CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ESL TEACHERS

NURHEZRIN BINTI ANUAR

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR

2017

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ESL TEACHERS

NURHEZRIN BINTI ANUAR

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR

2017

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: **Nurhezrin Anuar**

Matric No: **TGB 120006**

Name of Degree: **Master of English as a Second Language**

Title of Dissertation ("this Work"):

Cultural Differences in Communication between Native and Non-Native ESL Teachers

Field of Study: **Discourse Analysis**

 I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

(1) I am the sole author/writer of this Work;
(2) This Work is original;
(3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any excerpt or extract from, or reference to or reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the Work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this Work;
(4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor do I ought reasonably to know that the making of this work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;
(5) I hereby assign all and every right in the copyright to this Work to the University of Malaya ("UM"), who henceforth shall be owner of the copyright in this Work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained;
(6) I am fully aware that if in the course of making this Work I have infringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise, I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

    Candidate's Signature   Date:

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

    Witness's Signature   Date:

Name:

Designation:

ABSTRACT

Misunderstandings in intercultural communication may occur because of many factors, one of which can be attributed to differences in cultural communication style and values. Focusing on the narrations of five native and five non-native English teachers, this study aims to understand if misunderstandings occur while they are working in a school setting. A qualitative research in design, this study uses discourse analysis as a framework to analyse data. Specifically, Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimension, Hall's (1983) High/Low Context Cultures and Ting-Toomey's (1999) Intercultural Conflict Management Skills were combined as a model to analyse data. Findings suggest that the participants perceived to experience misunderstandings while working together with majority of these misunderstandings being due to a difference in cultural variations in communication styles and values. The findings of this study would benefit researchers, educators, practitioners as well as travellers and in particular those who specialises in intercultural communications. Nonetheless, due to the limitation of the participants involved and the restricted school setting, findings cannot be generalised.

Keywords: *Perceptions*, *Misunderstanding*, *Intercultural Communication*, *Native Speakers, Non-Native Speakers*

ABSTRAK

Salah faham dalam komunikasi boleh berlaku disebabkan oleh banyak faktor, salah satunya oleh perbezaan nilai dan ciri komunikasi antara budaya. Melalui penumpuan pada penceritaan lima orang guru penutur jati dan lima orang guru bukan penutur jati Bahasa Inggeris, kajian ini bertujuan untuk memahami sama ada salah faham berlaku ketika mereka bertugas di dalam konteks sekolah. Kajian ini bersifat kualitatif, menggunakan analisis wacana sebagai rangka dalam menganalisis data. Dimensi Kebudayaan oleh Hofstede (1984), Konteks Budaya yang Tinggi/Rendah oleh Hall (1983) dan Kemahiran Pengurusan Konflik Antara Budaya oleh Ting-Toomey (1999) telah digabungkan dalam satu model untuk menganalisis data secara terperinci. Penemuan kajian mencadangkan bahawa sesetengah peserta kajian ini mengamati bahawa mereka mengalami salah faham semasa bertugas, dengan kebanyakan salah faham adalah disebabkan oleh perbezaan ciri-ciri komunikasi dan nilai antara budaya. Penemuan dari kajian ini bermanfaat kepada para penyelidik, pendidik dan juga pengembara, terutamanya dalam bidang komunikasi antara budaya. Namun begitu, penemuan tidak boleh diguna pakai dalam konteks umum oleh kerana jumlah peserta kajian yang kecil dan terhad dalam persekitaran persekolahan.

Kata kunci: *Persepsi, Salah Faham, Komunikasi Antara Budaya, Penutur Jati, Bukan Penutur Jati*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Almighty God for giving the opportunity to complete my Masters in spite of many challenges that was placed along the way.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude towards my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Kuang Ching Hei, for her guidance and support throughout the completion of my dissertation. Thank you for your patience and being understanding in assisting me in my research. I could have not asked for a better supervisor.

I would like to express gratitude to my family who have been supportive with their words of encouragement and provided me strength in times of need. In addition, I would also like to thank my husband, Aiman the assistance and support provided. The past few years have not been easy with so many challenges; thank you for your words of encouragement and relentless support.

In addition, I would also like to express appreciation to my friends, for their assistance and encouragements throughout my Masters' journey. Without your assistance, this may not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

NS : Native Speakers

NNS : Non-Native Speakers

ESL : English as a Second Language

PPSMI : Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris

MBMMBI : Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Mengukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris

ETA : English Teaching Assistants

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at some of the English as a Second Language (ESL) issues relating to this study such as issues of English language in Malaysia and programmes involving native speakers of English teachers in Malaysia. In addition, this chapter discusses and provides information on the background of the study, statement of problem, significance of study, aims of study, research questions, subjects of the study and also its limitations.

1.1   English as a Second Language (ESL) Issues in Malaysia

Over the past few years, the deterioration of English language proficiency among Malaysians has raised a great concern. It was reported about 200 000 graduates are still unemployed due to their lack of proficiency (Shamsudin Bardan, as cited in Yuen Meikeng, 2015). A survey conducted by Jobstreet.com in 2013 reported that poor grasp in the English language has contributed 55% to unemployment among fresh graduates in Malaysia (Satesh Raj, 2014; The Malay Mail Online, 2013). Former prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad also added that many government servants, especially those who work with foreign affairs could not communicate effectively in English (Yiswaree Palansamy, 2015). Issues regarding low standards of English language proficiency among Malaysian graduates have become more pressing in a country that considers English as its second language. In order to overcome the matter, the Malaysian government has taken a lot of initiatives over the past few years to improve the quality of English language among Malaysians, beginning from primary and secondary education.

One of the many initiatives taken was in 2003 with the implementation of Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI) in primary and secondary schools nationwide (Saadiyah Darus, 2009). Students in primary and secondary schools were taught Science and Mathematics through the English language due to the reason that English is a lingua franca that is widely used for academic purposes, particularly in the field of Information, Communication and Technology (Asmah, 2012). As Malaysia aspires to become one of the advanced nations by 2020, there is a need for Malaysians to master in the fields of ICT, science and technology. Another underlying reason was by using English as a medium of instruction in these two subjects, students are able to master the language (Asmah, 2012). By learning two additional subjects in English, students have more contact hours learning English in schools.

However, the policy was abolished in 2009 with mixed opinions from the public and stakeholders. One of the reasons for abolishment was that it was found that only those who have good command in the language benefited and students who were not proficient were struggling to learn Science and Mathematics in English (Ministry of Education, Malaysia,2012). In addition, some stakeholders believed that the policy was a threat to the status of the national language, Bahasa Melayu and also other first languages such as Mandarin and Tamil. The abolishment was done by stages through a 'soft-landing' process. By 2010, all national and national-type schools would revert to using their mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Science and Mathematics classes (Asmah, 2012).

Although PPSMI was abolished, the Ministry of Education, Malaysia is still determined to strengthen the quality of English language among the students and also teachers. In 2011, a new policy, 'To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to Strengthen the English Language' or '*Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Mengukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris* '(MBMMBI) was introduced to ensure that Malaysians are able to use English fluently by the end of their secondary school (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). This policy is carried out in all national and national-type schools for primary and secondary schools through increment of teaching periods, new curriculum and enchantment of English learning materials in schools (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2012). In addition, Teacher Development Program (TDP) was also introduced for the purpose of improving in-service English language teacher's proficiency and pedagogical skills. According to Fatiha & Juliana (2014) some of the programs introduced to achieve the aims of the MBMMBI policy is through collaborative programs between the local Malaysian teachers with English native speaking teachers/mentors/assistants in primary, secondary and also in teacher trainee colleges (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2012).

In order to revitalise the standard of English language proficiency among Malaysians, the government feels that it is necessary to have English native speakers to come and assist the local teachers in improving the standard of English language. In addition, it is also seen as an incentive to increase language contact of the Malaysian teachers and students with the English native speakers. By doing so, not only the teachers and students get to use the language in an authentic context but are also able to exchange each other's cultural knowledge. Two known programs with English native speakers were introduced in 2011 in primary and secondary schools nationwide. For the primary school students,

The Native Speaker Programme or '*Program Penutur Jati*' was introduced in 2011 in a few selected schools in several states in Malaysia. The priority was given to primary schools in the rural areas where expatriates from English speaking countries such as America, Australia, Britain and Canada were placed to assist English language teachers in planning and organizing English language programs and English language teaching pedagogy (Mei & Siew, 2015). This is similar to another program with English native speakers that was already introduced in secondary schools since 2006 (Rozana, 2016). The Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETA) programme was introduced in rural secondary schools in a few selected states in Malaysia whereby college graduates and young professionals are placed to assist English language teachers with conducting workshops and programs for students. These teaching assistants who have taken the role as teaching assistants to the local teachers or mentors might or might not have background in education (EurekaFacts, 2014)

In addition to the two programs mentioned, English Native Speakers (NS) were also hired to mentor local English teachers through an English professional development programme called, '*Professional Development Programme for English Language Teachers*' (Pro-ELT). The aim of the Pro-ELT programme is to improve English language proficiency among Malaysian primary and secondary teachers and also their English language teaching and learning skills (Reza Eshteradi, 2014). By employing the English native speakers in these programs, it is hoped that not only the teachers improve on their English language teaching pedagogy but also in their mastery of the language.

More recently, Deputy Education Minister, P. Kamalanathan (as cited in The Star, 2015) has also said that the government considers recruiting trained English teachers from India in order to strengthen English language proficiency among the students. Although India is not an English native speaking country, English is the medium of communication used to unite its multiracial people with different dialects (Laleh, 2013). From all of the programs and initiatives mentioned, it is evident that the government wants Malaysian students to communicate with people from different countries and culture by using English as the medium of communication. The initiatives taken by the government show how important it is for Malaysians to master the English language by using the language to communicate with others.

Native speakers of English are employed as teachers or assistants in selected primary and secondary schools in a few states in Malaysia. One of their main responsibilities is to assist and mentor non-native English teachers in improving their English language pedagogy. With the presence of the English native speakers in schools, it is hoped that teachers and students will benefit from the programme as they have to use English language to interact with the native speakers. By having to use only English to communicate with the native speakers, it is hoped that Malaysian students' and teachers' proficiency in the language will improve.

The co-operation between the native and non-native English teachers in schools benefited both parties and also the students in primary and secondary school involved. For the '*Program Penutur Jati*' or Native Speaker Programme in primary schools, it was

reported that the programme has helped non-native English teachers to improve in areas such as lesson preparation, classroom practice and teacher's personal and professional development (Wong, Noraini, Yuen & Nurjanah, 2015). In addition, Wong et.al (2015) also reported that the teachers' and students' English language proficiency has also improved, especially in speaking skills. Similarly, the Fullbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) programme benefitted non-native English students. It was found that students improved on their English language skills, motivated in their learning, more confident and generally become more active learners (EurekaFacts, 2014).

Although both native and non-native teachers use English as a medium of communication, they have different cultural and linguistic background (Shahrini Nadarajah, 2003). Therefore, both parties may have experienced conflicts in the form of misunderstandings while interacting with one another due to their differences. Some of the misunderstandings that might have occurred may have been resolved by both parties and some may have not.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the English native and non-native teachers' cultural differences in communication and whether the differences has led to misunderstanding between the teachers. In addition, this study aims to investigate how the misunderstandings were solved.

1.2   Background of the Study

Communication is defined as an action of transmitting information, ideas or opinions between the parties involved (Booher, 2012). Communication is vital as we make meaning and express our thoughts and ideas to be understood by the other person that we are interacting with. Communication can be verbal and non-verbal through gestures, symbols or body language. It needs to be effective in order to be understood by the recipient. However, communication may be ineffective due to certain factors or 'barriers'.

