A tale of two cities: Differences in pedagogic behaviours between Chinese and Non-Chinese teachers in and outside English and science (English-medium) classrooms in and IB World School in mainland China

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Executive Summary

Motivation of the Study

The growth of IB world schools in mainland China is rapidly increasing. According to the latest statistics from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), China has currently 47 out of 211 schools in over 27 countries running Diploma Programmes (DP) in Asia-Pacific area (IBO 2010). Furthermore, the number of candidate schools is rising rapidly in China. This has resulted in large numbers of non-Chinese teachers, especially English native speakers - a conservative estimate in 2006 was one hundred thousand (Li 2006), have been appointed to different levels of schooling in China.

According to previous research (e.g. Bond 1991, Ambler and Witzel 2000, Selmar 2004), for most non-Chinese expatriates working in China, although the Great Wall is no longer the physical symbol of resistance to foreign penetrations into the Middle Kingdom, the 'invisible Great Wall', that is, the gulf between cultures of the East and West remains. Tang and Ward (2003) further argue that the PRC is still perceived as so socioculturally complex as to resist many non-Chinese efforts to penetrate it. Ambler and Witzel (2000) also state that the Chinese remain mysterious and, in many respects, confusing to non-Chinese expatriates, so it is natural for them to feel uncertain about Chinese culture.

Had been working in the school for 5 years before starting my MA and PhD studies in the UK , I came back to the school in July 2009. I therefore have spent abundant time observing, at first hand, the implementation of the IB in this large private school. Both Chinese teachers and non-Chinese education expatriates were involved. This was particularly interesting because it brought together teachers from around the globe: American, British, German, Dutch, Australian, Canadian and Chinese. Tensions emerged – the 'invisible Great Wall'. In my non-Chinese colleagues' eyes, implementing the Diploma Programme (DP), an international curriculum in China, in some ways differs from or contrasts with some ways from the same programme in the West. My Chinese colleagues consider the differences as the natural order of events.

As the misunderstandings, the provocations, the tensions and related issues began to accumulate, I felt impelled to investigate, firstly, whether there are differences in pedagogic behaviours between Chinese and non-Chinese teachers within an IB world school community. If so, it is important and necessary to uncover what factors cause the differences in order to minimize any negative effects.

Purposes and Research Questions of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the pedagogic behaviours between non-Chinese teachers and their Chinese counterparts in and outside the classroom in an IB context in mainland China. It aims to provide an in-depth and systematic interpretation of the reasons that might lead to any differences. The aim is to contribute to a better understanding of co-constructed pedagogy, in particular:

- To find out, describe, illuminate, explain and analyze any differences in pedagogic behaviours between Chinese and non-Chinese teachers in an IB context in mainland China.

- To explore the role played by culture in any differences between the Chinese and non-Chinese teachers' pedagogic behaviours.
- To investigate students' perspectives on any pedagogic behaviour differences between the Chinese and non-Chinese teachers.
- To consider possible suggestions and measures to overcome the potential problems arising from any differences in pedagogic behaviours.

The present study consequently aims to answer the following two questions:
1. a) Are there any differences in pedagogic behaviours between Chinese teachers and non-Chinese teachers in and outside the English language and Science (English-medium) classrooms within an IB setting?
   b) If so, what are the differences?
   c) What role does culture play in any differences?
   d) What issues might arise from differences in pedagogic behaviours?

2. What are students' perspectives on any pedagogic behaviour differences in the IB context in the case study school?

The research hypotheses are as follows:
1. There will be some differences between the pedagogic behaviours of Chinese and non-Chinese teachers in and outside the English and Science (English-medium) classrooms within the school community in an IB context.
2. The differences will be partly attributable to cultural influences.

