is one of the most commonly referenced culturally relative measurements in recent texts dealing with power. His investigation into cultural dimensions is referenced heavily in the communication and educational communication literature that has been reviewed. Hofstede's research has been criticized for over-generalizing cultures among other issues, but it is, nonetheless, an important piece of research that is brought up again and again by study after study.

The PDI, basically explained, is the analysis of how power is distributed in a society. It is a measurement of the relative equality or inequality that is expected and accepted in a society (Hofstede 2001). Hofstede utilizes his PDI to explain the phenomenon of power distribution in different countries across the world. He claims that the PDI of a given country can help explain the relative power of, among others, bosses and subordinates and teachers and students. The relative values of PDI are supposed to show the amount of acceptance and submission to varying levels of power in different societies (Hofstede 1997, 2001). This dimension, therefore, is nearly identical to Schwartz's dimension of hierarchy/egalitarianism.

As stated by Goodman (1994), Hofstede's power distance cultural dimension is applicable in educational settings because it is assumed that the importance of roles and values in society is carried to the school with the teachers and students. Hofstede says that depending upon the different PDI levels students and teachers will interact differently. In countries that have low Power Distance the students and teachers may, for example, be more relaxed with each other, titles may be replaced by first names and open displays of power are avoided (Hofstede 1997). In

contrast, high Power Distance societies may have more formal and impersonal interactions between teachers and students. On Hofstede's scale Finland is listed as having a relatively low Power Distance of 33, this is well below the global average of 55 (Itim International 2009). Hofstede claims that this relative informality and lack of over power would carry over into the educational settings. This study will, while examining the interaction of Finnish professors and international students see what, if any, impact this will have upon teacher-student interaction at the University of Jyväskylä.

The importance of culture in the school has been a subject of study before; previous literature shows that the nature of teaching and learning is culturally determined (Goodman 1994). Hofstede's dimension of power distance, along with Schwartz's dimension, show that the views of roles and power in society are also culturally determined. Therefore, by combining these factors, a link between power, teaching and culture can be seen. As described by these theories, cultural differences in power as can significantly influence the interaction between teachers and students (Goodman 1994).

4.4 Politeness Theory

Another extremely important determining factor in intercultural interpersonal relationships is the amount of politeness used in interaction. The most important politeness theorists in the field of intercultural communication are Brown and Levinson and Scollon and Scollon. They propose that interpersonal communication involves the careful and constant negotiation of personal identities and manners of communication that will either affirm or contradict these identities (Brown & Levinson 1987, Scollon & Scollon 1983). The identities of the actors are known as face, which is "the negotiated public image,

mutually granted each other by participants in a communicative event” (Scollon & Scollon 2002: 45).

4.4.1 Face

The concept of face is broken down into a couple aspects. The first aspect of face is comprised of the “freedom of action and freedom from imposition,” while the second part is the “self-image or ‘personality’ ... claimed by the interactants” (Brown & Levinson 1987:61). The first aspect of face is the one which is crucial to this study because it is directly reliant upon the negotiation of power between the participants. The negotiation of this aspect face is a negotiation of what a person can do, the will and volition to do what one wants is, in many cases, a measure of power. Brown and Levinson’s theory is heavily dependent upon power relations, and this aspect of face is where the power resides (Brown & Levinson 1987).

The face theory of politeness continues by assuming that all communication involves face and is, therefore, a threat to face. As Scollon and Scollon say, “any communication is a risk to face” and “there is no faceless communication” (2002: 48). These threats to face are called face-threatening-acts (FTAs) and goal of proper communication relies upon choosing the correct communication strategies so that the individual faces of the participants are mutually maintained (Brown & Levinson 1987, Scollon & Scollon 1983).

According to this theory, good communication hinges upon the ability to determine how to interact with certain people in a way which helps the participants maintain face. The communication style must be able to change due to the perceptions of many differences between the participants. Scollon and Scollon (2002) say that the ambiguity between

actors is reduced by making certain assumptions about people and by analyzing the possible relationship between them. Basically put, all that is required is to determine our “own social self-worth and social self-worth of others” and communicate accordingly (Ting-Toomey 2005). The main type of interaction that is studied in these theories, however, is interaction between people from different cultures; that is why this theory is important to the present study.

Brown and Levinson (1987) created a formula for measuring the seriousness, or ‘weight’ of a particular FTA in a particular culture between two participants. Their formula is:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

In this formula:

- W_x is the measure of how serious the FTA x is, with
- $D(S, H)$ as a measure of the social distance between S (the speaker) and H (the addressee) and
- $P(H, S)$ representing the power, roughly in Weber’s sense, between S and H , while
- R_x is the measure of how serious the FTA x is in the culture of interaction (Brown & Levinson 1987: 76).

This calculation of the weight of imposition of the FTAs is used in much politeness theory, but it is of minimal use in the present study. I do not believe that any of these variables are quantifiable, but interviews may be able to shed light on the way that social distance and power work in the communication of Finnish professors and international university students.

4.4.2 Explaining Power and Social Distance in Politeness Theory

Politeness theory is important to this study in that it formulates a theory of how power works and is negotiated intercultural communications and interaction. Scollon and Scollon, while explaining Brown & Levinson's theory, say that power, in these face or politeness systems, is a vertical disparity in a hierarchical structure (2002). They do, however, say that the difference between participants in an egalitarian system can be quite small (Scollon & Scollon 2002). This is important to notice because both Schwartz and Hofstede, as mentioned above, view Finland as a relatively egalitarian society. It will be interesting to see how the international students react while interacting with professors from an egalitarian society. They may have no reaction, little reaction, or it may provoke a large reaction. Their thoughts and feeling about this type of reaction is what this study is about. The idea of distance, on the other hand, is a measurement of how close the relationship between the participants is. The closeness of a relationship is, in many ways, a personal and subjective perception by the participants.

Communication styles, according to Scollon and Scollon (2002), are chosen and associated with the particular participants and particular contexts. Many times these contexts, as in this study, are specific cultures. There are many ways in how to modify communication style depending on the culture. Two examples are expectations in the amount of speech, in how taciturn or voluble a participant is, and the relative ability of fluency in the lingua franca of the participants. In politeness theory, choices of language and communication styles are negotiations of face; they are negotiations of the identity of the people interacting (Scollon & Scollon 2002: 50). With this in mind, it will be interesting to see how Finnish and international participants converse.

5 EXPECTANCY VIOLATIONS THEORY (EVT)

Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) will be used in this study in order to help understand and explain possible surprise, problems and differences in the communication and interaction between teachers and students. EVT has been used to test how individuals perceive one another and it has been shown that, in interpersonal relationships, expectancies are crucial factors in constructing a shared sense of perspective between people (White 2008: 195). The importance of perception and personal perspective has already been discussed, and this study seeks to explain how violations of expectancies may influence the interaction and communication between teachers and students from different cultures.

5.1 Expectancies

In the field of communications, expectancies, as defined by Burgoon, are patterns of behavior that are anticipated (expected) (Burgoon 1993). These expected behaviors are shaped by a number of factors including the relationship between the communicators, different roles that people may occupy, and the context of the communication (Burgoon et al. 1995). Expectancies are analogous to social norms, they are “the way things are done” and they are often particular to a certain group of culture-sharing people (Cooke 195: 4). Expectancies are determined by what people have experienced in the past, and these experiences often happen among members of their same culture. Knowledge and experience derived from culture and society are significant factors in the construction of expectancies (Burgoon & Walther 1990). Expectations, according to Burgoon, Stern, and Dillman (1995) are

“learned and reinforced in one's culture since birth” and they “operate outside conscious awareness and produce habituated, automatic behavior patterns” (94-95). Some behaviors may be expected, some may be unexpected, and others may be misinterpreted or misunderstood. EVT focuses attention on the interpretation of interpersonal interactions (White 2008: 195), and many expectancy violations may occur due to the fact that certain behaviors and norms serve different functions in different cultures and settings.

The relationship and roles dealt with in this study will be Finnish university professors and international students, and these relationships will be examined as they occur in an educational setting, be it in the classroom or during advising roles. The background material suggests that the difference in cultures may produce some differences in expectancies due to the roles of the actors. This theory results from previous theorists who have posited that expectancies are patterns of behavior and communication that are learned, formed and repeated in different cultural and social contexts (Koermer & Petelle 1991). This study will endeavor to analyze the results of any expectancy violations that occur and see if they are, in fact, related to the culture of the participants.