Over the years, many people of different culture and languages have come in contact through trade and it has expanded due to the advancement of technology (Martin & Nakamaya, 2013). This is also supported by Majanen (2008) who states that most of the population in this world uses English as the language of international relations, science, business and also for tourism. As these people differ in language and dialect, there is a need of one common language as a medium of communication and English is widely used as a common language that binds the people of different language and cultural background. The term '*intercultural communication*' is used to refer to the act of transmitting massages across different culture and language background (Arent, 2009). Arent further adds that '*intercultural communication*' occurs when two persons from diverse linguistic and cultural background make negotiations and understanding of meaning in human experiences across social systems and societies. People from diverse cultural background may have different views of the world around them that they bring from their own existing experiences and values.

Thus, when two people from different cultural and language background communicate, it is also possible for misunderstanding to occur while communicating with each other (Martin & Nakamaya, 2013). According to Kaur (2011), a mutual understanding is vital and needs to be achieved by the interlocutors involved in order for the communication to be successful. However, this may sometimes be difficult to achieve when the communication that occurs involve people of different language and cultural backgrounds (Mauranen, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial that misunderstanding should be minimised in order for both parties to communicate successfully (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Mauranen, 2006; Kaur, 2011).

There are a few research conducted in recent years to study misunderstanding between different cultures in the workplace setting. For example, Dumanig, David & Hanafi (2012) conducted a similar study between Filipino domestic workers and Malaysian employers. It was found that misunderstanding occurs between the domestic helpers and their Malaysian employers due to lack of proficiency between the two parties. Similarly, a research conducted by Sweeney & Zhu (2010) found that native English-speaking businessmen lack in understanding the culture of their non-native English speakers' counterpart. The study also found that the native speakers are unable to accommodate their speech to the non-native speakers. Hynes (2007) conducted a study on intercultural misunderstanding between native English teachers and the Japanese staff in a teaching agency in Japan. By employing Hofstede' (1980), Hall's (1983) and Mead's (1994) framework, it was found that conflict such as misunderstanding arises due to the cultural differences such as power distance and individualism/collectivism. In addition, the

findings also suggest that the Japanese staff are high context while the native English teachers are low context in culture.

1.3   Statement of Problem

As both native and non-native English as Second Language (ESL) teachers come from diverse cultural and linguistic background, conflict may arise due to dissimilarities in styles of communication (Martin & Nakamaya, 2013). This notion is also supported by Ting-Toomey (1999) that each individuals of diverse cultures has different values, assumptions, expectations, verbal and non-verbal habits and in consequence, may contribute to conflicts such as misunderstanding. What the other person thought would be appropriate in his or her own culture could be regarded as inappropriate in the other's culture. If misunderstanding could occur between speakers of the same language, therefore, it is likely for misunderstanding to occur between people of different cultural background. If misunderstandings are not resolved, it may cause disagreements between the two interlocutors involved (Kaur, 2011). Therefore, misunderstanding could cause disharmony in the working environment such as negative relationships or mistrust if it is not addressed and resolved (Hall, 2002; Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2009).

A research conducted on the reaction of native ESL mentors and non-native ESL mentees in rural primary schools in Malaysia found that there is lack of effective communication between the mentors, mentees and the organisation involved (Mei & Siew, 2015). The lack of communication between the parties involved may have triggered

misunderstandings. It is not known whether native and non-native teachers experience misunderstanding while communicating with one another in the school settings. Both native and non-native English teachers may not have problems in understanding each other as English is used as the medium of communication. However, due the differences in their culture, value and norms, it is possible that misunderstandings might have transpired while they were working together in their respective schools. Therefore, this study aims to fill in the gaps whether the native and non-native English teachers experience misunderstandings while working together in schools and how do they solve the misunderstandings that occurred.

A pilot study was conducted prior to the research in order to determine whether the native and non-native ESL teachers perceive to have encountered misunderstanding while working together in schools. From the findings of the pilot study, it was found that both native and non-native ESL teachers cited that there were not much misunderstanding due to language although at times, there were some confusion on the terms or expression that the native and non-native ESL teachers used during interaction. However, it was found that most of the perceived misunderstanding might have transpired due to different ways of doing things or 'cultural differences'. Thus, further investigation on different styles of communication and values between the native and non-native teachers need to be explored in order to determine the cause of the perceived misunderstanding and its resolution between the parties involved.

1.4   Significance of Study

By highlighting the issues on intercultural misunderstanding, the findings of this study will benefit both native and non-native speakers in terms of communication in the future. By understanding how people from different cultures communicate, misunderstanding can be avoided at all cost and the parties involved can communicate effectively at their workplace. In addition, it is hoped that the results from this study will enable policymakers and other stakeholders to make improvements on areas such as trainings on intercultural communication or cultural awareness in order to enhance the effectiveness in communication between the native and non-native speakers.

If the native and non-native ESL teachers could communicate effectively and minimize the misunderstanding that may have occurred due to their differences, it is hoped that a harmonious working environment could be created between the parties involved in the program. In addition, both native and non-native ESL teachers could avoid any ill feelings towards one another and have trust in each other. As a result, positive rapport could be created between the teachers in schools. In addition to positive environment between the native and non-native English teachers, the students could also benefit thorough effective communication between the native and non-native teachers. By having clarity in communication and minimizing misunderstandings, both native and non-native ESL teachers may be able to state their ideas and opinions effectively while designing a program for the students. Students will benefit the most if the programs

planned by the native and the non-native English teachers could achieve its objectives due to clearer instructions or expectations.

In addition, it is also hoped that the results obtained in this study will enable other researchers in this field to gain more insights on misunderstandings in intercultural communication. The findings obtained from this study may provide them some reference for future research purposes.

1.5   Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate what were perceived to be misunderstandings by the native and non-native English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers while serving in the Malaysian primary and secondary government schools. Firstly, this study aims to explore the communication style of the native and non-native ESL teachers. Next, this study aims to investigate the causes of the perceived misunderstandings which could have emerged as a result of the differences in communication styles.

In particular, this study aims to investigate how the native and non-native ESL teachers solved the perceived misunderstanding. The perceived misunderstandings might be resolved or not based on how the native and non-native teachers deal with the situation. Since solution to conflicts in intercultural communication is important to ensure harmony,

this study also aims to investigate some of the strategies used in solving the perceived misunderstandings.

1.6   Research Questions

Based on the aims of the study, three research questions were formulated for the purpose of this study:

1. What are the cultural communication styles of Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS)?

2. Why misunderstandings occur in the communication between the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers?

3. How do the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS) solve misunderstandings in communication?

Research Questions 1 and 2 attempt to find the causes of perceived misunderstanding experienced by the participants whereas Research Question 3 attempts to find the perceived resolutions taken.

1.7   Participants of the Study

To investigate misunderstanding caused by cultural differences in communication between native and non-native English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Malaysian primary and secondary government schools, the study requires those who were or are still involved with any programs between English native speakers and local primary and secondary schools. The native English speakers that are involved in this study comprise of those involved in The Native Speaker Programme in Malaysian government primary schools and those involved with the English Teaching Assistants (ETA) programme in secondary schools. These NS teachers were mentors or teacher assistants for the programs mentioned. All of the native speaker participants involved in this study are American.

The non-native ESL teachers participating in this study are those who were or are involved with the programs mentioned in primary and secondary schools. The local teachers are in-service English language teachers working in primary and secondary schools. These teachers consist of English language optionist and non-optionist. The English optionist teachers are those who were trained or majored to teach English in their teacher-trainee college (Noor Hayati & Mohd Sallehhudin, 2015). Meanwhile, English non-optionist teachers are those who were trained to teach other subjects as their core subject and English as their minor subject (Jai Shree, Parilah & Juhaida, 2014). The non-native teachers hold the role of mentors or mentees for both programs. All of the non-native participants involved in this study are Malay. The selection was done as the

researcher focuses on one culture; Malay. In addition, the Malay participants involved in this study consider Malay language as their mother tongue and English as their second language. This is deemed appropriate in the context of this research; English as a Second Language.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Prior to the study, some of the limitations have been identified by the researcher. First and foremost, the native and non-native ESL teachers who participated in this study did not work with each other in the same school. Thus, the misunderstanding incidents narrated in this study might have been based merely on their perceptions. The word 'perception' is used as the misunderstanding incidents are based on the participants' own understanding or interpretation of the incidents. These perceptions of misunderstanding are based from one person's point of view. What the other person perceived to be misunderstanding may not be the same for the other person. The other side of the story from the person who were involved directly or indirectly in the perceived misunderstandings are not known (Floyd, 2011).

In addition, the number of participants who participated in this study are only ten. Only five English native speakers and five non-native speakers contributed to the findings of this study. The results could not be generalised as representatives of the whole population. Furthermore, it could have been that the participants in this study may or may not share the same communication or cultural values of their culture. Not everyone in the same culture may share the same communication style and values due to their life experiences

and also the condition of their environment. Therefore, the results of this study should not generalise or stereotype that everyone in the same culture group has the same communication style and values.

Another limitation to be considered is this research focuses on the recollection of misunderstanding episodes from the narrations and interviews obtained from the native and non-native ESL teachers. Some of the incidents have happened for quite some time and the participants might have not been able to recall some of the important details in the incidents that occurred. This may have influenced the data collected from this study.

1.9   Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aims to investigate the cultural differences in communication between native and non-native English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers that might have caused misunderstanding. In addition, this study also aims to investigate how the native and non-native English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers solved the misunderstandings. The misunderstandings might have been caused by differences in cultural communication style and values.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a few terminologies are discussed such as culture, communication, perceptions, intercultural communication and native and non-native English teachers. Hofstede's (1984) *Cultural Dimension*, Hall's (1983) *Low and High Context Communication* and Ting-Toomey's *Constructive Conflict Management Skills* (1999) framework are also reviewed in this chapter. In addition, a comparison of the Malay and American culture are discussed for the purpose of this study.

2.1   Culture

Culture is a complex and unique component intertwined in our lives. The way we do things and look at things around us depends largely on the culture that we are in. Our lives are compartmentalised into different sets of cultures, depending on the environment and the groups of people that we are with. A person may belong to a few cultures, depending on the context that he or she is in. Gibson (2010) states that culture comprises of different types according to its context such as professional, gender, age, regional and class. For example, a 29-year-old Indian male lawyer may adhere himself to the personal and professional cultures that he is in. He belongs to the culture of adults in the age of 20 to 29, the culture of lawyers when he is working and also the Indian culture. When he is with his peers of similar age, he dresses and uses jargon that is understood and used regularly of people of the same 'culture'. When he goes to court for cases, he subjects himself to the culture by using the mannerism and jargon used by the profession. When

he is with people of the same race, he shares the same beliefs, behaviour and ways of doing things accordingly to his culture.

In addition, a culture is also tangible and non-tangible (Ting-Toomey, 1999). There are things that one can see that denotes the culture in a form of symbols and realia such as clothes, food and musical instrument and there are also the *hidden* aspects of a culture such as views, opinions and ways of doing things (Koyama, 1992). The two distinctions of the tangible and non-tangible aspects of culture are what anthropologists often refer to as *'visible'* and *'invisible'* culture. Baker (2006) made a distinction of what constitutes a culture and divided culture into two parts, the '*visible*' and the '*invisible*' culture.

Similarly, Gibson (2010) compares a culture as an iceberg; the outer part of the iceberg represents the '*visible*' culture whereas the inner part of the iceberg that we could not see from the surface denotes the '*invisible*' culture. The outer part of the iceberg represents the elements of a culture that can be seen such as traditional dances, literature and food. Meanwhile, the inner part of the iceberg consists of elements that need to be looked at closely in order to understand a culture; gender roles, power equation and also way of communicating.