Methodology and Methods
The conceptual framework of my research is based on George Z. F. Bereday's (1964) cross-disciplinary approach. Bereday's approach involved first, the systematic collection of pedagogical information in one country, then analysis the data in terms of the political, cultural, and other backgrounds, then a review of another system to construct a comparative framework before finally carrying out the comparison (Bereday 1964). To sum up, there are four phases of my windmill model adapted from Bereday's, that is Description, Juxtaposition: Comparison and Interpretation
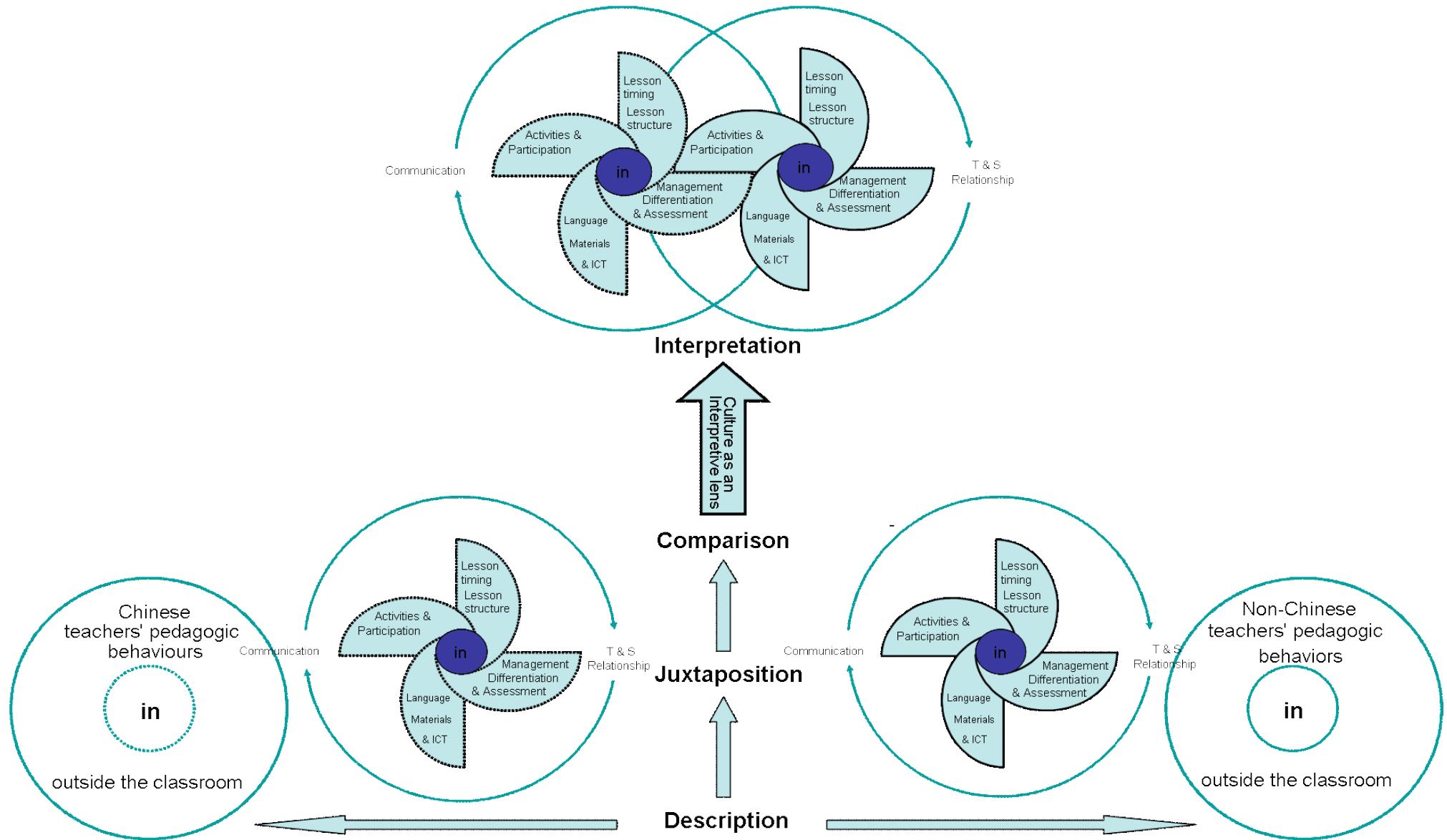
Context of the Case Study School