5.2 EVT in Teacher-Student Communication: Immediacy

EVT has previously been applied to studies of teacher-student communication. These studies focused primarily upon the utilization of nonverbal immediacy in teacher-student interaction. Nonverbal immediacy is a mix of behaviors that involve behaviors such as increased eye contact, smaller interpersonal distances, more smiling, and more nodding (Golish & Olson 2000). In American¹ school systems

¹ American is meant to refer to U.S. Americans unless otherwise stated

it was found that when teachers used a greater amount of immediacy cues the students responded positively and reported being more interested in and satisfied with the material being taught (McCroskey et al. 1996, Roach et al. 2005). Students were also found to experience higher levels of cognitive learning and to be more likely to continue studies in the field which the more immediate teachers taught. In general, it has been concluded that immediacy cues in teacher-student interaction is, in an American educational setting, a positive influence which increases the efficacy of teachers (Goodman 1994, Roach et al. 2005). Additional studies in teacher immediacy, however, have shown that this is not a universal trait in teacher-student communication.

In addition, a connection between power and teacher immediacy has been identified. Golish and Olson (2000) claim that teachers who use immediacy cues were actually changing the relative amounts of power between themselves and students. It has been shown by researchers that immediacy cues seem to reduce the power distance between teachers and students in addition to changing the type of power used. Teachers who use more immediacy cues were more likely to have students who identified more with them and an interrelationship in power was evident. In these situations Golish and Olson (2000) claim that "the more powerful students perceived their instructor, the more powerful they perceived themselves" (306). Teacher immediacy, therefore, has been shown to have a direct effect on the negotiated power in relationships between teachers and students.

The aforementioned studies were conducted in American schools with American teachers and American students. Other national culture sharing groups have shown vastly different power relationships between teachers and students. Chinese instructors, for example, have been found to exhibit almost no immediacy cues and are very likely to

be punishment oriented (Lu 1997). The differences between cultures and use of immediacy, however, are not limited to the stereotypical dichotomy of east and west.

Another study conducted by McCroskey, Sallinen, Fayer, Richmond, and Barraclough (1996) has demonstrated that the amount of nonverbal immediacy used on university students in the United States, Australia, Puerto Rico, and Finland were different. American students and Puerto Rican students reported that their teachers used a significantly larger amount of immediacy cues than those from Australia or Finland (McCroskey et al. 1996). Results show that Finnish teachers were the least immediate in the study. The Finnish students, in fact, were explicitly chosen for the study because they represented students from a cultural and language sharing group that is quite distinct from the others involved in the study (McCroskey et al. 1996).

Another study was conducted to compare teacher-student communication in American and French educational settings. It was found that Americans seemed to require more encouragement and motivation to continue working on tasks; this was explained as not surprising due to the differences in power distances between the United States and France (Roach et al. 2005). It seems, however, also likely that this could be viewed as a difference in the immediacy of instructors. As was mentioned before, American students have often experienced motivation and encouragement from the immediacy of their instructors; they have come to expect it. French students, on the other hand, may not have come to expect immediate instructors so they could easily be perceived by the researchers as not needing more motivation or encouragement. If the American students in this study did experience immediacy from their instructors it could be seen as an expectancy violation which would negatively influence the students'

industriousness.

The results of these previous studies are very pertinent to this current study as they report a direct difference between teacher-student communication in individual cultural groups and they also show that certain things are indeed expected by university students. Many previous studies have been done on teacher expectations, but not as many have been done on student expectations (Koermer & Petelle, 1991). Since students from different cultures have been shown to expect different levels of immediacy in teacher-student communication it makes sense that they may have different expectations of other factors as well. This study will focus on the possibility of students' expectancies of teacher-students interactions. It will discover if possibly unexpected uses of power and immediacy by Finnish instructors will result in strong feelings from international students. It will also seek to determine if these feelings are positive or negative.

5.3 EVT and Perception

EVT has been used to not only explain how different communication behaviors have become expected, but it also deals with how individuals actually perceive each other (White 2008). The perception of other people is a central factor in this study because power has been intrinsically linked with perception. As mentioned before, if power is not perceived then power does not exist. If a certain person is not expecting another to have power then they may not perceive it at all. Likewise, if people do not expect to have power themselves they may not perceive it either. These differences in perceptions can lead to a number of unexpected behaviors and communication strategies between teachers and students.

A student from a high power distance background, for example, may expect teachers to exhibit and utilize a large amount of power, but this may clash with a teacher's perception of his or her power if the teacher comes from a low power distance background. The student would most likely expect the teacher to control the communication and influence the student whereas the teacher may not expect that at all. Situations like this could possibly result in expectancy violations on both the part of the student and of the teacher. Expectancies are culturally influenced and they are also determining factors in establishing mutual perceptions along which relationships are conducted (White 2008). The expectancy violations here would be merely from the lack of a shared perspective of power. This study seeks to find out whether or not situations like this occur and how students feel about these differences.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Qualitative Research

This investigation of the phenomenon of power in teacher-student relationships will be conducted as a qualitative study. As has been discussed, perceiving, expecting and experiencing power in interpersonal interaction is a highly personal and internal process. Qualitative research, therefore, is necessary because it is concerned with how the social world and phenomena are perceived, interpreted and understood by various social actors (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, Mason 1996, Rubin & Rubin 1995). Qualitative research is a form of research which is commonly used to find out what people feel and think about their worlds and their actions within it. The choice to use qualitative methodology is customary and appropriate when the topic being studied deals with social or human problems, and when the goal is to understand the viewpoint of the actors (Burns 2000). It is clear that interpersonal communication and interaction should be studied using a qualitative research methodology. This study will, therefore, be a phenomenological study that will focus on the thoughts and feelings that international students have had while interacting with Finnish professors.

Qualitative research promotes comprehensive and holistic studies of subjects within their contexts (Creswell 1998). Researchers understand that context is intrinsically and inherently important to communication, and they have treated culture as a “central context of interaction” (Lindhof & Taylor 2002: 20). The importance of culture is central to this investigation, and the investigation requires a methodology which

appreciates the role of culture. This is yet another reason that qualitative methodology has been chosen as the manner with which this study will be conducted.

In order to gain a broad understanding and elucidation of the interaction between teachers and students it has been decided to conduct qualitative interviews. Interviews are highly effective at understanding the experiences and perspectives of the interviewees (Lindhof & Taylor 2002). With interviews the researchers are able to delve deeply into the thoughts and perceptions of the interviewees, they are able to get closer to their perspective (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). Since expectancies and cultural norms are often unconscious and automatic behaviors, it may take a certain amount of effort in order for the students to recognize them. Teasing forth this information is possible by qualitative methodology which allows the flexibility necessary to uncover this type of data. Qualitative researchers understand that it is crucial to study, observe and attempt to interpret phenomena in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln 1994), but this is not always possible. The next best thing, therefore, is to interview the respondents to see what they think, what they experienced. Their experience is their reality, so the best way to see things in their natural setting is to get the information from interview participants.

6.2 Data Collection

6.2.1 Respondents

The interview respondents were chosen using the purposeful sampling method. This means that the respondents were chosen from a larger group of students because they fit selection criteria that were seen to emerge logically from the objectives of the project (Lindhof & Taylor

2002). In addition, the sampling strategy could be described as a convenience sample, a sample in which people were chosen based upon their availability in order to save time, money and effort (Frey et al. 2000). This study seeks, in general, to understand the interaction between Finnish university professors and international university degree students. The respondents, therefore, had to meet the following criteria:

- they must be a university student pursuing a degree in a Finnish university
- they must have had interactions with Finnish professors
- they must not be of Finnish origin themselves; they must be from another country

By meeting these conditions, it was assumed that the respondents would have a vast amount of appropriate and relevant experience about the phenomena being studied; this is a crucial consideration when choosing respondents (Lindhof & Taylor 2002). In addition to these criteria, it was important that the students would have the time and motivation to participate in the interviews.

The search and selection of the respondents did not involve a long process. The small size of the sample and the fact that the researcher is himself a foreign student studying for a degree at the University of Jyväskylä made the selection of respondents easy. All of the respondents are either personal friends or acquaintances of the researcher from the University of Jyväskylä. The aforementioned convenience sampling strategy was deemed most useful because the researcher was acquainted with a large number of students who fulfilled the interview criteria. Interviewees were selected, therefore, upon their availability. The preexisting relationships between the

researcher and respondents was not seen to be a problem since qualitative interviews often take on the form and feel of conversations between friends; “loose, interactive and open-ended” (Lindhof & Taylor 2002: 171). They are often, in fact, structured to be more of a “guided conversation” than a formal interaction of strictly questions and answers (Frey et al. 2000: 273). The previous relationship between the researcher and respondents, in fact, was thought to be beneficial because establishing a rapport would not be problematic.