Based on the descriptions above, it can be concluded that culture is an intricate concept in our lives. Many authors have come up with their own definition on the concept of culture and what constitutes it. The term 'culture' is quite complex and difficult to be

defined and has multiple meanings in different disciplines and context (Harrison & Huntington, 2000). Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, (2013) define culture as:

a set of human-made objective and subjective elements that have increased the probability of survival and resulted in satisfaction for the participants in an ecological niche, and thus became shared among those who could communicate with each other because they had a common language and live in the same time and place

(pg.38)

Rodriguez (1999) posits that culture comprises of how one relates to other people, how we reason, behave and view the world. Martin and Nakayama (2013) delineate culture as learned patterns or behaviour that is shared by a group of people. Meanwhile, Hall (1983, as cited in Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013) concludes that "There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched or altered by culture". Geert Hofstede (1984), a psychologist interprets culture as a group-related perception that is learned:

Every person carries within him or herself patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting which were learned throughout [his or her] lifetime. Much of [these patterns are] acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating.

(pg.91, as cited in Martin & Nakayama, 2013)

Hofstede's view on culture tells us that culture is developed through interactions between various groups and individuals in a social environment. Culture is seen as a collective experience as it is shared by everyone who is in the same social environment. In addition, researchers in this field also stress on the role of perception in culture. They believe that our cultural patterns of thought and meaning influence our perceptions on

how we see others and the environment, which will also influence on our way of doing things (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). This assertion is supported by Singer (1987) who states that culture is a pattern of a learned, group-related perception that influences our verbal and nonverbal language attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour.

As culture plays a crucial role in determining our ways of doing things and views, it also has a specific function in our lives. As quoted by Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy (2013), culture teaches people how to adapt to their surroundings. Sowell (2009) shares the same notion when he views the function of culture as to make "all things easy". In other words, our culture provides us a 'blueprint' or guidelines on how to conduct our behaviour accordingly based on the group of people that we interact with or in a specific environment.

A culture also consists a set of traits that helps us identify what constitutes a culture. It also enables us to understand the complexity of the concept and how it relates to our everyday lives. McDaniel, Samovar and Porter (2009) listed what constitutes a culture; learned, transmitted in integrational manner, dynamic and ethnocentric. Ethnocentric is a term that refers to a strong sense of belonging to a group's cultural identity or attachment that may lead to ethnocentrism; one's tendency to feel that one's own culture is much superior than others (McDaniel, Samovar & Porter (2009). Lack of exposure to other cultures may have caused ethnocentrism (McDaniel, Samovar et. al, 2009; Martin & Nakayama, 2013; Wood, 2014). Thus, it is important that we are aware of other cultures around us in order to avoid ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism may be detrimental especially when dealing with people from other cultures (McDaniel, Samovar & Porter, 2009).

2.2   Communication

"*Communication is powerful: It brings companions to our side or scatter our rivals, reassures or alerts children, and forges consensus or battle lines between us*"

(Keating, 1994; as cited in Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013; pg. 27)

The statement above succinctly describes the influential role of communication in our lives. It shows that communication is crucial for living things to convey their intended messages to others, express their opinions and views, make meaning or negotiation. Since the day we were born, we communicate to make sense of the world to others and as we become older, we learn how to communicate explicitly and implicitly in order to make our communication more effective. Humans and animals need to communicate for survival. Therefore, communication has played an integral role in our everyday lives.

Over the years, many scholars have attempted to define what communication is and investigate the purpose of communication and its importance. Communication can be described as a process where we use signs, symbols and behaviours to exchange information and make meaning (Floyd, 2011). Similarly, Wood (2014) outlines communication as a systemic process of interaction between people through symbols to make and interpret meanings.   Meanwhile, Hybels and Weaver (2009) describe communication in a more elaborate manner as any process which people generate meanings such as information, ideas, feelings and perceptions through the use of symbols

whether it is done verbally or non-verbally, consciously or unconsciously, with intentions or unintentionally within or across various contexts, cultures, channels and media.

Martin and Nakayama (2013) come up with three perspectives on the definition of communication. The three perspectives are *social science*, *interpretative* and *critical*. From the *social science* perspective, communication consists of sender/receiver, channel, message and context. Communication from this perspective has a pattern and it can be predicted. Meanwhile, from the *interpretative* point of view, communication is seen as symbolic and of processual nature. According to Martin and Nakayama (2013), communication is symbolic as the words and gestures that we use have no inherent value but has its significance from an agreed-upon meaning, which are conveyed verbally and non-verbally. Martin and Nakayama further adds that when we convey messages, we assume that the other person understands the intended meaning and shares the same view and beliefs, although sometimes it may be incoherent due to differences in cultural background and experiences. The third perspective on communication is the *critical* perspective. From this perspective, the importance of social roles in the communication process is stressed on. Verbal and nonverbal communication are not the same but it is organised according to the social hierarchy whereby certain individual characteristics are highly valued than the other (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

There are many reasons why we communicate and its importance in our lives. According Wood (2014), communication is vital to us in a few aspects in our lives -- personal life, personal relationships, professional and civic life. Mead (1934, as cited in Wood, 2014) stated that 'humans are talked into humanity', referring to our need to gain

our personal identities through interaction with others. We seek validation and acceptance from others, from their views and their perceptions of us. Our family and friends let us know what they think and what we ought to be through communication. By communicating with the other person, we also let them know of our opinions towards them. In addition, Wood (2014) also states that we also learn who and how others perceive us through mass and computer-mediated communication.

Communication definitely fulfils one's personal needs psychologically. It is said that children deprived of human contact suffer psychologically. It is said that there is a great connection between communication and identity in cases that involves children isolated of human contact. A few case studies of children isolated from human communication show that these children have no concept of themselves as a human being and their mental and psychological development is delayed as they also receive lack of language input from their surroundings (Wood, 2014). Such example is the story of Genie, who was isolated and deprived of any language input since birth until she was discovered at the age of thirteen (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006). In addition, a few research has found that communicating with others definitely promotes one's health and social isolation could cause stress, disease or early death (Floyd, 2011; Wood, 2004).

Other than benefiting our sense of identity, communication is also beneficial for us to establish personal relationships. Relationships are built and established at the foundation of communication. We use communication when we want to initiate a new relationship with another person and we use a lot of communication trying to sustain the relationship as it goes on. Without effective communication, relationships may deteriorate. According

to an American national poll in 1998, it was found that 53% of voters attributed the cause of divorce due to lack of communication between married couples (Wood, 2014). It is said that couples who discuss their innermost thoughts and feelings and manage conflict constructively tend to survive in a relationship. With interaction, intimacy in relationships could be sustained (Wood & Duck, 2006; Schmidt & Uecker, 2007).

In addition to personal relationship, communication is also the foundation to a successful professional life. Established organizations such as FedEx and GlaxoSmithKline cite that communication is important to the success of their organizations (O' Hair & Eadie, 2009, as cited in Wood, 2014). For example, it is said that those who work in the health care sectors rely on communication skills to interact with their patients and colleagues and effective communication between a doctor and his or her patients relate to effective treatment and patients' well-being (Fleishman, Sherbourne & Crystal, 2000).

2.3   Relationship Between Culture and Communication

Culture and communication are two important entities in our lives. When intertwined, the relationship that it has with one another is complex. Martin and Nakayama (2013) views culture as related to one another and reciprocal. Anthropologist, Edward T. Hall (1977) sums up the impact that culture and communication has on one another as he points out that "Culture is communication and communication is culture" (Samovar, Porter,

McDaniel & Roy, 2013, pg. 36). Based on the statement, it is clear that culture and communication influence each other and are inseparable.

Many research has been conducted by anthropologists and psychologists in their attempts to investigate and come up with frameworks on the influences of cultural variable factors in communication. Some of the notable frameworks that are frequently used are Hofstede's *(1984) Cultural Dimension* and Hall's *(1983) Low and High Context Communication* (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Jones, 2007; Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

2.3.1   Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Values Dimension

Geert Hofstede (1984), a social psychologist came up with his own framework to determine the influence of culture on one's communication style, namely *Hofstede's Cultural Dimension* theory. Hofstede developed his framework based on his cross-cultural research on cultural patterns of IBM employees working in IBM divisions in over 53 countries (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). From his earlier research, he identified five areas of common problems for the workers while working together; Power Distance, Femininity/Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance; Individualism/Collectivism and Long-Term Orientation. In a more recent research, a new dimension was added; Indulgent/Restraint (Hofstede, 2011).

Hofstede's culture values dimensions have been widely used in various research areas related to cultural studies such as workgroup dynamics, leadership styles and conflict resolution (Jones, 2007). Therefore, this framework is used to analyse the data in this study. In the context of this research, two widely used value orientations will be discussed; Power Distance and Individualism/Collectivism

2.3.1.1 Power Distance

One of the dimensions in Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimensions is power distance which refers to the role of distribution of power on cultures. It consists of *Low Power Distance* and *High-Power Distance*. Some of the countries that are said to value *Low Power Distance* are United States of America, Denmark, New Zealand and Germany (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Meanwhile, some of the countries that are considered to value *High Power Distance* are Malaysia, Philippines, and Guatemala (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013). The cultures that value low power distance believes that less hierarchy and equality in an organization is better whereas those who value high power acknowledges the role of power and authority (Brown, 2007; Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

In an organisation, cultures that value power distance believes in hierarchy roles and respect the higher authority and conform to the superior. Meanwhile, those who has low level of power distance view that each individual is equal and rank is of no importance. When two people with different values of culture power distance work together, their differences in this value may lead to conflicts on the roles and also on how to

communicate with people of higher or lower rank. Table 2.1 below illustrates the differences of Low and High-Power Distance culture:

Table 2.1 : High/Low Power Distance

Low Power Distance Culture	High Power Distance Culture
• Egalitarian	• Hierarchical
• Horizontal relationships	• Vertical relationships
• Equality is accepted	• Inequality is accepted
• Subordinates consulted	• Subordinates informed

(Sourced from Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013)

2.3.1.2 Individualism/Collectivism

The individualism/collectivism dimension is prominently being paid attention to in research of cross-cultural studies as it explains the differences and similarities of communication between people of different cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Cultures that value individualism believe in independence over interdependence, rewards in achievement, rights and privacy and each individual is unique (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013). Meanwhile, those who come from the collectivist culture prefer interdependence, harmony between group members and collaborative spirit (Ting-

Toomey, 1988). In other words, those who are individualistic are more concern of 'I' whereas the collectivist is more of 'We' while working with one another.

Cultures that are considered to be collectivist usually have an indirect style in communication while those who are in the individualist group are considered to have direct communication style. A direct communication style is when the spoken message shows the speaker's intent, needs, and desires (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). In contrast, an indirect way in communication is when the speaker's true intent, desires and wants are not revealed directly and often the speakers have to 'read between the lines' in order to understand the message intended (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Ting-Toomey, 1999). According to Martin & Nakayama (2013), those with indirect communication often uses high context communication where preserving the harmony in relationships are far more important than being forthright with the other person. Hofstede's dimension on individualism/collectivism is closely related to Hall's (1983) framework on *High/Low Context Communication* style.

As the individualist has a direct approach in communication and the collectivist believes in indirect communication fashion, conflict may arise as both parties may not be able communicate well of their intent and opinions. Collectivists may not be able to make themselves clear as their main goal is to preserve harmony while communicating and Individualists may appear to be insensitive or cold in communicating what is on their mind.

The table 2.2 below illustrates how an individualist culture differs from the collectivist:

Table 2.2 : Individualism/Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
• Self-reliant and independent • Directness in communication • Task dominates relationship • Social obedience to sense of guilt	• Relies on the members of the group • Indirectness in communication (to preserve harmony) • Relationship dominates task • Social obedience to sense of shame

(Sourced from Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013)

Hofstede's framework is one of the most cited and widely used in cultural research (Cardon, 2008; Jones, 2007). However, this framework has also faced criticism (Jones, 2007; Schmitz & Weber, 2013). This framework has been used in most cultural studies due to its relevance and accuracy in its findings. Hofstede has collected and analysed data from over 40 countries relating to organisational communication in cultural settings (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). The findings obtained using this framework is considered relevant in communication and cultural research (Jones, 2007). In addition, it was found

that almost all of the research replicated showed consistency with the framework in its findings (Hunsinger, 2006; Sondergaard, 1994).