Figure 1 Windmill-Model in this Study

In general, this model illustrates a windmill moving in the wind. Each of the circles shown contains a small inner area (representing pedagogic behaviours in the classroom) and an outer area contains the classroom. The inner area can be understood as a core which embodies pedagogic behaviours in classroom transactions as the heart of pedagogy in school education. The dotted line around the core in the circle in the bottom left-area side of the diagram and the solid line around the inner area of the correspondent circle on the right, stand for the different beliefs in pedagogic behaviour between Chinese Teachers and non-Chinese teachers respectively. As previously mentioned, the Chinese definition of pedagogy extends its space from inside the classroom to the outside, compared with the non-Chinese definitions. Hence, for Chinese teachers, although they believe in the core role playing by the pedagogic behaviours in classroom, they further emphasize the harmony, integration and unity between pedagogic behaviours inside and outside the classroom. For non-Chinese teachers, these two parts are two independent entities.

Derived from the inner area, the four sails of the windmill express four important elements of classroom pedagogic behaviours, symbolising the independent and integrated coexistence of these elements as well. The windmill further illustrates the dynamism of pedagogic behaviours in classroom.

Broken into two parts, the big outer circle focuses on two kinds of pedagogic behaviours outside the classroom, namely, communication and teacher-student-relationships. Symbolised as the wind, the broken circle with the windmill developed from the inner circle interprets the interaction that exists between pedagogic behaviours in the classroom and communication and teacher-student-relationships outside the classroom in a school context.

The study deals with two groups of teachers, one of which (the CTs) is culturally relatively homogenous. The CTs hold at least a bachelors degree and have more than five years' experience of teaching the Chinese national curriculum; they are also considered effective teachers in Chinese, having won prizes in teaching competitions at different levels and having a high status, such as Senior Teacher, within the school. They are relatively proficient in English but have little experience of teaching subjects through the medium of English and the IB Diploma programme is relatively new to them. The other much more loosely constituted group has been referred to as *Non-Chinese Teachers(NCTS)*.

Three pairs of CT and NCT who taught the same subject and the same level groups were selected for special study. Three students (henceforth S1-3) who had elected to do all three subjects taught by these teachers (English B, Biology and Chemistry) contributed to the narrative inquiry thread of the research and 20 students from the four classes (five students from each class) in Year 11 to the three focus group interviews.

Main Findings

Both hypotheses were confirmed. Teachers in the school were guided by the same syllabus, and taught the same topics to the same year and age group students at the same academic level. Nevertheless, differences in pedagogic behaviours emerged in relation to: lesson timing, lesson structure, activities, students' participation, management, differentiation, assessment, language, the use of material and ICT in the classrooms. Moreover, differences in pedagogic behaviours were observed outside the classroom in terms of communication and Teacher-Student-Relationships. The following key differences were noticed:

Lesson Timing: Extending Time vs. Being on or Shortening Time
- CTs' lessons were generally longer than NCTs' as they entered classroom ahead of time and extended lessons as well.
- Although CTs extended the lessons, there was a predicable rhythm to their lessons. In contrast, NCTs' lessons varied much more widely.

Lesson Structure: Symphony vs. Jazz
Taking all these lessons together, two metaphors may convey the differences between CTs and NCTs' lessons. CTs' lessons can be likened to a symphony orchestral concert conducted by a teacher; regardless of the conductors' styles, the composers and orchestras, the form and the development of the sonata form is fixed .

If CTs' lessons are a symphony orchestral concert conducted by a teacher, the lesson structure is the sonata form for this is used in most first movements of symphonies. From the figure above, the sonata form - the exposition, development and recapitulation with coda seem to parallel the structure in CTs' lessons. The following figure illustrates the comparison between sonata structure and CTs' lesson.