After selection, the group of interview respondents was comprised of ten students from countries other than Finland who are currently studying in various degree programs at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. These students are not exchange students; they have made a conscious decision to spend, on average, two years studying towards a Master’s Degree. All of the respondents come from different national backgrounds, and they study in a range of degree programs

Overall, the International Master’s Degree students who participate as interview respondents in this investigation are between the ages of 24 and 30. The average age of the respondents is 26.9, which can be safely rounded up to 27. As was mentioned before, all of the respondents are from different countries. The countries of origin of the respondents, in alphabetical order are Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, China, France, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Latvia and the United States of America. The respondents have all spent at least eight months in Finland while others have spent a number of years living and studying in Finland. The group of respondents was comprised of both men and women. There were seven women (70% of the respondents) and three men (30%) interviewed. It was not a conscious decision to interview more women than men; this is just how the availability of the respondents worked out. A concise display of this information, with a breakdown of ages,

gender, nationalities and duration of interview in minutes, can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 6.1: Respondent and interview information table

Country of Origin	Age	Gender	Duration (minutes)
Australia	29	F	31:07
Azerbaijan	28	F	30:36
Canada	25	F	33:37
China	29	F	33:46
France	26	F	26:24
Greece	24	F	52:14
Ireland	28	M	17:11
Japan	24	M	24:19
Lativa	26	F	33:23
Unites States of America	30	M	22:56
Average:	26.9	70% F	30:53

6.2.2 Interview settings

The ten interviews took place in a variety of settings according to the personal preferences and ease of access for both the respondents and the researcher. The main conditions for the interview setting were that the respondent would feel comfortable, the interview would take place in relative privacy and that the interview would be conducted in a setting where it could be recorded easily. To this end, a variety of interview settings were used. These included:

- the personal residence of a respondent,
- a quiet study room in the university library,
- lobbies of various buildings on the university campus and

- a couple cafeterias on the university campus.

All of these settings were agreed upon prior to the interviews by both the researcher and respondents. The proposal and agreement of the interview setting was done both by e-mail and in person. Overall, the process of site selection proved to be rather straightforward and uncomplicated because of the existing easy relationship between the researcher and respondents.

6.2.3 Interview format

The interviews were conducted by mainly using in-depth, semi-structured and open-ended questions. The questions were used in a manner so that the respondents related their views and experiences in their own manner. This is referred to as a non-directive interview (Frey et al. 2000). Although the interview was relatively non-directive, a semi-structured interview format was used because there was an interview schedule, but it was very loose and allowed the interviewer to guide the questions and ask more probing questions to discuss the subjects in depth. These are regarded as typical and common characteristics of qualitative interviews (Frey et al. 2000, Mason 1996, Rubin & Rubin 1995).

Open questions were deemed desirable because the main purpose of these interviews was to find out what the respondents think about their interactions and communication with Finnish professors, and open questions allow respondents more fully respond with what is on their mind and to provide more information than closed questions (Frey et al. 2000). The interviews were designed so as to allow the respondents as much freedom as possible when talking; this was most beneficial in eliciting information from them.

The interviews, despite being loosely structured, did have an interview schedule, a list of questions that guide the interview. These questions were laid out strategically in an inverted funnel format. An inverted funnel format, as described by Frey et al. (2000), is an arrangement of questions in which narrow, closed questions are asked in the beginning and then the interviewer moves to more open, in-depth and probing questions. Qualitative interviews commonly use quantifiable background information about respondents, but the majority of the information elicited in the interviews is not quantifiable and requires interpretation during analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The use of questions supplying both quantitative and qualitative data was deemed practical in that it allowed a comprehensive picture to form. The inverted funnel format was not initially planned; it occurred naturally in the first few interviews. This unintended format, however, worked well for those interviews and was subsequently adopted for the following interviews.

6.2.4 Interview questions and themes

As mentioned above, the majority of questions were open, but there were some closed questions at the beginning, thus making the format an inverted funnel. The beginning questions were easy, low-risk questions that were used to make the respondents more comfortable. They were questioned, among other non-intrusive questions, about their age, nationality, educational background and the amount of time they have spent in Finland.

It was mentioned previously that all of the respondents were either friends or acquaintances of the interviewer; this begs the question of why they were asked questions to make them more comfortable. This is

because the respondents were, in fact, most often rather nervous about the interviews because they said that they wanted “to give you good information, good answers that you can use.” The basic questions at the beginning of the interview were, therefore, used to confirm some of the basic information about the respondents, but the primary function was to allow the respondents to relax in the interview setting, help them forget about the recorder being used and to prepare them for more in-depth and open-ended questions.

The open-ended questions were very loosely structured, but they did revolve around a few key themes. These themes were: the idea of social power, the norms and expectations of teacher-student interaction in both their country of origin and Finland and the issue of culture. The questions were outlined on a sheet of paper carried by the interviewer so that some aspects of the themes would not be forgotten. The sheet of paper carried many similar questions about the various themes, but they were phrased in a number of slightly different ways to get the most out of the respondent. Some of the phrasing was seen to elicit different levels of responsiveness from the separate respondents. As is to be expected, individual respondents felt differently about some of the questions and ways in which they were phrased.

6.2.5 Pilot Interview

Before the main round of interviews started, it was deemed appropriate to have a pilot interview. Pilot studies are held in order to test the procedure, in this case the interview procedure, to make sure that they are suitable and effective (Frey et al. 2000). The pilot interview was conducted with the Irish respondent in order to test the effectiveness of the interview method and to make sure that the recording equipment was adequate. During the pilot interview there were a few more pauses

and breaks than in the main study, but otherwise it was quite successful. The only main change that was made was to include more direct questions regarding the non-verbal immediacy as experienced by the respondent.

The pilot interview was initially conducted with the intention of questioning the Irish respondent another time for a 'real' interview. This, however, did not turn out to be necessary. The pilot interview was the shortest of all the interviews, but it did yield a great deal of usable data. The pilot interview was helpful in allowing the questions and themes to be checked and slightly modified and it was agreed with the respondent that if more information was needed then a second interview would be conducted.

6.2.6 Informed consent and recording the interviews

It has been mentioned a couple of times that the interviews were recorded. They were recorded by an MP3 recorder borrowed from the University of Jyväskylä. The recorders are very large and conspicuous, but on the most part the respondents were not noticeably affected by the presence of the recorder. Only one respondent seemed adversely affected and was constantly looking at the recorder or tilting her head so she would appear to be talking more directly into the internal microphone. After the recorder was turned off she relaxed and opened up and became more natural and forthcoming with answers and thoughts of hers. These thoughts and answers are included in the results and discussion because in-depth notes were taken by the researcher during the off-record talk.

One of the first things recorded at the beginning of each record is the verbal consent of the respondent. It is often said that consent for

interviews should be both oral and written (Lindhof & Taylor 2002), but only oral consent was given for these interviews. All the respondents, however, agreed to give written consent at a later time if it was deemed necessary. The respondents were asked if they:

- knew that they were being interviewed anonymously
- gave permission to be recorded
- understood that their answers would be quoted and utilized for a Master's thesis at the University of Jyväskylä
- gave permission for their answers and quotes to be used
- gave permission for certain personal details such as age, nationality and gender to be disclosed

All of the respondents gave verbal consent to the questions asked and when they were asked if they had any further questions or concerns they all replied negative.

6.3 Data Analysis

Lindhof and Taylor (2002) claim that the data collected in qualitative interviews is often so vast that the data must be both managed and reduced in order to make sense of it. This management of data is what allows further analysis to happen. After the data is put into a more understandable form then it needs to be explained and this analysis will lead to conceptual development which is the end result of the study.

6.3.1 Data Management and Categorization

Managing the data is often started with commentaries and notes taken during the process of interviewing (Lindhof & Taylor 2002). These interviews were all recorded, as was mentioned previously, but notes

were also taken during the interviews themselves. The interviewer always had a notebook in hand and was taking notes about what the respondents said, writing down clarifying questions for use in other interviews and writing down verbatim quotations that seemed to illuminate a particular area of interest. Data analysis is said to be an ongoing process that occurs from the beginning to the end of the study (Frey et al. 2000, Lindhof & Taylor 2002). The data was managed during the interviews by the in-process notes and then the recorded data was studied again in order to aid in categorization of the data.