Although it was used due to its relevancy and accuracy, some researchers and reviewers have criticised the framework. McSweeney (2000) argued that the framework is invalid as it is based on national boundaries (countries) rather than a specific cultural group. As a country consists of various cultures, it is not valid to make general definitions of a culture based on its country. This notion is also supported by Graves (1986) and Olie (1995) who argued that the findings only represent the culture of a nation as a whole and lack of validity (as cited in Hafiz, Hafiz, Aisha & Bakhtiar, 2011).

2.3.2   Hall's (1983) Low / High Context Communication

Similar to Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimensions, Hall's theory of Low and High Context Communication is one of the most cited theories in investigating the role of cultural variables in communication (Cardon, 2008; Kittler, Rygl & Mackinnon, 2011; Wood, 2014). In his initial research, Hall suggests three dimensions relating to a person's non-verbal communication behaviour; time, space and context (Hart, 1999; as cited in Kittler, Rygl & Mackinnon, 2011). This further leads him to develop the framework based on the context of varied culture.

Hall (1983) defines the *context* dimension of his research as the extent to which the communication is clear and verbal or embedded and non-verbal (Andersen & Wang, 2009). In his theory, Hall distinguishes how people in some cultures communicate in low context and some in high context. In a high context communication, most of the intended messages are either in physical context and internalised and very little is in the coded, precise or transmitted part of the message (Hall, 1976; as cited in Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988). In other words, the communication may be indirect and the interlocutor must 'read between the lines' in order to decode the intended messages (Oetzel, 2009; Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013; Wood, 2014). Meanwhile, those with low context communication is the opposite; communication is direct and straight forward. America, Australia and Denmark are some of the countries considered to be a low context culture (Martin & Nakayama, 2013) Meanwhile, Asian countries such as Japan, China and Korea are categorized as cultures with high context communication (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Hall's theory on high and low context communication style is closely related to the works of Hofstede's (1984) on individualism/collectivism dimension (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Oetzel, 2009). Indirectness in communication is one of the characteristics of Hall's high context communication and it is also considered to be a characteristic of collectivist culture. Meanwhile, directness is related to low context culture and one of the description of the individualist culture. The close link of Hall's low/high context communication and Hofstede's individualism/collectivism dimension is further supported by Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim & Heyman, (1996).

Hall's (1983) and Hofstede's (1984) framework on culture and communication are often cited in related academic literature (Hunsinger, 2006; Thatcher, 2001). Although both frameworks are often used as a reference and criticised by researchers, Hall's framework on the high and low context culture is said to be more vague, overgeneralised and lack in empirical studies than Hofstede's dimensions on cultural values (Cardon, 2008; Chuang, 2003; Holden, 2002). Most of the research conducted showed inconsistencies in the findings. For example, a study conducted by Kim, Pan and Park (1998) on American, Chinese and Korean students found that both Chinese and Korean students are collectivist (high context) compared to the American students. However, some of the responses of the three-cultural group's questionnaire were inconsistent and did not support the hypothesis of the framework. Kim et. all (1998) further reported that the inconsistency might have been caused due to the experiences and exposures to other cultures. The findings obtained from this study suggest that Hall's high and low context theory should not overgeneralise individuals in a culture.

Although Hall's (1983) low/high context communication and Hofstede's cultural values dimension are mostly used in cultural and communication research areas, it is also criticised due to some of its weaknesses. However, these two frameworks are found relevant in the context of this study based on the some of the findings obtained from the pilot study. However, it was found that each of the framework are not reliable individually due to the weaknesses. Thus, both of Hall's (1983) and Hofstede's (1984) cultural frameworks are used to support the findings obtained from this study.

2.3.3 American and Malay Culture

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this study focuses on the American English native speakers and Malay non-native speakers who are ESL teachers. The following paragraphs discuss the differences of American and Malay culture in terms of Hall's (1983) High/Low Communication Context and Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Values Dimensions.

2.3.3.1 Malay Culture

The Malays are the predominant ethnic in Malaysia among the three dominant ethnicities; Malays, Chinese and Indians. According to the Department of Statistics (2016), the Malays make up 68.6% of the population in Malaysia. The Malays practice Islam and this is one of the key elements in the Malay culture in Malaysia (Abdul Razak & Kamarulzaman, 2009). The Malay community is known as a group that still upholds and preserve their cultural heritage and values, known as the '*Adat*'. The '*Adat*' encompasses all aspects of the Malay culture and social life and it represents an ideal value on how a Malay person conducts himself with others (Abdul Razak & Kamarulzaman, 2009). Tham (1985) states that the Malay community values loyalty to their culture and way of life. This is supported by Jeannot, Ong, Md Nor Othman and Sofiah, (2014) who stated that '*Adat*' in the Malay culture is seen as a crucial element and members of the community must abide and preserve it.

Language denotes the identity of an ethnicity (Berry, 1980). One the characteristics of the Malay community is the language that they use. The Malays use 'Bahasa Melayu' or the Malay language as their first language. A few scholars have identified the Malay language as the main identification of the Malay ethnicity (Omar, 1986; Nor & Wahab, 2000; Yatim, 2005, as cited in Jeannot, Ong et. all, 2014). The Malays believe that language should be used in a proper manner and it reflects one's courtesy and manners (Ahmad, 2007). How a person conveys his intentions through language influences how others view the politeness of his culture. Politeness is referred to as the manner a person expresses himself in interaction that includes certain use of strategies that reduces intimidation to the other person (Kuang, David, Lau & Ang, 2011). One of the ways to achieve politeness is by being indirect. According to Lailawati (2005), the Malays are often indirect in expressing their requests and opinions. To be direct in communication are perceived as rude and impolite to the other person. A few notable research was conducted and found that the Malay community practices indirectness in their communication (Asmah, 1992; David & Kuang, 2005; Kuang, Wong & David, 2011; Suryani, Noraini & Marlyna, 2012).
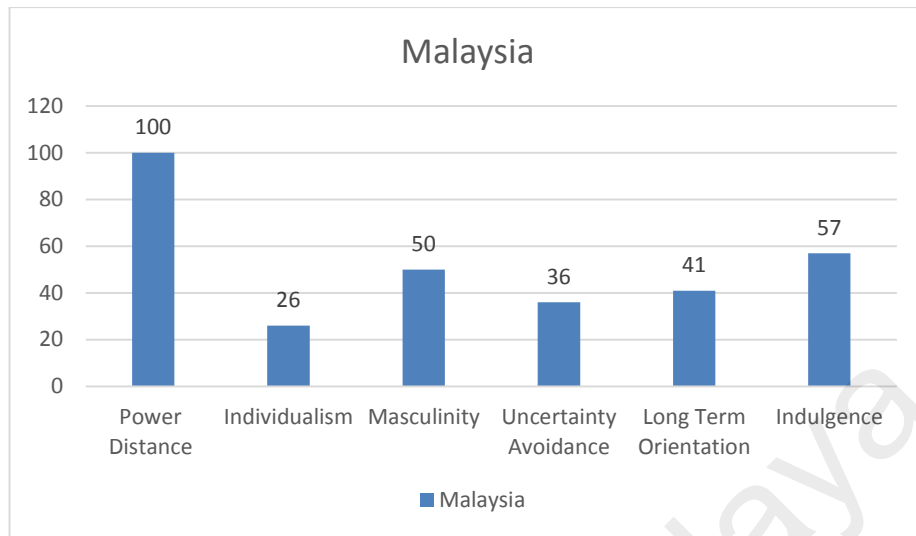
Figure 2.1: Malaysian Culture Scores

(Sourced from Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010)

The findings of the research mentioned supports the findings from a study conducted by Hofstede (1984; 2001) and Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) on cultural dimensions. Figure 2.1 above provides an overview of each score of Hofstede's *Cultural Dimensions* on the Malaysian culture. Malaysians score 26 on the Individualism dimension. This indicates that Malaysians are more of a collectivist culture. Indirectness is being referred to one of the communication styles of people who belong to the collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1984; Martin & Nakayama, 2013; Kuang, Wong & David, 2015). The Malays are more indirect compared to other ethnicities in Malaysia (David & Kuang, 1999, 2005; Jamaliah, 2000; Thilagavathi, 2003, as cited in Kuang, Wong & David, 2015). Asmah (1996) identified four types of indirectness that can be found in Malay communication; the use of imagery, contradictions, use of surrogate and beating around the bush. The following table describes the four types:

Table 2.3 : Types of Indirectness

Type of indirectness	Description
a) imagery	The preferred replacement of the intended message in order to avoid offending the other person's feelings. For example, a person asks when a married couple is going to have a child: Bila nak hidup bertiga pula? (When is it going to be three of you in this family?) <u>Intended meaning:</u> When are you going to have a child?
b) contradiction	Contradiction is used in communication as a way to supress the attitude of conceit. This attitude is not encouraged in the Malay culture. For example, if someone give you a praise, you will contradict the comment. *Awak sangat cantik!* (You are so beautiful) *Eh, mana ada! Biasa saja…* (No, I'm just like others)
c) use of 'surrogate'	The use of a third person as a 'surrogate' in conversation who acts as a mediator between the sender and the receiver. For example, a surrogate marriage proposal matters instead of the parents of the groom and bride in a Malay wedding.

d) beating around the bush	The most widely used type of communication in the Malay community. The speaker talks about other topics before expressing their true intentions. It is often used as a request or asking a favour. Example: Ali: *Assalamualaikum Amar, makin sihat nampaknya!* (Assalamulaikum Amar, you look great!) Amar: *Waalaikumusalam, baik sahaja. Kau bagaimana pula?* (Waalaikumusalam, I'm good. What about you? Ali: *Baik sahaja…tapi Ali, aku macam nak mintak tolong sikit….* (I'm good…but Ali, there's something that I've been meaning to ask you…)

'Table 2.3 continued'

(Sourced from Asmah, 1996; Kamisah & Norazlan, 2003)

Table 2.3 displays four types of indirectness that can be found in Malay communication. In addition to the four strategies, indirectness in Malay communication is also manifested through lying, avoidance and silence (Teo, 1996). According to Teo (1996), lying is one of the means used in declining request among the Malays in order to preserve harmony in relationships. Furthermore, silence is also considered to be one of the ways the Malay culture avoid conflicts (Jamaliah, 1995).

In a study conducted by Kuang, Wong & David (2015) on silence in Malaysian interactions, it was found that the Malay community uses silence as an avoidance strategy in conflicts. In addition, it was also found that the use of silence among the Malays is to show respect. By showing respect, the Malays use indirectness in their communication as one of the ways that they can be polite. According to Jamaliah (2002), politeness is a valued aspect of the Malay culture and being polite is believed to be able to preserve harmony with the other person they are talking to. Shashel (1997) further explains that the Malay community is careful in their communication to avoid hurting the feelings of others, no matter how modernised the person is. Shashel's explanation further supports Hofstede's (2001) and Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov's (2010) findings that the Malays are more of collectivist.

In addition to being collectivist, the Malay culture also emphasises on hierarchy and social status (Kuang, Jawakhir & Saroja, 2012). In the Malay culture, honorific titles such as 'Dato' and kinship terms such as 'Kak' are used to indicate status and differences of hierarchy in the society (Kuang, David, Lau & Ang, 2011). These titles and terms are used to show respect and also politeness in the Malay community (Kuang, Jawakhir & Saroja, 2012). Jamaliah (2002) states that the Malays respect those of higher rank as a sign to show respect although sometimes they may disagree or feel dissatisfied. Disagreement or dissatisfaction may have been shown by the use of indirectness such as silence in order to preserve harmony.