Figure.2 Comparison between Sonata Form and Structure of CTs' Lessons

In terms of NCTs' lesson a different metaphor comes to mind. NCTs' lessons might be better compared to jazz. Most jazz is based on a form that is actually quite similar to the sonata allegro: an optional introduction, the exposition or theme (possibly repeated), the development section, and the recapitulation, possibly followed by a coda (Sabatella 1995). In jazz terms, these sections of a piece would be called the intro, the head, the solo section, the head out, and possibly a coda or tag ending. The intro establishes the mood; the head is the main melody; the solo section is where the soloists improvise on the melody and/or chord progression of the tune; the head out is a restatement of the theme; and the coda or tag is an ending. The following diagram illustrates the comparison between jazz and the structure of NCTs' lessons.
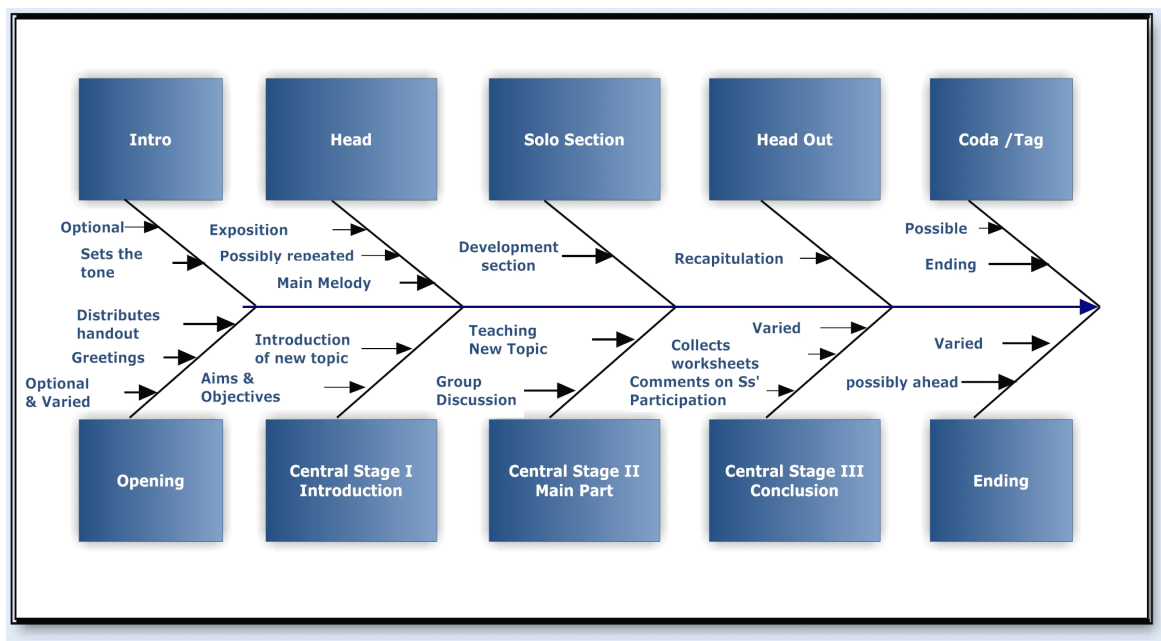
Figure.3 Comparison between Jazz and Structure of NCTs' Lessons

However, jazz, in fact, is not - and never has been - an entirely composed, predetermined music, nor is it an entirely extemporised one (Encyclopædia Britannica 2010). Improvisation is clearly the most important character of jazz, although it has its own structure (Sabatella 1995), just as the development is often considered the most important part of the classical sonata. According to Sabatella, while classic music may strive to conform the musical tones to orchestral sonorities, jazz thrives on instrumental diversities, the player's individual sound becoming the desired proficiency. This seems to resonate in the NCTs' lessons.   There were fewer formulas to follow. The lesson structure was more flexible in order to fit the content or topic of lesson better.   The structure is not the result of choosing a tune, but an ideal that is created first in the mind.

Improvisation in jazz potentially involves audiences in a dynamic atmosphere. The dynamic in NCTs' lessons was 'newness' as every lesson's structure might be different; therefore, it lessened possible tedium caused by the same fixed structure.

Furthermore, jazz draws the onlooker to a deeper league, that of a partnership so to speak. In NCTs' lessons, students were always divided into groups, and then group discussion became the main activity.