The categorization of data is a process in which parts of the data are differentiated and associated with specific characteristics or themes formed by the researcher's meticulous study of the data (Krippendorff 2004, Lindhof & Taylor 2002). This allows for the data to be put into more manageable categories that can be dealt with category by category, instead of all the data at once. The categories contain a diverse range of phenomena such as "concepts, constructs, themes, and other types of "bins" in which to put items that are similar" (Lindhof & Taylor 2002: 214).

This study relied upon content analysis in order to manage, evaluate and understand the data which has been collected. Content analysis is concerned with the content of communication; it is used to identify, enumerate and examine the themes, concepts, characteristics and meanings of interaction (Burns 2000, Frey et al., 2000). Content analyses are usually quantitative in nature, but there are, however, qualitative content analyses where the researchers are not so interested in number of times a phenomenon occurs, but rather the meaning associated with it (Frey et al., 2000). Content analysis was chosen as the proper method in which to divide the data into manageable and understandable categories so that it can be analyzed properly.

6.3.2 Data Reduction

After reviewing the vast amount of data collected, it became clear that the amount of data needed to be reduced. This is a necessary and crucial step in data analysis because some of the data will be vital to understanding the phenomena being studied, some may add some indirect information, but much of the data will not be used at all because it is not relevant to the issues being studied (Lindlof & Taylor 2002).

The first issue that was considered was the suitability of the respondents. All of them were determined to have fulfilled the necessary criteria found above, so none of the interviews were dropped, all ten were regarded as informative to the study. In the overall content of the interviews, however, there was a lot of information which was not necessary at all. It was, therefore, decided that only the areas that are vital to the study would be transcribed and studied. This decision was not taken lightly, but some of the information was obviously not suited to answer the questions at hand. The conversations were only loosely guided, so it was expected and understood that there would be tangential and non-essential information within them. The data was divested of the extraneous information and reduced to a more manageable amount which was then categorized as was mentioned above. The data analysis process is not necessarily step-by-step, it is evolving and occurring so that different "steps" may take place before or after each other or simultaneously. Qualitative researchers are known to acquire data, analyze it and then acquire more data and then analyze that; "they make sense of the data as they are acquired" (Frey et al. 2000: 280).

7 RESULTS

In the following sections the words professor and teacher will be used frequently and their meaning can be vague. As professor and teacher have different meanings in different contexts, it is important that any ambiguity is dispelled. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a teacher as “one whose occupation is to instruct.” In addition to teacher, however, the term professor will be used frequently, especially while taking direct quotes from the interview respondents. There are two common definitions of professor, and they need to be differentiated. In the Finnish school system, and at the University of Jyväskylä, a professor denotes an instructor who has attained “the highest academic rank at an institution of higher education.” This, however, is not what is meant in this study. For purposes of this study, the term professor, instead, is a teacher who instructs at a college or university. This definition of the term is used because it is how the majority of the respondents use it and adoption of this definition, therefore, contributes to an ease of quotation. The meanings of teacher and professor were discussed with the respondents during their interviews and it was agreed upon that these two terms would be used interchangeably and both denote an instructor at a college or university.

The categorization of the data was not an easy process. It was known from the beginning that there would be no definite codification of speech or communicative acts as are done in many communication studies. This study rather chose to look at the content and group the interview responses into thematic areas as is suggested while doing qualitative content analysis (Lindhof & Taylor 2002). The creation of categories was a time-consuming process. Recordings of the individual

interviews were listened to numerous times, and each time notes were taken and certain content-rich portions were transcribed. The in-process notes from the interviews were then combined and collated with additional notes taken while listening to the recordings. After all 10 interviews had been listened to repeatedly the data was looked at through the light of the research questions and theory. Data that seemed to answer a specific question was brought together as was data that seemed to pertain to a specific theory. There was, however, no clear delineation of theories and questions. Some data addresses a couple of questions or can be analyzed through a couple of different theories. The burden of qualitative data is that is usually quite copious and the management of it is not so easy.

Overall, a number of categories and subcategories were chosen. The two main categories were the expectations of power and the informality of the Finnish teachers. The expectations of power section deals with the sources of teacher power and their expected presence in the teacher-student relationships. The informality category is basically an explanation of the main perceptions of Finnish teachers. Their informal forms of address, friendliness and apparent lack of authority are discussed. The differences data from the interviews are interpreted mainly through the theories related to bases of power (French & Raven in Rubin & Raven 1995, McCroskey 1992), cultural dimensions (Hofstede 1997, 2001; Schwartz 1999, 2006), politeness theory (Brown & Levinson 1987; Scollon & Scollon 1983, 2002) and expectancy violations theory (Burgoon 1994; Burgoon et al. 1989, 1996; Burgoon & Dillman 1995).

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there are a total of ten interview respondents. The respondents are all international degree students at the University of Jyväskylä who were asked about their

experiences and feelings while interacting with Finnish university professors. The respondents are all from separate national backgrounds, and references to them will utilize the name of their country of origin. Referring to individual respondents by their country of origin is judged to be the easiest and clearest way to identify them.

7.1 Expectations of Power

The role of a teacher is one aspect which, as discussed earlier, is highly dependent upon and determined by the cultural norms and values of the people involved. Previous research has shown that the aspect of power was intrinsically linked with the role of the teacher in many cases. One of the major thematic areas that the respondents were questioned about, therefore, was the role of a teacher in their country of origin. This question yielded many answers and a list of their expected attributes of a teacher began to emerge. There was no definitive explanation of the role or power of a teacher, but there were some commonalities in many of the responses. These factors are not mutually exclusive by any means, and some respondents had overlapping ideas of what the role of teacher is, what they expected and what power was in these situations.

7.1.1 Bases of Power

Teacher power meant many different things to the respondents. Some of the explanations of teacher power relied upon the reward and coercion/punishment bases of power from either French and Raven (1976) or McCroskey (1992). They focused on the fact that a teacher is in charge of the grades so you do what you what you are expected to do out of hope for reward or fear of failure. This was mentioned especially by the Canadian, Irish, American and Azerbaijani respondents. They

were, however, used to being motivated mainly by fear instead of rewards. The hope for rewards was a motivating factor to work harder, but the main motivation was the fear of punishment that would occur if they did not work. They expected the teachers to be strict and, as the Irish respondent says, to have “rigid deadlines.” Both the Canadian and American responded that deadlines in their countries are also very rigid. They say that many teachers will “drop them a grade” for each increment of time they are later. These increments can be minutes, hours or days, depending on the teacher. If an assignment is too late, then the student will have to do the assignment over. Failing assignments and courses due to tardiness was a real threat for the American and Canadian. They said that the deadlines taught them to work under pressure and that it was what they learned to expect from professors.

The power to give or withhold rewards and punishment was accepted and expected by the respondents. They understood that the teachers’ role in the school system gave them the right to decide to evaluate their performance. This fact, according to McCroskey (1992), is one of the main factors that makes students accept that authority of teachers. The institutionally sanctioned role of teachers as evaluators means that students must accept their authority if they want to operate within the system (i.e. pass courses and graduate). In this way, the institutional roles of teachers also function as a source of legitimate power. Legitimate power means that students perceive the rights of the teachers to make certain demands and requests due to their role as a teacher (McCroskey & Richmond 1983).

Another response that the respondents gave was that they expected their teachers to be experts and to have experience in what they were teaching. This is the expertise base of power. Their teachers are

supposed to be “fountains of knowledge,” to have “authority over the subject,” according to the Australian and Irish respectively. The Chinese and American also explicitly agreed with these attributes of the teacher. They say that the teacher’s power comes directly from their specialist knowledge of the subject they are teaching. The American, for example, responded that the teachers have expertise and “when you request help from them it gives them the upper hand.” Previous studies about teacher student relationships have also shown that expert power is one of the bases of power that is commonly at work in teacher-student communication (McCroskey & Richmond 1983).

Overall, the data showed that the personal power of the teacher was expected by the respondents to come from their role as teachers and the abilities and responsibilities that come with that role. They are able to reward and punish students, but they are also responsible for their expertise in a subject. The accuracy of these roles is constantly affirmed through communication and interaction between the teachers and students. The unstated fact is that when a teacher ‘uses’ a base of power they are somehow communicating with the student in order to utilize that power (McCroskey 1992).

