

Principles of Language Learning and Teaching

H.D. Brown

Chapter 7: Sociocultural Factors

Second Culture Acquisition

- On page 182, Brown states that ... *“Many students in foreign language classrooms learn the language with little or no sense of the depth of cultural norms and patterns of the people who speak the language. Another perspective was the notion that a foreign language curriculum could present culture as ‘a list of facts to be cognitively consumed’ by the student, devoid of any significant interaction with the culture.”*

Please give an example or two of challenges that you have met in the English language classroom due to a lack of understanding of the norms/patterns of your English language instructors?

Social Distance

- Brown explains on page 185 that ... *“Social distance refers to the cognitive and affective proximity of two cultures that come into contact within an individual.”* Of course the concept is *“... used in a metaphorical sense to depict dissimilarity between two cultures.”*

Let's regard the U.S. as the TL group and Korean immigrants as the L2 group, if you will. With respect to Schumann's description of social distance as consisting of the following parameters ([1] Dominance, [2] Integration, [3] Cohesiveness, [4] Congruence, [5] Permanence); how would you define the relationships in the respective categories?

[1] Dominance

[2] Integration

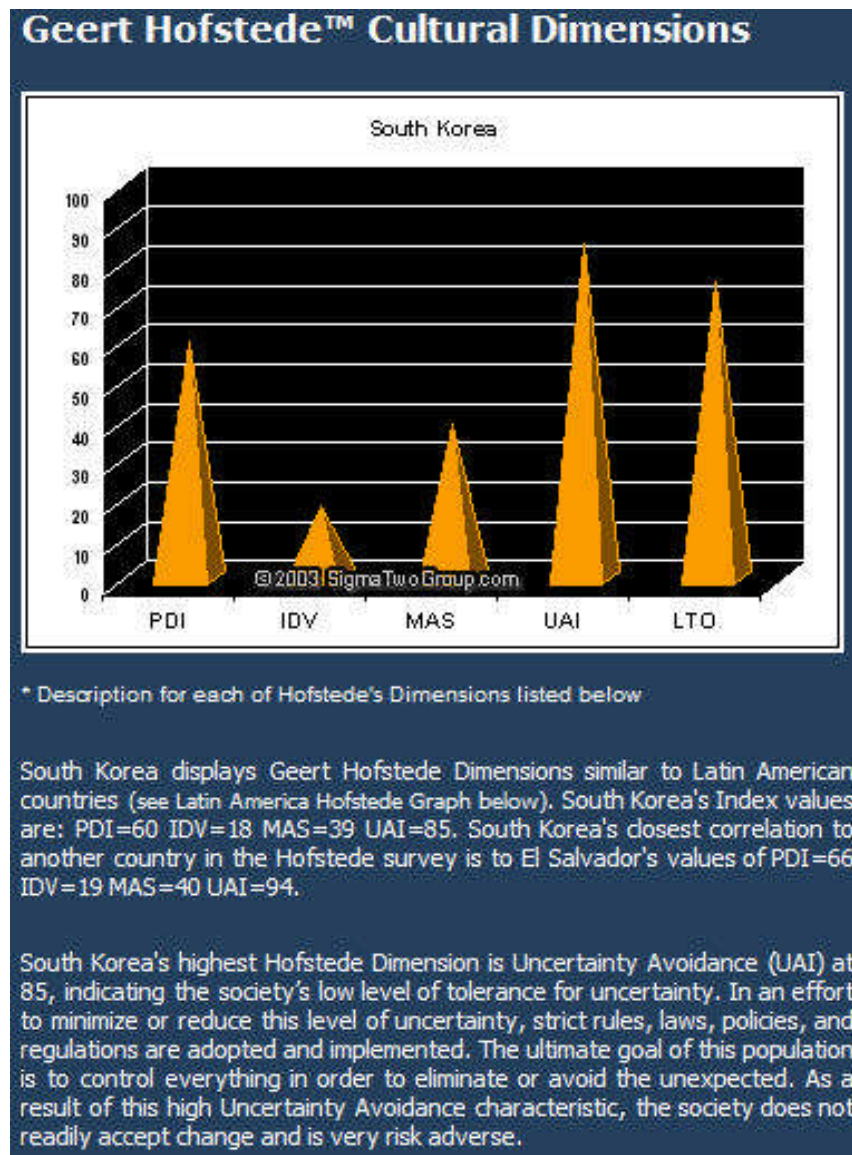
[3] Cohesiveness

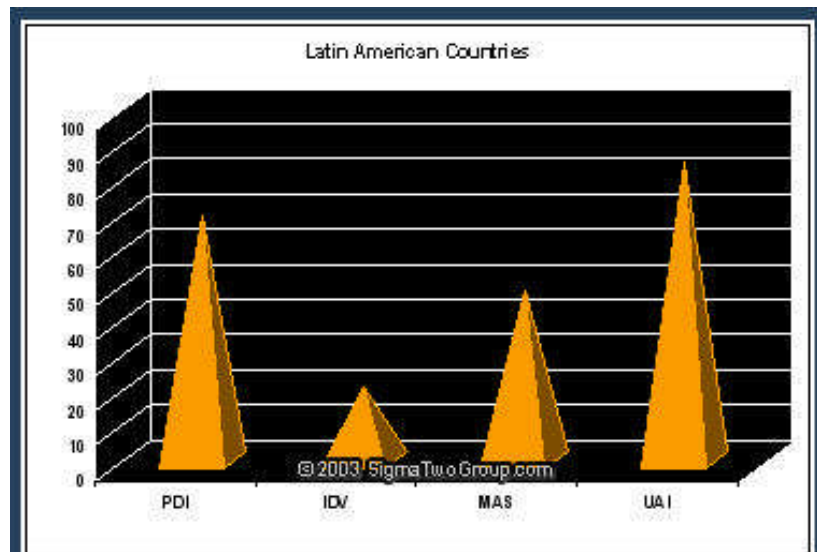
[4] Congruence

[5] Permanence

Culture in the Classroom

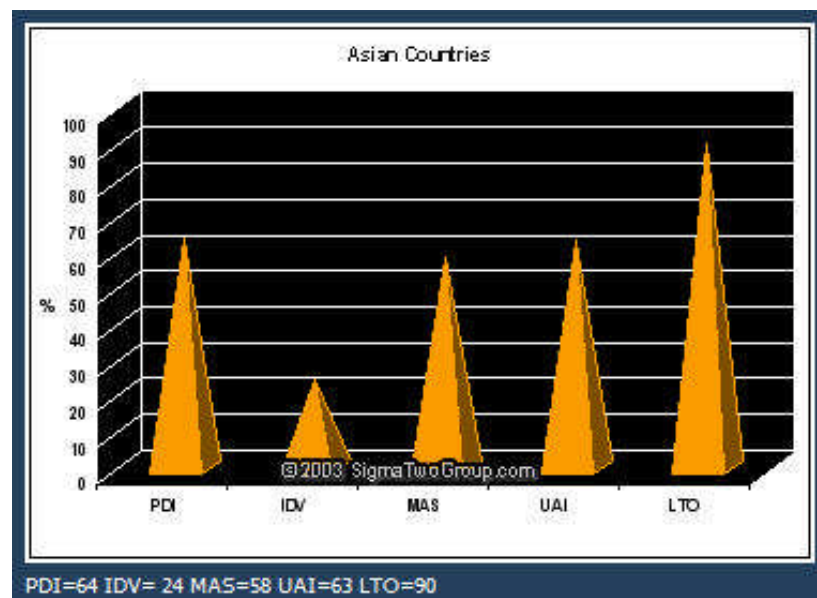
The following information was attained from www.geert-hofstede.com/. After reviewing the chart as it relates to South Korea, speculate how the categories would be different when measured for Canada. (Draw the values for Canada on the chart for Korea, as you would perceive them to be, relative to those of Korea.)





PDI=70 IDV=28 MAS=41 UAI=85

South Korea has a low Individualism (IDV) rank of 18. The score on this Dimension indicates the society is Collectivist as compared to Individualist. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.



PDI=64 IDV= 24 MAS=58 UAI=63 LTO=90

Power Distance Index (PDI) that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society and anybody with some international experience will be aware that 'all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others'.

Individualism (IDV) on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The word 'collectivism' in this sense has no political meaning; it refers to the group, not to the state. Again, the issue addressed by this dimension is an extremely fundamental one, regarding all societies in the world.

Masculinity (MAS) versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found. The IBM studies revealed that (a) women's values differ less among societies than men's values; (b) men's values from one country to another contain a dimension from very assertive and competitive and maximally different from women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women's values on the other. The assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine'. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'. People in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures are more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express emotions.