In addition, at the early stage of jazz history, there was a slogan: just for fun.   In NCTs' lessons, the climate seemed more relaxed and students felt more conformable, especially in NCT1's English B lessons.

I must point out that there is no intention to judge any groups of the CTs and NCTs by using these two metaphors. I believe that most genres of music including both symphony and jazz involve the listener in different experiences of work as it was scored. This is to say both genres attract different audiences.

Activity and Students' Participation: Inspiration vs. Solution

- In CTs' lessons, the 'centre of gravity' was the class, while in NCTs' lessons, it was the group.
- In NCTs' lessons, students were requested to look, listen and answer questions; they talked with each other rather than to the class as a whole; they worked from group-based worksheets.
- CTs asked more display questions, while NCTs asked more referential questions
- Students seemed more active in CTs' lessons, and more reticent and passive in NCTs' lessons. This is firstly due to the difference in types of questions, the language used and activity design between CTs and NCTs. Secondly, students lacked for required language proficiency and their learning experience.

Classroom Management: Teacher-Control vs. Student-Self-Control

- In CTs' lessons, students were seated in rows, while NCTs preferred to divide students into groups.
- CTs treated students as 'children' with a need to control as much as possible. NCTs considered students old enough to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviours.
- In NCTs' lessons, rules were made to be kept, whereas in CTs' lessons, it seemed that rules were made to be broken sometimes.

Differentiation: Able Students vs. Less Able Students

- In lessons, CTs paid planned unequal attention to the 'less able' students, while NCTs paid planned equal attention. The former focused on individual students, whereas the latter spent equal time with each group.
- CTs spend more time after class on the 'able' or 'less able' students by giving them extra lessons or arranging extra work or exercises. NCTs preferred to assign extra work to 'able' students in lessons.
- CTs differentiated students according to the family backgrounds and exam grades.
- CTs preferred or perhaps were more indulgent towards more able students, whilst NCTs preferred those students with good behaviour.

Assessment

- CTs set more tests and exams than NCTs. CTs valued greatly students' formal exam

results, while NCTs believed that attendance, homework and participation in class were as important as the exam results.

- NCTs provided positive feedback orally while CTs preferred positive written comments.
- CTs used finite marks whilst NCTs made open-ended comments. NCTs paid more attention to students' creativity.

Language: Chinese vs. English

- CTs, especially Chinese Science teachers used the Chinese mainly in their lessons largely due to limitations in their English proficiency, while NCTs used English mixing several Chinese words.
- CTs' beliefs and teaching goals played a key role in their choice of using Chinese chiefly. CTs believed that L1 use might contribute to the comprehension of input under certain circumstances. They were also concerned about the negative effects of using a weaker language as a medium of learning on academic achievement.

Material: Sources, Types and Cultural Content

- Sources: CTs essentially use course companions and old exam papers, whilst NCTs explored the library. Both of them used internet as a supplementary source.
- Types: CTs offered more types including bilingual, digital and support material, while NCTs prepared more paper-based material.
- Cultural content: CTs preferred more Chinese cultural information, whereas NCTs focused on Anglophone cultural information.

ICT

CTs considered ICT as Zeus' thunderbolt which is powerful, and overused it sometimes, whilst NCTs were more conservative and thought of it as a Trojan horse to a certain extent.

- Anxiety about limited English proficiency was the biggest influence on CTs' sustainable development of use of ICT. Beliefs in the power of ICT and resulting in training and support from the school influenced CTs' use of ICT positively.

- Concern about constraints on the use of ICT and lack of training and support were the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contributed to NCTs' reluctance to use ICT.

Language Used in Communication

Three main languages were used in daily communication. Students primarily used Cantonese after class, while CTs mainly spoke Mandarin.   CTs and students only spoke English when they had to communicate with NCTs who only used English in and outside the classrooms.

Communication Styles: Indirect vs. Direct
- Whereas NCTs expected a direct answer to a direct question, CTs and students rarely answered using *yes* or *no*
- Whereas NCTs put their opinion directly, CTs communicated negatives indirectly and only expressed disagreement or discontent directly among close friends.
- Whereas NCTs tried to be brief, orderly and keep to the point, CTs aimed to be polite, keep the conversation smooth and avoided embarrassing a person in public, except those who are much younger and inferior.