The ability to dominant and control teacher-student interaction was also commonly expected to be an attribute of a teacher. As described before, power is seen as a *potential* that must be exercised through communication. The French respondent was able to provide an example by saying that the “leader [teacher] drives the conversation, you wait until the professor is finished,” also when the teacher speaks “influence is assumed, they talk and it is.” She said that the power of a professor came through how they interacted with the class, she said many times that the interaction is only one way, only the teacher can speak. In France she says that the teachers “live in another world” and

they are “untouchable.” This is actually another example of legitimate power as described by French and Raven (Raven & Rubin 1976), where power is accorded to a person, the teacher in this case, because the student accepts this power as right and then complies with the teacher’s wishes.

As another example of this phenomenon, in Azerbaijan there is “no interaction” with the teachers; they talk, you listen. This total domination of the teacher-student relationship was reported by the Azerbaijani, Chinese, French, Greek, Japanese and Latvian respondents. As the Greek says, “if you’re a teacher, you’re somebody” and “he’s [the teacher] like the master of the classroom.” The teachers in these situations were seen to be automatically accorded power by their role, they assumed complete control and were granted it by the students. In these cases, the role of communication is more clearly seen by the respondents. They understood that the teacher determined who was allowed to communicate and when they were allowed to communicate. The respondents accepted this because they acknowledge the right of the teacher to behave like this. This is an example of a perception of legitimate power being and it also indicated the willingness of the respondents to accept this power inequality. Accepting power inequality as a normal part of societal rules is a trait of countries with a high PDI (Gudykunst et al. 2005).

7.1.2 Power Inequality

The countries in which the teacher is reported and clearly dominant are those that have a high PDI. The lower PDI countries, such as Australia and Ireland, relied primarily upon the teachers’ expertise. The teachers in the high PDI countries, on the other hand, clearly saw themselves as different from the students. The Greek respondent said that talking

with teachers outside of class was not acceptable because “they are not my friends.” This attitude was also shared by the Chinese respondent who likened the relationship as more of a parental relationship than a friendship. She reported that a Chinese saying is that “if somebody is your teacher for a day then they are your father for a lifetime.” The Japanese respondent also said that the “higher person” (i.e. the teacher) is supposed to take care of the lower person (the student) like a parent. This assumption and acceptance of fundamental differences between the commonly perceived subordinates and superiors is a classic feature of high PDI countries (Gudykunst et al. 2005, Schwartz 1999). The countries of the respondent and their PDIs can be seen in the following table.

Fig 7.1: PDI values in Finland and Respondents’ Countries of Origin.

Country	PDI
Australia	36
Azerbaijan	-
Canada	39
China	80
France	68
Greece	60
Ireland (Republic of)	28
Japan	54
Latvia	52
Unites States of America	40
FINLAND	33

All of the PDI values apart from Azerbaijan, China and Latvia were found in Hofstede (2002). The PDI for Latvia was not included in Hofstede’s study, but it was found from another study that calculated

indices for the Baltic countries by correlating Hofstede's research and macroeconomic indicators. This study gave Latvia a PDI index of 52 (Luptáková, et al., 2005: 66). A PDI value for Azerbaijan could not be found as it was apparently not included in Hofstede's study or any parallel studies. The PDI for China was found from Hofstede's website, and it was given a PDI value of 80, significantly higher than the Asian average of 60 (Itim International 2009). The responses from the respondents seem to support the results of Hofstede's study. Those with a high PDI mentioned aspects that were consistent with Hofstede's description of those cultures, while those with a relatively lower PDI did not report the same phenomena.

The hierarchy/egalitarianism dichotomy produces a continuum that yields results very similar to Hofstede's PDI values (Schwartz 1999, 2006). Schwartz analyzed data from 73 countries, but he chose to group them into regional categories instead of revealing, like Hofstede, a table of countries and their relative values. He did, however, mention a few countries explicitly; Finland, China and Japan. At the risk of making an obvious East-West dichotomy, it was said that Finland rates high on the egalitarian region of the continuum while China and Japan both rate high on the hierarchy side (Schwartz 2006). These three countries, therefore, are examples of a strong correlation between Schwartz's and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Overall, the data gleaned from the respondents seems to clearly correspond with the cultural dimensions put forth by both Hofstede and Schwartz.

7.2. Informality

The foremost attribute, mentioned unanimously by the respondents as specific to the Finnish teacher-student relationships, is its relative informality. Many of the respondents, as indicated by Figure 7.1, come

from societies and cultures where power is a social phenomenon that is clearly evident and accepted in every walk of life. The background chapter mentions that power is present in all interactions, but many of these cultures are presumed to have more emphasis placed upon power and power inequalities, as was described by Hofstede's PDI.

Informality is often seen to indicate a lesser degree of social distance and power between individuals (Hofstede 2001; Schwartz 1999; Scollon & Scollon 1983, 2002). In this manner, Finland's relatively low PDI and high tendency toward Schwartz's egalitarian score can be seen. Finland, like all countries, has both ends of the dichotomies presented by Hofstede and Schwartz, but these theories say that one end of the scale tends to be dominant in a culture (Gudykunst et al. 2005). In Finland, the data from the respondents clearly indicate that low PDI and egalitarianism were identified dominant factors.

The Japanese respondent, said, for example, that the first difference he noticed about interacting with professors in Finland is that he did not feel it necessary to think about hierarchy as much as he did in Japan. He, along with the Chinese respondent, both explicitly explained that Finland has "more of an idea of equality" that they found evident in the educational system. This was initially a large shock to them, as it violated their expectancies of how power relations work. The perceived informality of the teacher-student relationships in Finland was ubiquitous in the interaction of all of the respondents. According to the respondents, this strong feeling of informality came from a number of factors including forms of address, friendliness and the perceived lack of authority of the Finnish teachers.

7.2.1 Form of address

The manner of addressing a professor was another large factor in many

students' estimation of power and informality. The Irish and Australian respondents said that it was expected for them to call their professors by their first names, but the other respondents said that titles and honorifics were used at all time. When asked why they needed to use titles or honorifics they replied that "that's just the way it is" and that any other form of address would be considered rude or impolite. A level of formality was expected from those who were expected to use titles and honorifics. This level of formality is not a societal norm in Finland. All of the Finnish professors mentioned by the respondents told their students to call them by first name.

The French respondent said that when her Finnish professors asked her to call them by their first names her first thoughts were of shock and "disbelief." The Japanese respondent also said that "I still find it difficult to use their first name; I usually say professor or something." The respondents agreed that form of address was very crucial in decreasing the formality between them and the professors, and some of them were, and still are, uncomfortable with this lack of formality. They said that the lack of titles made them feel more equal with the professors, whether or not it was comfortable. The Canadian respondent believes that her interaction with her Finnish professors is "100 percent different" than with her Canadian professors. She said that in Canada they were very formal and insistent about titles. She said that "the whole putting down the title thing is important" in building informal relationships, and that is what she has experienced in Finland.

The form of address is an area that has been under much scrutiny and received a lot of attention from the politeness theory point of view. This is especially true in the use of honorifics or formality; it is a theme that is discussed frequently in politeness theory. When looking at Brown and Levinson's equation $W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$ it is important to

remember that *D*, social distance, is one of the two main factors in the equation (Brown & Levinson 1987). The manner and methods of greeting and addressing people are, in many cultures, dependent upon their relative social distance (Scollon & Scollon 2002).

In my own experience, for example, there are a number of ways to greet people in Kyrgyzstan. A basic greeting would be *salaam aleikum*, *salamatsizbe*, *salamatsizdarbe*, *salamatsingbe*, *salamatsingarbe*, *jaksingar*, or *salaam* depending upon the relative social power of me and the other social actor. Also, apart from greetings, the general forms of address have multiple layers of formality and deference that must be shown. The correct form of greeting and address is determined by Kyrgyz culture and the relative amount of importance they attach to factors such as age, gender, occupation and wealth. These are seen as indicators of social distance. If I would not have used the correct form of address in Kyrgyzstan it would have been a face threatening act (FTA). If I, for example, address an older person with an informal greeting I would be perceived as insulting them. On the other hand, if I addressed a child formally I would also be making a mistake. The importance of formality and informality in communication is high in some cultures and low in others. In the Kyrgyz culture it was an essential part of everyday social interaction and communication, in Finland the respondents indicated that it is not.

The importance of correct form of address is determined by the participants and the context. Culture appears to be a crucial factor in the context of communication in the communication between Finnish professors and international students. The role of the teacher is accorded different values depending on culture as evidenced by Schwartz's hierarchy/ egalitarianism and Hofstede's PDI, and being polite and respectful often requires different ways of communication.

Some of the respondents obviously felt that informality, indicated by first names, was an improper form of communication with Finnish professors. Others adapted to it. The overall idea here is that the Finnish teachers wanted and expected to be addressed in an informal fashion and this clashed with the expectations of many of the respondents.