2.3.3.2 American Culture

The United States of America is a country located in the North America continent between Canada and Mexico (Nations Online, 2016). As of July 2016, the current population is estimated around 323,995,528 with white ethnicity predominate the population (79.96%) followed by Hispanic (15.1%), black (12.85%), Asian (4.43%) and other minority races (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). From the percentage, the United States of America is a country with various ethnicities and cultures. Immigrants from other continents such as Europe, Asia and Africa came to the United States of America as early as 19th century and assimilated into the mainstream 'American' culture (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Although most of its population comes from diverse backgrounds of ethnicities, they come together as a 'melting pot', a metaphor used to describe the integration of different groups of ethnicities as in different ways (Martin & Nakayama, 2013, Zimmermann, 2015). They may retain their heritage culture and language but are also integrated in the mainstream and distinctive 'American' culture or known as the 'American way of life' (De Rossi, as cited in Zimmermann, 2015).

Aspects of the American culture could be distinguished by Hofstede's cultural value dimensions (1984; 2001). The figure 2.2 illustrates the score for each cultural value dimensions for the American culture:
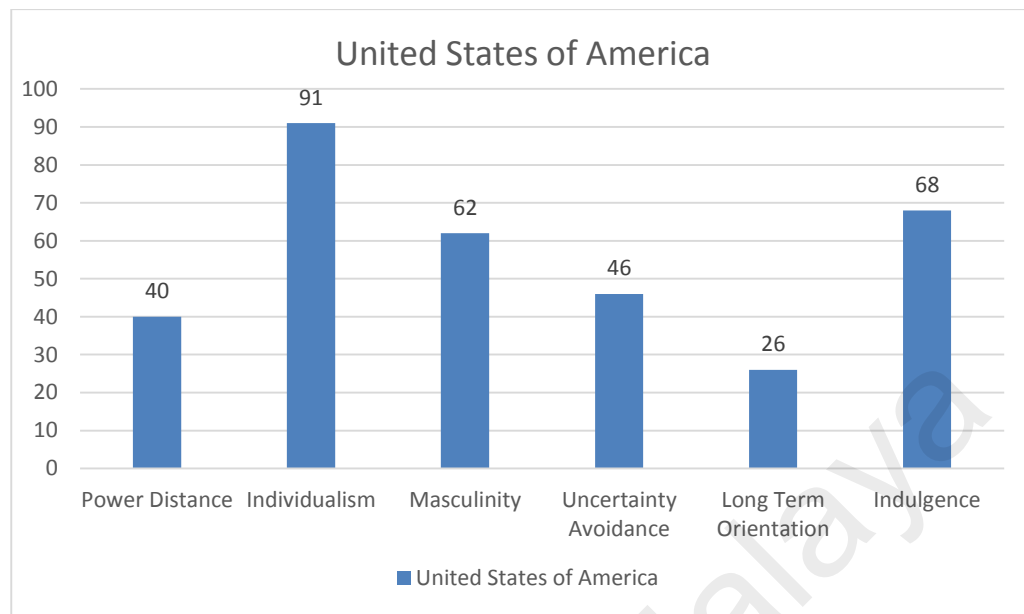
Figure 2.2 : American Culture Scores

(Sourced from Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov,2010)

From Figure 2.2 above, the American culture scored 91% on Individualism. Individualism, which is the opposite of collectivism refers to the loose degree of ties that an individual has in a cultural group (Hofstede, 2011). An individualist look after himself or herself first and his or her immediate family (Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Wood, 2014). The American culture is known to have high scores on the individualism dimension (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy; 2013). This is possibly due to their beliefs that one should be self-reliant and not rely on others (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede (2011) further adds that Americans often communicates informally and in a direct manner. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) mention that while the individualists are able to adapt to a new situation and interact with new people at a workplace, it is difficult for them to develop close friendships especially among men.

As for individualism, the American culture scores low on the power distance value with only 40%, in contrast with the Malaysian scores of 100%. This shows that the American culture does not accept unequal distribution of power in an organisation. According to Hofstede (2001), low scores of power distance could have possibly caused by the emphasis of equality in the American values. Hierarchy is of convenience whereby the superiors are accessible and work together with their subordinates (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

Based on the discussion, the American and Malaysian (Malay) cultures differ in their communication style and cultural values. The Malay culture has high context communication style, where communication is indirect and subtle. Indirectness in their communication style might be used as they want to avoid confrontations in order to preserve harmony with the members of the group. Indirectness is also one of the characteristics of a collectivist culture. In addition, it is suggested that the Malay culture has high power distance value (Lailawati, 2005). This could be traced with their values of respecting the elders and those in high rank.

In contrast, the American culture uses low context communication style where directness and honesty in communication is valued. Directness in communication may appear to be harsh to collectivists as it may offend feelings of the group members. Thus, directness is often linked to individualism; those who look only after the interest of themselves and their immediate family. This also relates to their low scores on power

distance values. Being individualist makes the American culture as accepting everyone as an equal rather than stressing on the importance of rank in a hierarchy.

2.4   Intercultural Communication

As we move into the 21ˢᵗ century, globalization has enabled people of different nations, cultures and languages to be in contact with one another. With the use of one common language such as English, people all over the world are able to communicate while working together in their domains. In addition, immigration and outsourcing of the low skilled labour has increased the diversity of cultures in a country (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013).

In addition to immigration and outsourcing, technology has also played a vital role in globalization. Advancement in Information Technology (IT) has made it possible and more accessible for people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds to unite in a common cause or ideology (Samovar, Porter et. all, 2013). Through globalization, there is no barrier for people of diverse cultural and language backgrounds to interact with one another.

As each of us brings our culture as part of our identity while communicating with one another, we are engaged in an *intercultural communication*. Intercultural communication is a term that refers to communication that takes place between people of different cultural and language backgrounds. It is a form of interpersonal communication that occurs in a

cultural dimension. Hybels and Weaver (2009) believe that intercultural communication transpires when a member of a culture needs to process the message created by a member of another culture. It is also known as a situated communication that occurs between individuals or groups of different linguistic and cultural origins (Koyama, 1992). It is a scientific field on the interaction between individuals and groups of different cultures that studies the influence of culture on how people are, how they feel, think and speak and listen (Dodd, 1991; as cited in Aneas & Sandin, 2009). Samovar, Porter et. al (2013) succinctly defines intercultural communication as the interaction that occurs between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems differs adequately to influence the communication that takes place.

Another similar term that is also used is '*cross-cultural communication*'. Although it may sound alike, some researchers have made distinction on the term '*cross-cultural*' and '*intercultural*' communication. (Oetzel, 2009) opines that the term 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural' communication holds different meaning or refers to different field of study although both focuses on the relationship between culture and communication. Fries (n.d) defines 'cross-cultural' as a comparison made on any aspects of a culture while 'intercultural focuses on the interactions that take place between individuals of different culture. A *cross-cultural communication* is said to be focusing on comparison on how communication is within the members of group of each culture. Meanwhile, *intercultural communication* focuses on how communication takes place between different groups of cultures (Oetzel, 2009). Some of these definitions show distinction between the two terms. However, some researchers combine the two concepts into one definition. For example, Tannen's (1985) definition of 'cross-cultural' not only includes speakers of different countries and languages but also those in the same country of different class,

gender, age and region. Meanwhile, Gudykunst (2003) includes 'cross-cultural' under the umbrella term 'intercultural'. According to Gudykunst, the term 'intercultural' is a general definition of studies conducted on communication of those between different national cultures whereas 'cross-cultural' refers to communication across cultures.

Although there are different views on the term 'cross-cultural' and 'intercultural', the term 'intercultural communication' is commonly used in most of the research conducted between speakers of different cultures, countries and languages. A research conducted by Kaur (2011) on the communication of students from different countries in a Malaysian university used the term 'intercultural'. Another study conducted on the native and non-native English speakers in aviation industry in the same country uses the term' intercultural' instead of 'cross-cultural' (Hazrati, 2015). Based on the research mentioned, most of the studies on 'intercultural communication' are conducted on people who come from different countries with different cultural and language background who are interacting together in the same setting (same university, workplace) in the same country. The context of this study focuses on the interaction made between American native speakers of English (NS) and Malay English non-native speakers of English (NNS) teachers in Malaysian schools. Therefore, the term *intercultural communication* is used in this study.

The field of intercultural communication is not relatively new compared to other research fields (Gudykunst, 2003). However, there is a need for more research to be conducted as more insights are needed to investigate the cultural and linguistic factors that affect certain aspects of relationship between the two interlocutors involved (Holmes,

2016). In addition, culture and language is an extensively broad and complex field with many aspects that need to be studied in depth. Laadegaard (2007) emphasised on the importance of intercultural communication research as it enables us to have insights into the orientations and dispositions of members of culture in this globalised world. The experiences involved in an intercultural communication can be viewed from different levels and views. The communication process that occurs between people of different cultural values transpires at individual, small group and societal levels. It could also exist in romantic relationships, friendships and also in workplace settings.

Many aspects of culture and communication influences the nature of a person's relationship with one another in intercultural communication. Linguistic aspects such as the speakers' fluency and the choice of words used may influence the effectiveness of intercultural communication (Hall, 2002). Non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, the tone of voice and gestures also play a crucial role when two speakers engage with one another and may influence their relationship and also the message intended. It was found that lack of eye contact, inexpressiveness and lack of paralinguistic cues as one of the factors that influence non-verbal communication among Chinese immigrants and their interpreter (Vargas-Urpi, 2013). Meanwhile, an earlier study conducted by Gumperz (1982) found that the rising tone of voice used by Indian speakers of English during interactions with British English speakers influenced their perceptions of one another. Therefore, while engaging in an intercultural communication, one must be aware of the verbal and non-verbal messages that are involved.

2.4.1   Conflict in Intercultural Communication

Culture also plays an important role during an intercultural communication. Due to the differences that each culture brings when they interact with one another, conflict may occur in an intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey, 2006). For example, a person who is in a romantic relationship with a person of dissimilar cultural background may experience intercultural conflicts in the relationship. Workers in a multiracial company may experience problems of intercultural communication in the workplace setting. Conflict between individuals is defined as a difficult situation where both parties have different goals or means that may affect the relationship in a negative way (Cahn & Abigail, 2007).   The conflicts may occur in the form of disagreement and it may lead to misunderstanding (Gass & Varonis, 1991; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Some of the factors that may contribute to conflicts in intercultural communication may be caused by external factors such as obstruction of comprehension during conversation, difficulties in pronunciation or different lexical sets used by two different cultural groups (Gass & Varonis, 1991). In addition, differences in cultural communication style may also transpire conflicts between the cultures (Oetzel, 2009).

In a study conducted on conflicts in marital relationship between Caucasian American and Asian spouses, it was found that conflicts occurred due to the differences in the spouses' communication style, cultural value and face value orientation (Tili & Barker, 2015). Waldman and Rubaclava (2005) further explained that most of the conflicts happened as individuals engaging in intercultural communication are unaware the

influence of their culture on the way they behave with the other person. Thus, differences such as cultural values, communication style that each individual has while engaging in intercultural communication may contribute to conflicts. These conflicts in intercultural communication may lead to misunderstanding (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Not all of the effects of intercultural communication are negative. A few researchers have reported the benefits of being in intercultural communication (Tili & Baker, 2015). For example, Cuellar (2000) identified that those in intercultural communication are more susceptible to adaptability to the other culture while Deweale and Van Oudenhoven (2009) found that individuals in intercultural communication are more open-minded. Intercultural communication also leads to intercultural sensitivity (Christmas & Barker, 2014) and interpersonal sensitivity (Lyttle, Barker & Cornwell, 2011; as cited in Tili& Baker, 2015). Resolution of conflicts could be achieved if both parties have competence in intercultural communication, able to adapt to the situation and communicates effectively to resolve the conflicts. This could be achieved by having a deeper understanding of one's culture; their values and how they communicate is needed in order to resolve conflicts in intercultural communication (Ting- Toomey, 1999). In addition, Chen (1989, as cited in Tili & Baker, 2015) proposed that communicative skills, which refers to the interlocutors' ability to use language appropriately in verbal and non-verbal manner, flexibility, responsive and emphatic is needed in order to solve conflicts in intercultural communication.