Teachers' Role: A Teacher and A Father
- Believing the saying 'a teacher a day, a father for life', CTs took their role as a stern father seriously, having the moral responsibility to guide students on the right path. NCTs did not mix the role of a teacher with the role of a father.
- CTs were stricter and used harsh measures to control students' behaviours.
- CTs would more readily use social pressure or group disapproval. NCTs would avoid shaming students in front of others, preferring to deal with problems on a more individual basis.
- Closely associated with this strictness in discipline was CTs' infrequent use of praise and encouragement, which stands in sharp contrast to NCTs.

Teachers' Time: 'Part-Time' vs. 'Full-Time'
- After class, CTs devoted much more time to students than NCTs did.
- CTs blurred or extended their C-time to S-time and O-time, hence, CTs worked more hours than NCTs.

Teacher-student relationships: Simple vs. complicated
- NCTs did not spend time with students after class and respected self-esteem. Therefore, the TSR was seemingly simpler and easier.
- The relationship between CTs and students was complex due to teachers' strictness and total devotion to students at the same time.

The data suggest that culture played a fundamental role. CTs' pedagogic behaviours in and outside the classrooms could be ascribed to the influences of school management and teaching beliefs rooted in Chinese culture. For example, the core value of collectivism in school management stems from China's long history of belonging within the collectivist camp (Hall 1976). What is more, the influence of an examination-oriented approach on teaching beliefs reflects the influence of a millennia-long history of Chinese competitive, imperial civil service entrance examinations. The data also suggest that Confucianism, which has moulded

Chinese culture (Fang 1998), still has a strong impact on the pedagogy adopted by CTs as they frequently cited Confucius and consider Confucius' sayings as the Golden Rules. The following figure demonstrates CTs' key teaching beliefs rooted in Chinese culture:

Chinese Teachers' Teaching Beliefs

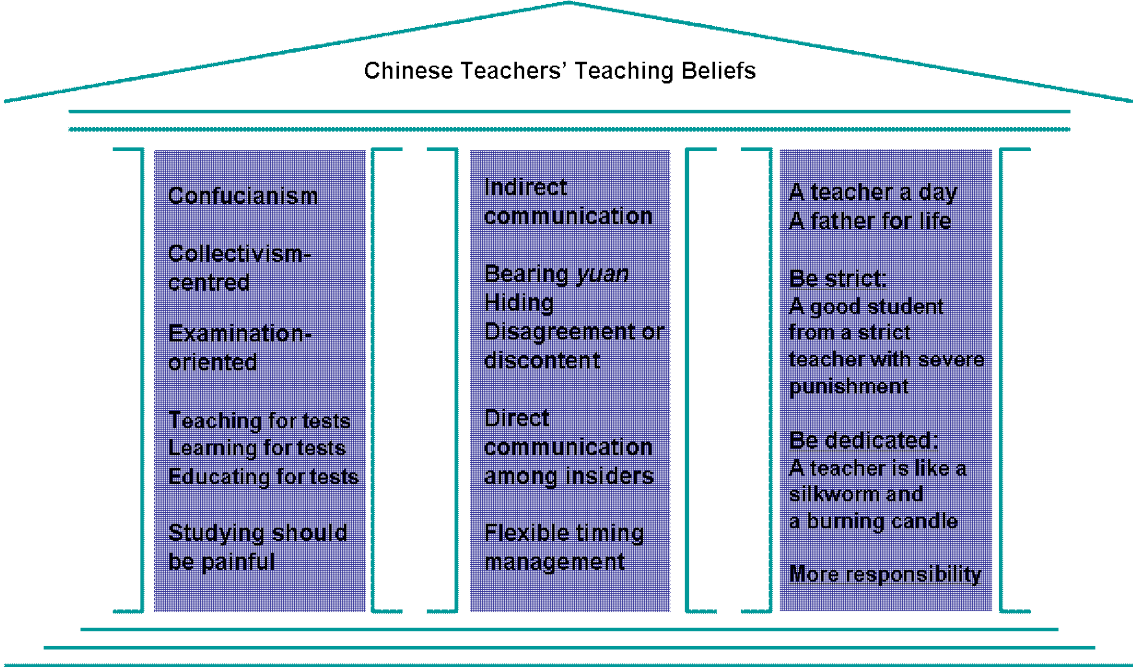| Confucianism	Indirect communication	A teacher a day A father for life
Collectivism-centred	Bearing *yuan* Hiding Disagreement or discontent	Be strict: A good student from a strict teacher with severe punishment
Examination-oriented		
Teaching for tests Learning for tests Educating for tests	Direct communication among insiders	Be dedicated: A teacher is like a silkworm and a burning candle
Studying should be painful	Flexible timing management	More responsibility