7.2.2 Friendliness

One aspect of teacher-student relationships that was frequently mentioned by the respondents was the friendliness of the Finnish professors. All of the respondents perceived their Finnish professors as being friendlier than professors from their country of origin. This perception of friendliness was realized through the behavior and interaction styles of the professors. The professors tended to be informal in dress, form of address and their use of language and space (such as sitting with the students as mentioned by the Greek). Topics that the professors would bring up or talk about were seen as being more personal than many of the respondents expected. No definite list of 'friendliness factors' resulted from the data, but the respondents had a strong perception that Finnish professors wanted to have a more casual and friendly than they were used to. The friendliness of the teachers was seen as a factor that really stressed the informality of the teacher-student relationship. The teachers were often perceived as "talking like friends" instead of "talking like teachers."

Even the Australian respondent believed that the friendliness of teachers here is very noticeable. In Australia, she is used to calling professors by their first name and having drinks with them at the end of the week. Although the teacher-student relationship in Australia is rather informal, she says that the Australian professors are friendly, but are also seen as elitist and out of touch. This elitism promotes distance

so the professors are friendly, but more distant. Professors in Finland, on the other hand, are so friendly that she feels that “being a uni professor [in Finland] is maybe just more of being a regular person.” She says that they have a tendency to be very laid-back and not exhibit any kind of power difference whatsoever. The main difference she noticed between Australian professors and Finnish professors is that she knows more about them personally and they know more about her personal life. Likewise, the respondent from Azerbaijan said that with her professors “I feel them as a friend to me.” For her this was a violation of her expectations, but it was positive because it made her feel more confident and comfortable when talking to the professors.

Not every respondent, however, was happy about the friendliness of their Finnish professors. The Irish respondent thought that the professors here can be too close. He, like the Australian, is used to a very informal relationship with his professors, but he says that he believes that the teacher-student relationships here are “too cozy” and sometimes he has felt “a bit uncomfortable ... even though the intentions were good.” He said that he feels that Finnish professors put a lot of effort into establishing a good relationship with the students. The intentions, as mentioned, he perceived as good, but he said that he would prefer the teachers to focus on material and teaching rather than on the personal relationship. This seems to indicate that he sees a closer personal relationship as not an important factor in the student-teacher relationship.

The American respondent, in addition, said that his interactions with his professors are so informal that, “I don’t know if it is a friendship thing or more of a teacher-student thing.” He also believed that there needed to be more of a separation of teacher and student in their relationship. Both the Irish and American felt that the friendliness of the

teachers was indicated through their informality, choice of topics and manner of speech. They were able to handle this level of informality, but they both indicated that they did not really want to be friends with their professors.

The friendliness of Finnish teachers can be seen from two points of view. First of all, it can be seen as an example of *referent power*, power that arises from one participant, in this case the teacher, identifying with or perceiving a commonality with the other participant, the student (Raven & Rubin 1976). In this way, the closeness of the teacher can also be described as a result of referent power and/or *relational power*, power dealing with the rapport between teacher and student, as conceptualized by McCroskey (1992). It was mentioned before that students perceived the teachers as giving them respect and indicating equality. This also falls in line with the egalitarian aspect of Schwartz's cultural dimensions.

One thing that needs to be mentioned, however, is that this is opposite of what was mentioned in the literature by McCroskey & Richmond (1983). They mention that referent power is used quite often in teacher-student communication, but in their case they mean that the student is trying to build some kind of commonality with the teacher. In Finland, on the other hand, it seems to the respondents that teachers are the ones who are reaching out and trying to be friendly, to build a sense of common identity or camaraderie.

The friendliness of teachers seems to be, as described earlier, as part of the negotiation of power between teacher and student. It is said that the quality of the teacher-student relationship relies upon the perceived rapport between them (Barraclough & Stewart 1992, Golish & Olson 2000, Kerseen-Griep & Hess 2008). An equality of interpersonal power,

as expected in the egalitarian Finnish society (Schwartz 1999) would most likely translate into the Finnish teachers' efforts to establish a rapport. This, while welcomed and approved of by some of the respondents, was not appreciated by all of them. The respondents who did not feel comfortable with the friendliness of the teacher seemed to feel that it was "too much." Some level of friendliness was good for the teacher-student relationship, but they felt that the Finnish professors crossed a certain boundary. The level of friendliness which crosses this boundary is most likely culturally determined. People from different cultures expect different levels of informality and formality as mentioned before (Scollon & Scollon 1983, 2002). The crossing of this boundary can be seen as another violation of social distance found in Brown and Levinson's equation, as discussed in the preceding section. An incorrect social distance is a violation of face because it changes that way that a person's social identity is seen. This threat against identity is one way in which to interpret the negative feelings of some of the respondents.

7.2.1 Lack of Authority

The perception and feeling of authority, or lack thereof, presented itself frequently in the interview data. The respondents had earlier explained that they expected the authority of a teacher to be derived from certain attributes of their role. These were identified as reward, punishment and legitimate power as described by French and Raven and McCroskey. None of the respondents, however, felt confident in explaining more specifically what they meant by authority, other than indicating that it often had something to do with the role of the teacher and that it was a phenomenon which is perceived to give power to another person. Although they were not exactly sure what authority was, they said that they could feel it; it was communicated to them by

the teachers. Their perception of teacher authority, however, was quite different in Finland.

The respondent from Latvia, for example, exclaimed that “authority is not so much of an authority [in Finland].” She believes that there is not much teacher authority in Finland at all. Her reaction to this perceived difference in the level of authority is that it makes the boundaries between professor and student less defined than she expected. She said, for example, that when she asks questions in class she feels comfortable being “more sloppy” than she would in Latvia. She explained that Latvian professors would expect a very clear and well thought-out question, whereas in Finland she did not feel the necessity to do that. She said that her teachers here were more understanding and would not feel so insulted if somebody “wasted their time” with a relatively “sloppy” question. She also said that “authority is power.” She links various expressions of authority by the professor, such as being strict, giving instructions and demanding respect, as expressions of power. According to her, however, these ways of exercising power were not present in the communication from Finnish teachers.

Authority was perceived by many of the respondents to have a link to power. They often perceived the expressions and exercise of authority as indicating different levels of power in the teacher-student relationship. When questioned about the existence of power in interaction with Finnish professors, the French respondent stated that “authority is needed.” She explained that she did not feel much authority from the informal manner in which the professors interacted with her and therefore “as first [she] thought they had no power.” The American respondent also perceived a difference in power between American and Finnish professors. He said that the Finnish professors have a tendency to “guide, rather than teach.” This tendency to him is

seen as giving up some authority or power in the teacher-student relationship. He believes that the teacher is supposed to instruct students, and “help [them] achieve success. “ This help, in his mind, requires more of a forceful manner of communication; it consists of telling him what to do. The communication he expected from teachers would require more power and use of authority.

The Greek respondent, in addition, said that “they do have the power, but they don’t use it.” She was used to a more formal and authoritative way of communication with professors, and she did not experience that here. She said she initially felt that her professors lacked power and authority because “the truth is that I had the Greek standard in my mind.” At the first departmental meeting she attended the Greek related that she was surprised when she saw the professors because they were sitting around a table and interspersed in the group of students. In her initial perception, that was incorrect and their role as teachers required them to show their different position and authority by being separate from the students. She said that “it somehow felt that there were not professors to me” because they exhibited a lack of consciousness of authority that Greek teachers would have. The professors’ position around the table was a form of nonverbal communication which gave the Greek respondent a distinct feeling and perception of their level of authority.

The teachers in Finland were, in general, perceived as not having much authority because they did not utilize much power when interacting with students. The French respondent said that in France “in order to talk you need to show that you are the boss.” She was unable to elaborate much on how they communicated that they “were the boss,” but she said it was clear in the way that they spoke. She expanded her response by saying that, unlike in France, teachers and students have

no need to fight for authority; they have the same right to speak. This equality was also remarked upon by the Azerbaijani, Chinese and Japanese respondents who said that teachers reciprocate the respect that is shown them by the students. They said that this was evident in the teachers' choice of words and tones while communicating.

It seems to me that the lack of authority in communication can be understood as the negotiation of face. Face, as mentioned, is the public image and identity that a participant wants to claim in interaction. Face is connected with power and social distance between the participants (Brown & Levinson 1987, Scollon & Scollon 2002). Teachers in these situations were described as being quite informal. This is interpreted as a teacher strategy in minimizing the power and distance between themselves and the students. This is how they wanted to present their identities and stress a lower level of power, the relative equality, between them and the students. The teachers would perceive this as normal interaction because they are from Finland which has a low PDI and stresses egalitarianism.