Ting-Toomey (1999) proposes a framework on conflicts resolution in intercultural communication; *Constructive Conflict Management Skills* as one of the skills that could be used by individuals to solve conflicts in intercultural communication. In this framework, Ting-Toomey (1999) proposes five skills that can be used in solving intercultural conflicts. In this study, mindful reframing, face-management skill, collaborative dialogue and communication adaptability skills were found significant to the context of the study. Table 2.4 below illustrates the skills and its descriptions:

Table 2.4: Ting-Toomey's (1999) Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills

(1) Mindful Listening	Both parties in intercultural communication must learn how to listen to each other mindfully.
(2) Mindful Reframing	Both parties of different cultural background 'translate' verbal and non-verbal messages from the others' cultural viewpoint.
(3) Face-Management Skill	Not humiliating others and also acknowledge their concerns or obligations.
(4) Trust-Building Skill	Trust is essential especially when one experience high anxiety with unknown behaviour or habits that are different than our own sets of beliefs.
(5) Collaborative Dialogue	Both parties attempt to suspend their own assumptions regarding the conflict that has occurred by communicating and addressing the conflict collaboratively.
(6) Communication Adaptability	Requires us to change our behaviours, attitudes and goals to meet the specific needs of the conflicts.

(Sourced from Ting-Toomey, 1999)

Based on Table 2.4, Ting-Toomey's (1999) Constructive Conflict Management Skills could be used by individuals who encounter conflicts in intercultural communication. The skills proposed in this framework are related to most of the intercultural conflict solution suggested by other researchers. For example, 'Face-Management Skill' is closely related to most of work on the concept of face in not only intercultural communication but also sociolinguistics and social psychology (Sueda, 2014). The concept of 'face' or 'facework' is defined as a strategy in communication that one uses to enact self-face and to maintain, support and challenge the other person's face (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Matsumoto & Takai, 2000). It is also related to a person's dignity (Kuang, David, Lau & Ang, 2011). When in conflict, each individual may want to protect their 'face' from being shamed or embarrassed (Oetzel, 2009). Both parties want to maintain their 'face' and this is crucial especially in intercultural conflicts (Ting-Toomey, 2005). If a person loses their 'face' during conflicts, it may bring negative effects to the relationship and conflicts may not be solved (Canelon & Ryan, 2013; Martin & Nakayama, 2013; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 2006).

One of the strategies of saving one's face is through indirectness in communication. The use of indirectness in communication is also seen as a way to make communication less threatening to the other person (Kuang, David, Lau & Ang, 2011). It is also closely related to politeness (Tsuda, 1993). Being polite is important in some cultures, especially in communication between those of higher rank or older. For example, the Malays are perceived as indirect and polite because of their values of respecting the elders and those in high rank order and they also tend to avoid confrontations to preserve harmony (Kuang et. al, 2011). This is also probably because the Malay culture is a collectivist and

preserving harmony among group members is valued. DeVito (2009) opines that individuals from high context culture tend to be indirect as they do not want the other person to lose face. This notion is also echoed by Sorrells (2013), who states that collectivist culture is more concerned in saving another person's face. In contrast, Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2002) reported that those who belong in individualistic culture tend to favour saving their own face and use conflict solving styles that are more confrontational, controlling and focused on solution. Individuals with different cultural values have different purposes when saving face. In another research, both indirectness and politeness are crucial in the negotiation of face in communication such as making requests (Cesar Felix-Brasdefer, 2005).

In addition to saving face, intercultural conflicts could also be solved with collaborative dialogue between the interlocutors involved in intercultural communication. In her framework, Ting-Toomey (1999) suggests that conflicts could be solved if both parties address the issues encountered and engage in a collaborative dialogue. It requires active listening and engage in discussion in seeking a solution to the conflict (Taylor, 2007). Both parties involved need to listen to how the other person is feeling and try to find solution in a positive manner.

Ting-Toomey (1999) describes the sequences that follow in a collaborative dialogue in Table 2.5:

Table 2.5 : Sequences in Collaborative Dialogue

a) differentiation phase	Individuals clarify the conflict goals and find the underlying reasons that may contribute to the differences
b) mutual problem description	Conflict problem is described in specific manner. Each individual describes the conflict situation occurred
c) integration	Displaying mutual interest intentions, generating, evaluating, selecting the best solution that are applicable to both individuals

(Sourced from Ting-Toomey, 1999)

By applying the sequences prescribed in a collaborative dialogue, conflict between the individuals involved could be improved. Collaborative dialogue is a communication skill that could be used when both parties engage in a face-to-face dialogue session in order to

address and clarify how they feel and seek solution. Ting-Toomey (1999) adds that not only collaborative dialogue skill helps to uncover issues such as honour, dignity, and boundary but is also beneficial for the individuals involved to uncover common interests and ground between the individuals involved. As a consequence, relationships between the individuals might be improved.

Seeing matters from the other person's cultural viewpoints and able to adapt according to the situation is also important in solving intercultural conflicts. Ting-Toomey's (1999) skills on Mindful Reframing and Communicative Adaptability focuses on how individuals adapt and be flexible in changing their own goals to accommodate to the situation. When applying Mindful Reframing skill, the individuals involved need to decode each other's verbal and nonverbal messages from the context of the other person's culture (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Ting-Toomey also state that when we are reframing, we need to change the priorities of our goals from the observation, listening to the expectations and viewpoints of the other person. This skill requires us to understand the others' actions from their point of view and try to adapt to the situation or goals. Similarly, when we change our goals or behaviours to adapt to the certain needs of the situation, we are applying Communication Adaptability skill (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). According to Ting-Toomey (1999), Communication Adaptability skill requires us to be sensitive to the others' cultures and also have awareness when making ethnocentric biases.

Ting-Toomey's (1999) Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills framework suggests that the concept of empathy is important in solving intercultural conflict. The concept of 'empathy' is defined as 'an understanding why people behave as they do with certain consequences can be pursued only so far' (Calloway-Thomas, 2010; P. 11). Duan and Hill (1996) refers 'empathy' as an individual disposition or a situation-specific experience. Individual disposition in empathy refers to the person's ability to take the others' perspectives and feel their emotions while situation-specific experience refers to sensing others' private world as if it were their own or respond vicariously to a person or stimulus (Davis, 1980; Batson & Coke, 1981; Rogers, 1959; as cited in Duan, Wei and Wang, 2009).

The feeling of empathy is important in intercultural conflict resolution as it is seen as a "bridge to civility" (Berman, 1998; as cited in Calloway-Thomas, 2010). Empathy enables a person to put himself in the other person's perspectives, tries to understand the situation and solves conflicts in the best possible way. A person's empathy is influenced by their cultural orientations (Duan, Wei & Wang, 2009). Duan, Wei et. al (2009) further explains that individualists and collectivists differ in their characters to empathise. Triandis (1995) proposes empathy as one of the characteristics of collectivist culture. In a research conducted by Duan, Wei et. al (2009), it was found that both collectivists and individualists have a significant role but it is more inconsistent with the individualist participants. It is suggested that the collectivists' value orientation enable them to empathise well with others intellectually and emotionally but for the individualists, it is more inconsistent due to their self-focused characteristics. Duan et. all further explains that the findings of this study should not be generalised as individual differences in

collectivist/individualist culture exist; a person from an individualist culture may exhibit empathy level similar to the collectivist. This is also consistent with Caldwell-Harris and Aycicegi (2006) and Cheon, Marthur & Chiao (2010).

The existence of empathy is important when applying Ting-Toomey's (1999) Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management skills as it allow us to understand the conflict and feel for the other person. Calloway-Thomas (2010) states that empathy is crucial in intercultural relations as it helps to improve relationships and solve conflicts that arises. By having the feeling of empathy, a person is able to solve the intercultural conflict such as misunderstanding as he or she is able to position him/herself in the situation and have an understanding from the other person's point of view.

2.5   Definition of Misunderstanding

At times, the flow of communication may not be smooth between the interlocutors involved. Conflicts may occur in communication when the messages intended are interpreted differently by the other person. The conflict that arises may have been caused by misunderstanding or miscommunication between the two interlocutors. Hall (2002) uses the term 'conflict' to refer to misunderstandings. The terms '*misunderstanding*' and '*miscommunication*' may differ although it sounds alike. Coupland, Wiemann and Giles (1991) view the term 'miscommunication' as a concept that is '*interesting and slippery*' as it is often used loosely to define any problems that occur during interaction and as a local process to '*misunderstanding*'. Reilly (1984) believes that miscommunication is any form of misunderstanding or misinterpretation that may lead to a disruption in the flow

of communication to explicit corrective action by the interlocutors. Bell (1984) defines miscommunication as a general term that encompasses a number of aspects of an unsuccessful communication; terms such as 'misinterpretation', 'misunderstanding' 'inaccuracy' and 'communication breakdown'. These are some of the definitions that considers misunderstanding as one of the components under the umbrella term 'miscommunication'.

Meanwhile, Milroy (1984), describes 'miscommunication' as a disparity between the speaker's intention and the hearer's understanding. She makes a distinction with the term 'misunderstanding' as the mismatch between the speaker's and the reader's semantic reading of the utterances caused by a communicative breakdown and one of the interlocutors realise or notice that something has gone wrong in the intended message (Bell, 1984). Humphreys-Jones (1986) posits misunderstanding as a process of "incorrect understanding by one person of the intention underlying the output of one another" (Bell, 1984, p. 259). Bell concludes that misunderstanding is a concept related to hearer-based and it is more inclined towards one's perceptions and miscommunication may occur at other points of the communication situation. Bell (1984) further adds that miscommunication consist of misunderstanding (hearer-based) and misinterpretation 'speaker-based' and such distinction shows that it is probable that a hearer to misunderstand something that was clearly or precisely expressed by the speaker.

The Cambridge Dictionary (2016) defines '*misunderstanding*' as a situation that occurs when a person does not understand something correctly. It is also used to define 'a disagreement, argument or fight'. Similarly, The Oxford Dictionary (2016) also defines 'misunderstanding' as 'a failure to understand something correctly' and 'disagreement or quarrel'. In contrast, Cambridge Dictionary (2016) makes a distinction of the definition of 'miscommunication' as 'failure to communicate ideas or intentions correctly' while Oxford (2016) outlines the word as a 'failure to communicate adequately'. Based on the distinctions on the definition of 'misunderstanding' and 'miscommunication', misunderstanding can be described as a situation that happens when someone does not understand the message conveyed by the sender correctly or have different interpretations on the message conveyed and it may result in disagreement, argument or fight whereas miscommunication is the inability of the interlocutors to convey their ideas adequately due to the limitations in their communicative or language skills.

Therefore, the term 'misunderstanding' is used for this research as both native and non-native participants involved are able to converse without any limitations in communicative and language skills. In addition, Bell (1984) cites that misunderstandings are more oriented towards perceptions and in this study, the misunderstanding narrated by the participants are their own perceptions of the instances occurred.

2.5.1   Misunderstanding in Intercultural Communication

XiZhen Qi (2011) cites that misunderstanding is inevitable and normal to occur between the interlocutors while communicating with one another. When two people from different cultural and language background communicate, it is usual for misunderstanding to occur (Martin & Nakamaya, 2013). According to Kaur (2011), a mutual understanding needs to be achieved in order for communication to be successful. However, sometimes this may be difficult to achieve when the communication is intercultural; people of different languages and cultural backgrounds (Mauranen, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial that misunderstanding should be minimised in order to achieve successful communication.