Figure 4 CTs' Teaching Beliefs

These beliefs can be likened to pillars which support the edifice of CTs' pedagogic behaviours in the school community.

Cultural conflicts are also manifested in intercultural communication and TSR between NCTs and CTs and students. The main issue regarding these conflicts was the lack of knowledge of each other's culture with respect to communication and the role of a teacher, with particular reference to misunderstandings and poor communication between NCTs and CTs on the one hand and their students on the other hand. This also creates tension in the working relationship between them, thus affecting teamwork and ultimately the implementation of the IB programme.

The main findings in relation to students' perspectives on pedagogic behaviour differences in the school suggest that firstly, Chinese students believed that there were differences in CTs and NCTs' pedagogic behaviours in and outside the classroom. Secondly, in their perspective, the CTs and NCTs could be compared to concave/lens and convex mirror/lens respectively. Finally, although students generally welcomed the differences, they expected an international standard of the IB approach – unity in diversity.

Reflection on International Education

In my understanding, an international education can probably be compared to a rainbow.

- In a rainbow seven colours keep their own identities and are equally important as without any one it cannot be a rainbow any more. An international education should be colourful and not have just one single colour, which means it should encourage diversity and flexibility. It should expose students and embrace the different cultures from all countries and their cultures in seven continents; in an even and balanced way. It is a unity in diversity.

- A rainbow is caused by the refraction and internal reflection of light rays that enter the raindrop. Similarly, international education refracts and reflects international-mindedness. It educates students to be critical and reflective learners.

- The arc shape of a rainbow reflects the role of international education - a bridge for understanding, a bridge that crosses the world and a bridge linking past, present and future.

- To experience international education can be a painful process, one of tears as well as joy, just as a rainbow emerges from rain and sun.

From Duality to Unity

If international education is about a unity in diversity, then uniting different pedagogic behaviours and whilst encouraging the retention of identities is fundamental.   Is it possible for there to be an overriding unity if pedagogic behaviours differ? Yes.