The equality and supposed lack of authority, however, violated the expectations of many of the respondents. They saw the behavior of the teachers as deviant and instead of perceiving a lower level of authority they perceived a lack of authority. This is one consequence of the normal informality of teacher-student communication in Finland.

7.3 Expectancy Violations

As can be seen from the data, the teacher-student relationship between Finnish professors and international students has resulted in a number of expectancy violations. Expectancies are patterns of behavior that are anticipated in certain situations; and the knowledge and experience

derived from culture and society are significant factors in the construction of expectancies (Burgoon & Walther 1990). Many cultural factors of teacher-student relationships have been related, but the evaluation of the expectancy violations need to be expanded upon.

After an expectancy has been violated, Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT) explains that people try to understand the meaning of the violation and then determine whether or not is it negative or positive (Griffin 2000). The evaluation of violations determines the *valence* of the expectancy violation. Violation valence is when participants assess whether or not they like the violation (Griffin 2000). Determining the valence of a deviant action is often determined by the how the violator is viewed by the person whose expectancy was violated (Gudykunst et al. 2002). If the person who acted in a deviant matter was seen positively then the valence of the expectancy violation was positive. If they were perceived negatively then it was often viewed as negative.

7.3.1 Negative Valence

As has been explained, differences in roles, teacher power, the perceived lack of authority, informal forms of address and the friendliness of Finnish professors were seen by many respondents as contrary to what they expected. These were expectancy violations. While the informal aspect of the relationship between teacher and student in Finland was comfortable and valued by many of the respondents, they also had a tendency to view the informality as a lack of power. This perceived lack of power a was seen most in two expectations that the respondents have; they expected to be pushed or pressured more by their professors and they expected deadlines to be enforced. Overall, this lack of deadlines and pressure, on the part of many respondents, led to frustration, disappointment and a lack of

motivation.

The Irish respondent, for example, said that he would “prefer a bit more, not formality, but less focus on harmony, more on material.” He felt that the relationship between the teachers and students was often overemphasized so that learning suffered. He said that he expected something more demanding. According to him, his professors in Ireland were informal but demanding, whereas in Finland they just seem to be too informal and friendly. This view was supported also by the Australian respondent who is also used to informal teacher-student relationships. She says that she would “like to be pushed more” and she said that she felt that “it’s quite horrible here. I expected them [the professors] to be stronger.” Both the Irish and Australian respondents, the ones most used to informal interactions with professors, felt that they were not demanding enough.

Likewise, the Canadian respondent said that she feels “quite disappointed” because the teachers don’t fulfill their roles. She said the biggest difficulty she experienced was that teachers do not strictly enforce their deadlines. She sees this as a lack of power and said that if teachers do not enforce deadlines she is not as motivated to work. This was a common theme found in the data. All of the respondents were surprised that enforcement of assignment deadlines did not seem to be an important factor to the Finnish professors. It was discussed earlier that the Canadian, Irish, American and Azerbaijani respondents expected “rigid deadlines” and the enforcement of these deadlines gave the teachers reward or punishment power as described in the typologies of power (McCroskey 1992, Raven & Rubin 1995). These deadlines, however, were not strictly enforced by Finnish professors so they were perceived as unimportant by the respondents. The power, therefore, of teachers was lessened in the eyes of the respondents.

The relative laxity of assignment deadlines also gave the respondents the feeling that the professors were not putting pressure on them; they were not “demanding excellence.” The Australian respondent described is as “a bit disheartening, demotivating, if excellence is not sought.” The French respondent also said that she is used to the situation where “the teacher is on your back” to get work done. She said that is what she expected, she expected to constantly feel pressure and that pressure is what motivated her. The concept of motivation by pressure was common amongst the respondents; they said that in their countries of origin they were often motivated by pressure and fear. In Finland, on the other hand, they did not experience this. When asked how this felt, the French respondent replied “you have to self-motivate, it’s something I’ve never had to do before,” this was echoed by the Australian who said “as a result [of less pressure] I feel I tend to push myself less.” These respondents, like the others, felt a lack of motivation because they were not pushed.

Not being pressured by the teachers was seen by the respondents as a consequence of Finnish ‘academic freedom,’ but they, in general, did not like it. They were often frustrated when they, expecting punishment if deadlines were not met, would work very hard and push themselves to meet these deadlines and it did not matter. Many related anecdotes where they had classmates who turned in their assignment days or months late with no negative consequences. The respondents expected that this would not be tolerated, but it was. They often felt that they had put more effort than necessary into completing tasks and assignments with no benefits. The lack of rewards and punishments was a major expectancy violation, and it was evaluated negatively and led to much frustration and a lack of motivation.

Overall, the teachers were seen as limiting their power by their informality and lack of strictness. This led to a more relaxed atmosphere, but that it not what the respondents expected or wanted from their teachers and they evaluated it negatively. The respondents may have liked their teachers, but the expectancies were often viewed as negative because the teachers, at that point, were not acting appropriately. They were deviating from their role and expected manner of interacting.

7.3.2 Positive Valence

The evaluation of the expectancy violations was, however, not all negative. The informality and friendliness of teachers did have some positive results. Feelings of comfort and acceptance were common among the respondents, but these were described in less detail. Most of the respondents just said, "I like it, I feel comfortable" when asked how they felt while studying in Finland. The Azerbaijani, for example, although she did not like having loose deadlines, liked the ability to choose when she could take book exams. That freedom was very gratifying to her.

The most evidence of positive violations valence was the fact that many of the respondents were changing their expectations of teacher interaction and communication. These respondents were, for the most part, from hierarchical or high PDI countries. They were used to stricter and more formal teaching but they said they "never knew teachers could be like this." The Greek respondent, for example, said that she really enjoys studying in Finland and she stated that "my whole idea of how teachers should behave has changed; I like the Finnish model ... my expectations have changed." She, alone among the respondents, also said that she feels more motivated because of the Finnish teachers'

style of instruction. The exposure to newer, less power-laden and less formal ways of teaching way viewed positively by a number of respondents.

7.3.3 Immediacy

Expectancy Violations Theory has been applied to educational settings previously (Golish & Olson 2000). These studies focused a lot on the amount of nonverbal immediacy in teacher-student interaction and communication. An increased amount of immediacy cues was theorized to lead to a lessening in power differences between teachers and students. The data from the interviews, however, did not corroborate this result. The respondents were often of two minds about the amount of immediacy from Finnish teachers. Overall, they were not able to give any clear indications as to whether or not the Finnish professors immediate. The discrepancy between responses can possibly be put down to cultural expectations. The Japanese respondent said that sometimes immediacy in Finland "can be too much," the Chinese respondent said there was "no real difference" in immediacy cues and the Greek said that "Finns are not as active with their bodies." The French respondent had a very different answer. Contrary to immediacy lessening power and bringing teachers and students closer she said that she felt "it's uncomfortable when a teacher smiles at you."

Immediacy appeared to be a very important issue in the EVT literature, but this was not evident from the interviews. The respondents gave some of their ideas and experiences with immediacy in teacher-student relationships, but it did not seem to be as important of an issue as would be expected from the literature. There was no real consensus on whether or not Finnish teachers were immediate. All the respondents indicated that they though that immediacy was important in

communicative relationships, but they were not able to say how immediate Finnish professors were.

7.4 Culture

The data appears to indicate that culture is a fundamental aspect of teacher-student relationships. The levels and types of power use seem to be determined by power. The relative amount of authority, informality and friendliness also appears to be related to culture. Forms of address and social distance are also apparently culturally determined. Violations of expectancies are culturally influenced because expectancies are culturally constructed. It seems that culture does matter.

When asked explicitly, the respondents overall agreed to the idea that culture mattered in teacher-student relationships. Six out of the ten respondents indicated that they thought that the national culture of the teachers and students is the most important and influencing factor in those relationships. The other four were convinced that national culture and individual personalities were mixed in producing differences.

Despite the mixed results, I believe that culture is a determining factor in the responses. Even the students who said it was a mixture of personality and culture had definite ideas and feelings of how Finnish professors behaved in relation to professors from their country of origin. They continually referred to cultural differences during their interviews, but when pressed on the matter of culture they seemed to try and be a bit more diplomatic. I interpreted their manner of speaking as trying to be as open-minded as possible and avoid stereotypes, but they made generalizations nonetheless. The importance of culture in the power found in teacher-student interaction can be seen the results.