Long-Term Orientation (LTO) versus short-term orientation: this fifth dimension was found in a study among students in 23 countries around the world, using a questionnaire designed by Chinese scholars. It can be said to deal with Virtue regardless of Truth. Values associated with Long Term Orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with Short Term Orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's 'face'. Both the positively and the negatively rated values of this dimension are found in the teachings of Confucius, the most influential Chinese philosopher who lived around 500 B.C.; however, the dimension also applies to countries without a Confucian heritage.

Linguistic Imperialism and Language Rights

Please visit the following site (www.hiddenfromhistory.org/) to view the most abominable violation of human rights perpetrated upon Canada's indigenous tribes by none other than the Catholic, the Anglican, and the United churches of Canada. In regards to the Catholic church, these crimes were carried out with the full knowledge of the Vatican, and in all cases, with full complicity of the respective provincial governments and that of the federal government and the Department of Indian Affairs.

America's legacy as it relates to its indigenous population is horrific and places that of Canada in its shadow. Also, Australia has a shameful history vis a vis its policies towards its aborigines, and in each and every case, without exception, language rights of the various indigenous groups were violated in order to either fully assimilate the respective groups into the dominant culture, or simply to destroy them.

To this day, Canada is still witness to violation of language rights in the province of Quebec. If you were to immigrate to the province of Quebec and begin raising a family, you would have no choice as where to educate your school-age children. The Quebec provincial government has a mandate to force all immigrants into French speaking only language schools, and since the French language school curriculum has at its foundation, Catholicism, you would be bound to send your children to French only classes with compulsory Catholic doctrine. Alternatively, if you were to choose any other Canadian province with a major metropolitan center as your home, you could choose a school that has a French immersion program and one that does not violate your rights to religious freedom.

As Brown so succinctly states on page 195, "*One of the most worthy causes we can espouse is the preservation of diversity among human beings.*"

Language Policy

In your opinion, (1) should Korea designate English as a second official language, and (2) should English be taught in English only, as proposed by the government of Lee Myeong Baek?

1.

2.