If we take a look at the windmill model applied in this study, we find that each sail of the windmill representing one element of pedagogy behaviour can be regarded as a separate semicircle (the white and black to the left of figure 4). If both of these two groups of teachers discard prejudices and engage in a face to face discussion with respect, and then draw on the strong points of the other side to offset their own weakness, those two seemingly contrasting semicircles (pedagogic behaviours) would could come together to make the image of Yin-Yang (阴阳) with an outer circle representing 'everything'(universe), a 'cosmic symbol of primordial unity and harmony' (Fang 1999: 31). In the image showing Yin-Yang as a circle, the white part represents Yang and the black part represents Yin. The two parts pass through each other on a line because Yin and Yang are never separated. There is a small black sphere in the white part and a white one in the black part. The following figure illustrates the above-mentioned process.
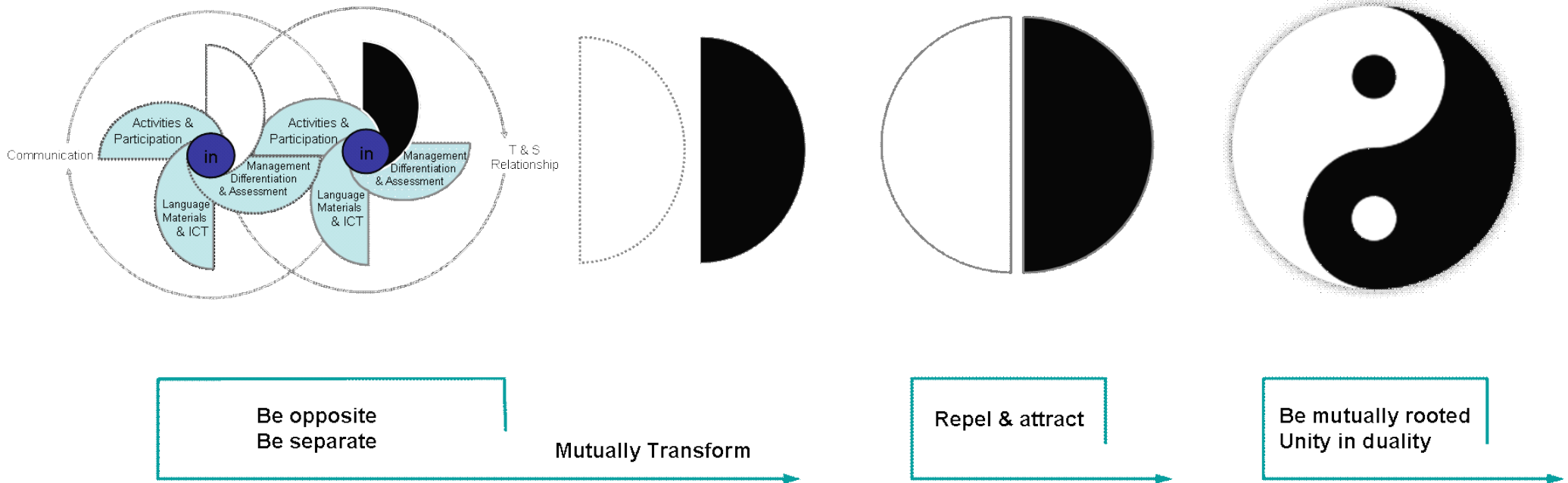
Journey of Harmony

Figure 4 Journey of Harmony: from Windmill to Yinyang

In Chinese philosophy, Yin-Yang (阴阳) are generalized descriptions of the antitheses or mutual correlations in human perceptions of phenomena in the natural world, combining to create a unity of opposites in the theory of the Tai chi (Tang and Ward 2003). The concept of Yin-Yang (or earth and heaven) describes two opposing and, at the same time, complementary (completing) aspects of any one phenomenon (object or process) or comparison of any two phenomena (Jin 1999).

This view is also echoed in non-Chinese philosophy; for instance, in the philosophy of Heraclitus, the concept of 'unity in duality' as underlying the nature of the Cosmos is fundamental. Similarly, Indian philosophy has a distinct dualistic strand, known as Samkhya. In this theory, Yin corresponds to 'Prakrti' and Yang to 'Purusha' (Jin 1999).

In a corresponding manner, although CTs and NCTs' pedagogic behaviours are different or even contrast in some way, such as communication style, they could still avoid the tension or conflict described in this study and achieve unity in duality, if only they can discern, face, respect and   learn from their differences   The Yin and the Yang aspect of any one phenomenon will, when put together, form the entire phenomenon. Yin-Yang is a philosophy of strict duality. This is the reason the Chinese phrase word has no 'and' between Yin and Yang - the term always expresses the two making up the one.   The 'one' in this study can be regarded as IB pedagogic behaviours or approach.

It was in this spirit that Abdu'l-Baha (1921: 20), the founder of the Bahá'í Faith (an independent religion beginning in 1844), asserted long ago that 'the East and the West must unite to provide each other what is lacking'. For surely the ultimate value in this exploration across cultures is to discern how 'Within the four seas, all men are brothers (四海之内皆兄弟) ', as Confucius says in *the Analects.* That is to say, from a unity in duality we can finally have a unity in diversity.

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