8 DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to get an understanding of how culture affects power in teacher-student communication between Finnish professors and international university students at the University of Jyväskylä. Qualitative interviews were utilized with the aim of eliciting in-depth responses from international students regarding their personal experiences, feelings and thoughts from interactions with their Finnish professors. The data from the interviews appears to support the idea that different cultural backgrounds have a distinct influence upon teacher-student communication, especially in relation to power.

8.1 Discussion of Theories

The most striking results from the study were the different ways in which power was perceived by the respondents and in their sensitivity and reaction to the perceived informality of Finnish professors. The experiences and feelings of the respondents appeared to be quite influenced by their separate cultures and these produced some striking expectancy violations. The violations were given both negative and positive values and the respondents overall agreed that culture was an important factor in the power relations in communication between Finnish professors and themselves.

One subject that I found particularly interesting was the definitions or concepts that the respondents gave for the phenomenon of power. I found it interesting that many of them referred directly to reward and coercive/punishment power as proposed by the previous research

(McCroskey 1992, Rubin & Raven 1995). In addition, it was interesting that the qualities of legitimate, referent and relational power were not directly stated, but were clearly evident in the data. The respondent who came closest to my conceptualization of power was the Australian who stated that power “operates all the time,” it “is not embedded in a person or position” and it “needs to be exercised.” Other ideas of power revolved around the common themes of control, dominance, authority and control over material resources.

The cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1997, 2001) and Schwartz (1999, 2006) received a good deal of support from the interview data. Many of the respondents perceived, accepted and submitted to power at a greater level if they were from high PDI or more hierarchical countries, and those who had a lower PDI and were more egalitarian accepted and expected less power difference and believed more in social equality. The dichotomies between the respondents were not set in stone, but there were definite trends that seemed to match both cultural dimensions. Another important factor to mention is that the respondents’ perceptions and feeling also verified the idea that Finland has a relatively low PDI and is higher on the egalitarian side of Schwartz’s dichotomy.

Politeness theory, in addition, was seen to be quite helpful in illuminating some cultural issue from in the data. The importance of maintaining personal identity, called face, was evident in some of the interactions and communication between teachers and students. The use of disparate forms of address and the perception of discrepancies in social distance proved to be salient factors in interaction between Finnish professors and international students. Politeness theory was not central to the phenomena at hand, but it did prove to be rather useful.

Expectancy Violations Theory received a lot of support from the data. The differing expectancies between the respondents themselves and the Finnish teachers seemed to fall along cultural lines. When violations occurred the data showed that respondents attributed both negative and positive violations valence to differing violations. Overall, EVT appeared to function as a suitable theory. A relatively unexpected result, however, was the apparent unimportance of teacher non-verbal immediacy on the interpersonal power found in teacher-student relationships. The importance of immediacy in the teacher-student was the subject of numerous studies (Golish & Olson 2000; Lu 1997; McCroskey et al. 1996; Roach, Cornett-DeVito & DeVito 2005), but the data in this study did not support the previous research.

8.2 Possible Limitations

One possible weakness of this study is the small number of respondents. Any study of phenomena as complex as power and culture, however, cannot have enough respondents. I believe it is impossible to conceptualize any definition of power or culture that would satisfy everyone. Both power and culture are extremely personal and context-based, so I am content with my choice of methodology. I wanted to get some individual thoughts, feelings and perceptions about power and culture in teacher-student relationships and I did that. The small sample size means that the results are not representative or predictive, but that was not the goal.

Another potential limitation of the research was bias from the researcher. Inherent in qualitative methods is the possible complication that the researcher may influence the results. I chose this subject because I have had personal experience with the phenomena studied; therefore it is possible that past occurrences and my preconceptions

could have colored the data. As a Finnish-American I have my own perceptions about how the communication between teachers and students, especially with relation to power, is influenced by culture. I have personally experienced some expectancy violations and have attached both negative and positive valence to those violations. During the research process I made a strong attempt to be as objective as possible while collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data. I do not believe that I had undue influence upon the results, but I think that it would be naïve to believe that my personal experiences did not play some role.

In addition, having friends and acquaintances as respondents may have affected the data. It was thought that an easy and preexisting rapport between me and the respondents was aid the collection of data. Some of them did, however, seemed to experience some stress because they wanted to give me “good answers.” This may have resulted in some hyperbolic statements or other changes to their depiction of actual experiences. Another possible limitation of the data from the respondents was that they have spent differing amounts of time in Finland. Some have been here for many years while others had only spent eight months in Finland.

The theories that were used in interpreting the data may have some limitations as well. I believe that some of the theories explaining the phenomenon of power are limited, but a wider analysis of the previous research has made me satisfied in my own conceptualization of power. Also, as was mentioned, Hofstede, although his research is used quite widely, has received a certain amount of criticism. In addition, the Expectancy Violations Theory by Burgoon has had some mixed results in empirical studies. It has, apparently, “never worked quite as well in practice as its theoretical blueprint says it should” (Griffin 2000: 87). The

last possible limitation coming from the background material is the fact that most of the studies are done by American researchers with American subjects. They can still contribute a lot to the study, but there may be an American bias to the previous literature. It is important to realize that concepts and ideas from previous theories may influence the interpretation of data more than is desired.

8.3 Recommendations for Further Research

The idea of teacher-student relationships in an intercultural context is one that will become increasingly important in the future. The subject of this study may be carried further by larger surveys and interviews which could give a more comprehensive explanation of the phenomena. In addition, much of the background material discussed the implications of power and culture on cognitive learning and teaching styles. Many of those studies were confined to the United States and younger age groups. As universities, including the University of Jyväskylä, are becoming increasingly international it may be beneficial to see if and how culture and power may impact the perceived efficacy of specific teaching methods.

9 CONCLUSION

The objective of my study was to generate data that would help to explain how international students feel about power in their communication with Finnish professors and whether their feelings are related to culture. The research data was generated from interviews with students from ten different countries and it sought to generate some in-depth material that would be able to illuminate the topic at hand.

The aim of the research was to obtain descriptions of the personal experiences of the international students and their communication with Finnish professors. The research data from the interviews consisted of the perceptions, thoughts and feelings related to these experiences. With this information, I intended to gain an understanding of how culture influenced their teacher-student communication by interpreting how power worked in their interactions.

The data yielded a large amount of valuable information regarding the respondents' perceptions of teacher-student relationships in Finland. The can be basically split into three areas: what the respondents expected about power, what they experienced and how they felt about it. The respondents often expected power to be a more tangible and definite phenomenon, but they experience a surprising amount of informality in many of their interactions with Finnish professors. These surprises and violations of their expectancies led to both positive and negative evaluations, and overall the differences were attributed to culture.

The respondent first talked about their expectations of teacher communication and the power of teachers. They indicated that teachers had a lot of power that came from different sources. These sources were shown to be different bases of power as described by previous literature. What these bases meant were that teachers had power because of their ability to reward or punish students with grades and evaluation and with their right to utilize this power. In addition, this power was accepted by many of the respondents because of their cultural norms. The ideas of Hofstede's (2002) low and high power distance cultures were discussed and was the egalitarianism / hierarchy dichotomy of Schwartz (1999). It was explained that the inequality of power in any society will be accepted or unaccepted depending upon the values in that society. Many of the respondents came from societies where an unequal distribution of power is expected, but they all indicated that Finland is a country in which equality is an important value.

The respondents gave a description of their experiences in Finland. The vast majority of their responses dealt with issues related to the unexpected amount of informality shown by Finnish teachers. Even respondents who came from countries who expected informality were shocked by their interactions with Finnish professors. The informality of the professors was perceived due to their preference for informal forms of address and their desire to be friendly with the students. These informal interactions with students led to the perception that they have no authority. This, in turn caused problems with the respondents. They perceived the apparent lack of authority as a violation of how teachers should behave and it led to them being disappointed, frustrating and experiencing a lack of motivation. In general they expected and wanted to be pushed to excel by their professors, but their professors did not believe in pushing them too much. The professors were seen as not

using as much power as they should.

On the other hand, the professors were also judged positively by their relatively low power distance. Many of the students felt more comfortable and relaxed in the Finnish system. They felt that they liked this system better and they responded that their values and expectations of teachers had changed.

Overall, the conclusion of this study is that culture does matter in the power relationships in teacher-student interaction. Different expectancies were shown to arise from cultural norms of the international students and their Finnish professors. These differences did lead to some problems, but they were not seen as acts of malicious intent, they were just cultural differences. Culture truly does matter with respect to the perception of power and its presence in teacher-student relationships.

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