Misunderstanding in intercultural communication could be attributed due to external or internal factors. The 'external' misunderstanding could have been caused when there are obstructions in the flow of the communication system. These obstructions may occur during conversation that impede one's understanding of the messages that the other person is trying to convey. Bazzaniela and Damino (1999) refer to these obstructions in their taxonomy as levels or 'Triggers of Misunderstandings' that may have caused misunderstandings between two interlocutors at a linguistic level. They have made distinction into five levels; phonic, lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. Bazzanella and Damiano (1999) further clarify that they do not see the levels mentioned as the cause but rather as triggers that facilitate misunderstanding during conversational interaction. In addition, this taxonomy believes in the role of the interlocutors involved during

interaction is very important in the ongoing conversation. Figure 2.3 shows Bazzaniela and Damiano's (1999) *Triggers of Misunderstanding*:

Structural triggers:

a) structural ambiguities (lexical etc.)

b)foreign language factors

c)similarities between linguitic codes

d)disturbance along the communicative channel

Triggers related to speaker:

a) 'Local' factors: slips of tongue, mispronounciation

b)'Global' factors : politeness, indeterminacy, anacolutes

Triggers related to the interaction between the participants:

a) Non-shared knowledge

b)Topic organization

c) Focusing problems

Triggers related to the interlocutor:

a) knowledge problems, false beliefs, lexical incompetence, gaps in knowledge

b)cognitive process such as wrong inferences

Figure 2.3 : Bazzaniela & Damiano's (1999) 'Triggers of Misunderstanding'

In addition to linguistic factors, misunderstanding may also occur due to the differences in communication styles between interlocutors of different cultures (Harnisch, David & Dumanig, 2009). As mentioned, each member of a culture has different perceptions on how one should behave, ways of conduct and also different ways to communicate ideas, opinions or show politeness. One person's perception is subjective and it is based on what the person thinks is the 'ideal' way of doing things based on his or her experiences and also culture. When we encounter another person, who holds different values and beliefs, we may have in view that the other person's value and beliefs as not perfect as it is incongruent with our own views. Brown (2007) further explains that

our distorted view of the others' culture may cause conflicts such as misunderstanding in any intercultural relationship.

In a study between Indian and British English language speakers, it was found that when the Indian English speakers used high volume during business conversations, the British English speakers perceive that the Indian English speakers are angry (Gumperz, 1982; as cited in Tannen, 1985). The British English speaker then responded to the manner of the perceived anger thus, confusing the other interlocutor. This somehow has led to a misunderstanding between the Indian English and British English speakers (Tannen, 1985). Similarly, a study conducted by Gumperz (1982, as cited in Hall, 2002) on interviews between East Asian applicants and English interviewers found that cultural misunderstandings occurred due to the applicants tend to explain their abilities in an indirect or modest manner. Hall (2002) further adds that directness and indirectness in communication style is one of the factors that may contribute to cultural misunderstandings. Therefore, conflict, in form of a misunderstanding may occur when two people of differing cultures could not see things and communicate in an effective manner accordingly.

This present study aims to investigate the differences in cultural communication style and cultural values that might have caused of misunderstanding between native and non-native ESL teachers in Malaysian schools.

2.6   Perceptions

Perceptions is a process of how we see and interpret others or situations based on our personal viewpoints and existing knowledge. Floyd (2011) defines perception as a process of making meaning from our experiences. It is how we look at others and the world around us (Hybels & Weaver, 2009). Different people may have different perceptions towards others or the situations that they encounter based on their life experiences, values, cultures and our personal opinions. According to Hybels and Weaver (2009), each of us have expectations, knowing what is to confront us and preparing for it, which is a type of perceptual filter called 'psychological sets' that have profound effect on our perceptions.

Without expectations, each new encounter is often confusing which automatically and unconsciously fit our sensations into categories that we have learned, we often distort the categories in process (Ratey, n.d, as cited in Hybels & Weaver, 2009). For example, a person who was involved in a bad relationship may perceive a relationship differently than those who were more fortunate. A person may perceive another person of a different culture based on his or her background knowledge, past experiences and the experiences of others. When we look at someone who appears to be coughing, looking pale with a runny nose, we may perceive that the person is not feeling well based on the physical appearances of the person. Therefore, factors such as our previous experiences or existing knowledge may influence how we perceive people or an environment.

Wood (2014) defines perceptions as an operational process of selecting, organizing and interpreting people, objects, events, situations and activities. Wood further classifies the process into three categories; selection, organization and interpretation. Floyd (2011) also states that the three basic stages of perception are selection, organization and interpretation. However, Hybels and Weaver (2009) describe that our perceptions towards others often appear less than perfect due to deletions, distortions and generalizations.

2.6.1   Perceptions and Culture

Based on the process of perceptions described above, each of us has our own perceptions of ways of doing things, values, beliefs and norms according to the culture that we belong to. It is a process coined as 'perceptual consistency' which refers to our needs to perceive experience exactly as we have perceived it previously (Gamble & Gamble, 2002). Those who share the same experiences may perceive their environment in similar fashion whereas those with different sets of experiences may perceive things around them differently and results a wider gap between them (Singer, 1985).

Our perceptions on the environment around us might be based on the culture that we have learned or are accustomed to. The culture and co-cultures that we identify with is one of the influences on the precision of our perceptions (Floyd, 2011). According to Weiner, Healy and Proctor (2003), cultural differences in perceptions emerged in the ways the Eastern and Western cultures perceive themselves against others. Therefore, we expect others to behave in a certain manner according to what we perceive as the correct way of doing things. However, another individual from a different culture may have

different assumptions, rules and have distinctive perceptions than us and this may lead to misunderstandings (Gamble & Gamble, 2002).

This could be illustrated in a scenario of Asian students in Western classrooms. The Asian students may not want to ask questions during the lesson as they believe that it is inappropriate and rude to interrupt the teacher during the lesson. This is likely to happen as the role teacher is valued highly and respected in the Asian culture. Meanwhile, the Western teachers may perceive the students' passiveness as a sign that they are not active, shy or probably do not understand the lesson. The differences in the perceptions of the Western teachers and Asian students may have caused misunderstanding between both parties and lead to stereotypes (Cowden & Jinyang Huang, 2009). Avruch (n.d) also states that differences in cultural perception may lead to conflicts such as miscommunication or misunderstanding. Thus, one's culture conditions their perceptions on others and an understanding of the other culture may help to understand the others' sets of values, beliefs and way of doing things better (Kastanakis & Voyer, 2013).

2.7 Native (NS) and Non-Native Speakers (NNS)

The role of native (NS) and non-native (NNS) English as a Second Language (ESL) learning is one of the most discussed issues over the past few years. Many scholars have discussed and argued the role of both native and non-native ESL teachers in language learning of the learners.

2.7.1 Definition

From the linguistic point of view, Chomsky opines that "everyone is a native speaker of any particular native language that a person has 'grown' in his or her brain" (Paikedy, 1985, as cited in Wilkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). Meanwhile, Davies (1991) argues that the first language that we speak since birth is our native language; therefore, he is the native speaker of the language (Cook, 1999; as cited in Boecher, 2005). Therefore, an English Native Speaker (NS) is someone who uses English since birth and considers English as the first language (L1) or mother tongue. Stern (1983), suggests the following that describes a native speaker of a language:

1. A subconscious knowledge or rules
2. An intuitive grasp of meanings
3. The ability to communicate within social settings
4. A range of language skills
5. Creativity of using language

However, Cook (1999) criticised Stern's dichotomy by saying that some native speakers may lack of metalanguage skills; the native speakers may be able to recognise the grammar rules of the language but they may not be able to analyse and explain the rationale of the rules (Boecher, 2005). In another criticism, Medgyes (2001) refuted that birth should not be used to determine whether one's a native or non-native speaker of a language. For example, those born of mixed marriages and children adopted by foreign parents.

As opposed to the Native Speakers, the Non-Native Speakers (NNS) are considered as those who learned a second (L2) or third language (L3) after they have acquired their L1 or the mother tongue. Over the past years, the English language has expanded and many of its speakers are those whose first language is not English. Kachru (1985, as cited in Medgyes, 2001) make a distinction between English and non-English speaking countries by categorizing in three circles. The *Inner Circle* refers to the countries that uses English primarily. Examples of countries in the *Inner Circle* are America, Australia, and England. Meanwhile, the countries that were colonised by the Inner Circle countries and uses English as the second language is categorized in the *Outer Circle*. Some of the countries in this circle are Malaysia, Singapore and Jamaica. Kachru (1985) further expanded the circle into the *Expanding Circle* which refers to countries that acknowledge English as an international language and English holds the status of a foreign language (Medgyes, 2001).

2.7.2 Issues on Native (NS) and Non-Native (NNS) English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers

The issues on Native (NS) and Non-Native (NNS) English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers have caused many controversies especially on the English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogy and methodology over the past few years. The NNS teachers are often regarded as more inferior compared to their NS counterpart in terms of knowledge and competence in the English language (Braine, 2005). Many studies were conducted on the issues of NS vs. NNS teachers, mostly on the teachers' self-perception and the students' perception.

In the East and Southeast Asia, a few research were conducted to investigate the English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' attitude and perceptions towards the NS and NNS teachers. A research conducted on perceptions of 600 Thai English foundation students towards their native English and Thai teachers found that the students have positive attitudes towards both teachers (Grubbs, Jantarach & Kettem, 2010). However, it was found that between the two types of teachers, the Thai students preferred NS teachers to teach them pronunciation, reading, speaking and listening skills whereas the local teachers are seen as effective in teaching them grammar and writing skills. The findings of the study suggested that the students may have positive feeling towards native and non-native teachers as a sign of respect in the Thai culture but they consider the NS teacher as the more effective teacher. The findings of this research are consistent with another similar study conducted on native English and non-native Thai teachers (Roh, 2006; Thonginkam, 2000; Photongsunan & Suwaranak, 2008).

Similarly, another research conducted on Thai university students on their attitudes towards NS and NNS English teachers found that students explicitly prefer the NS teachers over NNS teachers (Todd & Pojanapunya, 2008). However, although the students prefer the NS teachers more when it comes to English language teaching, they feel warmer towards their NNS teachers. The findings from this research is also congruent with a cross-nation research carried out on a Vietnamese and Japanese tertiary students' perception towards their NS and NNS English language teachers. It was found that the students perceived their NS teachers as a good example for pronunciation and also the best person to refer to the native speaker cultural knowledge but the NNS teachers fare

better in explaining grammar rules and the students could interact better with the NNS teachers of their shared cultures (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014).

As the many research results indicate that the students' preference for the English NS teachers over the NNS teachers, the community at large may have a preference or tendency to assume that the NS teachers are better than their NNS counterpart or as described by as the '*native speaker fallacy*'. This term is coined by Phillipson (1992) to illustrate the biasness that all native speakers are better teachers than the non-native teachers. By falling into the 'native speaker fallacy' notion, policymakers and stakeholders alike may prefer to employ the NS over NNS. Lee (2004) reported that the public has lost faith in the NNS teachers and blamed them for the students' poor performance in the English language. As a consequence, the teachers were made to sit for language competence test which many of them had failed and criticised by the press. This definitely has affected the NNS teachers' morale and furthermore made them appear to be less able to teach in English (Lee, 2004). Similarly, a survey conducted in Hong Kong found that NS teachers are seen to be more superior to their NNS counterpart (Tang, 1997). Educational institution preference for the NS than the NNS teachers also made the society at large believe that the NS are much more superior to the local teachers. It is reported that institutions that offers English language programs often cater to the NS teachers when advertising teaching positions (Clark & Paran, 2007; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2008).

2.8   Previous Research

Many research has been conducted in the recent years to study misunderstandings in intercultural communication in the workplace. Most of the research conducted on intercultural communication focuses on the issues found in professional and workplace such as business, medical and also in legal practice (Bowe & Martin, 2007). Beal (1992) conducted a research on the interaction between native speakers of French and native speakers of Australian English in a company in Melbourne, Australia. In this study, Beal focused on the differences of how both French and Australians colleagues respond to requests and how the differences in their sociolinguistic rules causes conflict by using Brown & Levinson's (1987) positive and negative politeness. From this study, it was found that both French and Australian interlocutors use different forms of politeness to reduce threat to the other person while making a request. In addition, it was also found that the participants in this study misinterpreted the negative politeness strategies used by their colleagues (Beal, 1992; Bowe & Martin, 2007).

Another study conducted by Marriot (1990) on the initial business meeting between an Australian and Japanese businessman. Marriot used observations and interviews to collect the data of the business encounter between the Australian and Japanese businessman. From the study, it was found that miscommunication occurred between the two interlocutors due to the different expectations that each of them have during particular phases of the negotiation. Marriot reported that both businessman had different views on their functions in the initial meeting. The Australian wanted to make introduction to the company's product and did not want to show any indication to proceed in the next stage

of negotiation. Meanwhile, the Japanese businessman wanted to obtain information regarding the Australian company and any relation to future cooperation. The clash of objectives between the Australian and Japanese in this study shows that people of different culture has different ways of negotiation during business encounters.

Similarly, a study conducted by Spencer-Oatey & Xing (2003) on business meetings between a British company and Chinese engineers found that although both parties were satisfied with their initial meeting, the Chinese engineers were very displeased when the second meeting was conducted. It was reported that one of the cause of displeasures among the Chinese engineers was the seating arrangements. The Chinese believed that since both parties have equal status, they should be seated along the opposite sides of the table with the heads from each group seated in the middle (Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2003; Bowe & Martin, 2007). In addition, it was also found that the Chinese delegations felt that the British chairman's comments on their relationship was not in depth and the compliments given were not strong enough during the welcoming speech. This shows that the Chinese delegations may have different expectations on how gratitude should be expressed and may have felt disappointed.

Those who work in the medical setting also encounter intercultural communication while working with colleagues from different countries and culture. A few research has been conducted from 1960's to investigate problems that arises while both providers and patients interact with one another with different culture work together. In the 1960's, research on miscommunication in medicine found that most of the patients were unhappy with the manner the practitioners disseminate the information to the patients (Cartwright,

1964; Hugh-Jones, Tanser, & Whitby, 1964; Raphael, 1969, as cited in West & Frankel, 1991). According to West & Frankel (1991), most of the miscommunication occurred were attributed to sociodemographic factors such as social class, educational background and cultural background. A few research conducted found that miscommunication occurs between the practitioners and patients was caused by different interpretations of people from different cultures.

A few research has also been conducted in the legal profession. Pauwels, D'Argaville and Eades (1992) conducted a research on the language used by Australian Aboriginals in the courtroom. It was found that the Australian Aboriginals use indirect questions for meaningful information although they are direct in asking questions related to routine situations. Similarly, Eades (2000) conducted another research that observe the reaction of Australian Aboriginal witnesses to type of questions asked. It was found that although some of the witnesses used Yes/No questions as an invitation to elaborate on explanatory narratives, there were some restrictions on issues such as family relationships or their social organisation. The Australian Aboriginals tend to use 'silencing' when they are faced with questions related to the issues.

Other than the settings mentioned, educational institutions are also one of the settings that research has been conducted on intercultural communication. Globalisation has made it possible for international students to enrol in a local university. In addition, many teachers and academicians have travelled abroad to teach in schools and universities. In Malaysia, Kaur (2011) conducted a research on misunderstanding between English as Lingua Franca (EFL) non-native speakers in an international university in Kuala Lumpur.

By using Conversational Analysis, recording between the non-native students were recorded and analysed in order to determine the sources of its misunderstanding. It was found that some of the misunderstandings occurred due to the use of unfamiliar and non-standard lexical items between the interlocutors, language performance such as mishearing and slips of the tongue and ambiguity. Another noteworthy study was conducted on crosstalk and communication breakdown between non-native speakers of English in Malaysia (Harnisch, David & Dumanig, 2009). It was found that crosstalk; the types of obstructions that lead to a misunderstanding were caused by mispronunciation, misinterpretations and semiotic interference. The study also reported that differences in cultures may contribute to misunderstanding between the non-native speakers.

A study was conducted by Dumanig, David and Hanafi (2012) on miscommunication between Filipino domestic workers and Malaysian employers. The study was conducted on a few Filipino domestic workers who worked with Malaysian family in Malaysia. Data was collected qualitatively by using phenomenology research methods by conducting interviews with the participant. From the study, it was found that miscommunication does occur between the domestic helpers and their Malaysian employers. The main cause of the miscommunication is attributed to the Malaysian employers' lack of proficiency in English language. However, this research is only one-fold as it does not include the Malaysian employers as the participant of this study. Similarly, another research conducted by Sweeney and Zhu (2010) on 14 NS and 13 NNS workers' accommodation strategies in business intercultural communication found that the NS attempted to accommodate to their NNS counterpart during business negotiation in a variety of strategies. Another key finding of the research indicates that there is an imbalance of

knowledge in intercultural communication issues and their inability to accommodate to the NNS' requests in effective manner.

Most of the previous research done in this field were conducted in the field of contexts such as business and hospitality. There is little research on the interactional styles and strategies employed by native and non-native English teachers (Rozina, 2001). One study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of intercultural communication program in an immersion English language program for South Korean teachers (Ngai & Janusch, 2015). However, it was not reported on any problems in intercultural communication involved between the South Korean teachers and the native English American speakers. As the NS and NNS ESL teachers come from two different cultural background, there is a gap whether these NS and NNS encounter misunderstanding while working together in the school context. They may have to use one common language; English to communicate but both NS and NNS teachers are two different individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses. They come from different countries and have different ways of doing things. Conflict may arise due to the differences mentioned while they are working together as they may have dissimilar goals or perceptions on certain issues (Hall, 2002; Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2013) Therefore, this research aims to investigate what are the incidents that both NS and NNS perceived as misunderstandings, what may have caused the misunderstandings and how the episode of misunderstanding resolved. It is suggested that the perceived misunderstanding might have been caused by differences in cultural communication styles and values.

In conclusion, when people from different cultural and language background work together, misunderstanding is susceptible to occur. Some of the previous research conducted found that miscommunication or misunderstanding does occur between interlocutors that are involved in intercultural communication. The different values, beliefs and way of doing things that each culture has does contribute to misunderstanding. In addition, differences in language and communication style may also contribute to the occurrences of misunderstanding.

2.9   Conclusion

In this chapter, important terminologies such as the concept of culture, communication misunderstandings, perceptions and intercultural communication are discussed. In addition, issues on NS and NNS English teachers are also reviewed. Culture and communication are two components intertwined to one another and each play an important role in our lives. Both culture and communication co-exist with one another. An individual makes perceptions based on their previous experiences, environment and cultural backgrounds. The way an individual perceives another person's communication style and cultural values are based on their experiences and environment. As individuals with different cultural values and communication styles interact, conflict in form or misunderstanding may occur due to the perceptions that each one has towards the other (DeVito, 2009; Hall, 2002; Ting-Toomey, 1999). The English Native (NS) and Non-Native (NNS) English teachers come from different cultural and linguistic background. Therefore, Native (NS) and Non-Native (NNS) English teachers in this study may be perceived to have encountered misunderstandings while working together.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology of this study and how data was collected and analysed. The methodology used in this study is qualitative. This research approach adopted in this study is perception based. The data collected in this study were analysed using discourse analysis by focusing on the episodes of perceived misunderstanding written in the narration and described in the interview.

3.1   Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted before this study was conducted. The main purpose of the pilot study was to identify whether NS or NNS ESL teachers perceived to experience misunderstanding while working with the programmes mentioned in Chapter 1. In addition, the results from the pilot study were used to determine whether most of the perceived misunderstandings were caused by linguistic factors or due to differences in cultural communication style and values. This aspect helped to determine the theoretical framework used in this study.

The participants selected for the pilot study were different from the ones in the current study. The participants wrote short narrations on what they perceived to be misunderstanding with one male NS participant interview informally. The participants in the pilot study were contacted through emails and the researcher interviewed the male participant face-to-face. Most of the narrations written in the pilot study were not lengthy

and most of perceived misunderstanding were on linguistic features such as pronunciation '*worm water*' instead of 'warm water' and the semantic meaning of the word 'hamper'. However, two instances of misunderstandings indicate conflicts in different values. The researcher decided to investigate more on the differences in cultural values, determine the aims and objectives and developed the methodology for the current study.

3.2   Theoretical Framework

Based on the preliminary findings from the pilot study, it was found that the perceived misunderstandings are mainly caused by differences in communication style and cultural values. Thus, Hall's concept of *High and Low Context Cultures* (1983) was used to identify the differences in communication style and Hofstede's (1984) *Cultural Dimensions* theory was used to find out the perceived misunderstandings caused by differences in cultural values.

Meanwhile, Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills* was used to analyse the skills used in solving the analysed perceived misunderstanding narrated by the NS and NNS participants in this study. This is illustrated in Figure 3.1.
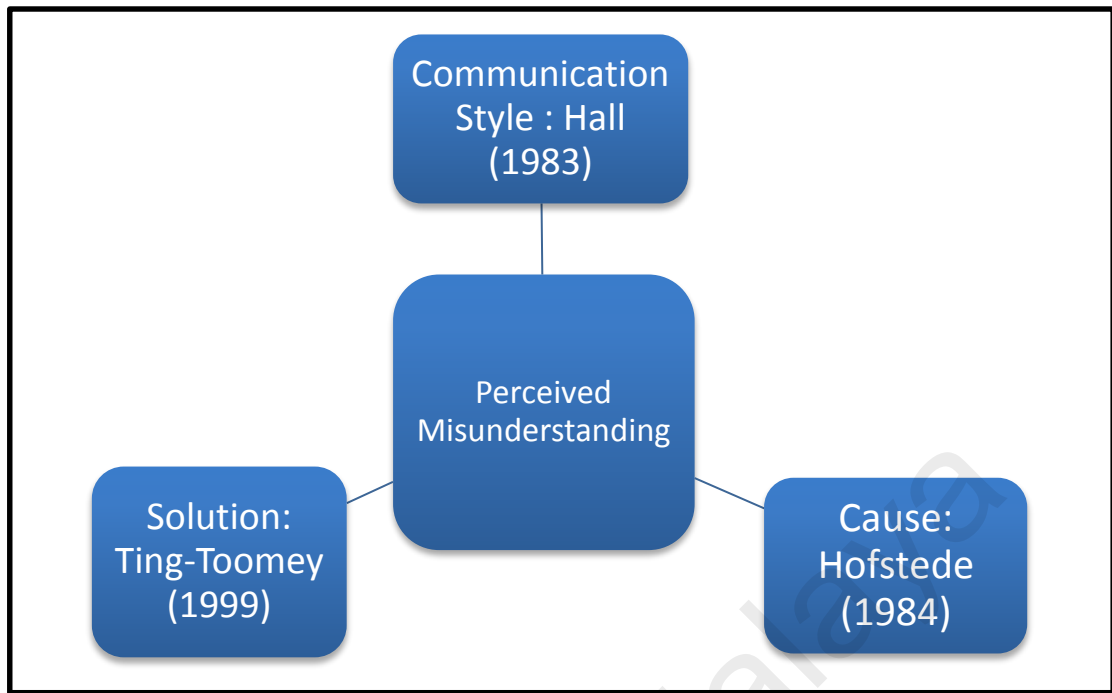
Figure 3.1 : Theoretical Framework

In Table 3.1, these theories are used to analyse the three research questions of this study. The first theory, Hall's (1983) High *and Low Context Cultures* (1983) is used to answer the first research question (R1); *What are the cultural communication styles of Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS)?* Meanwhile, Hofstede's (1984) *Cultural Dimensions* theory is used to answer research question two (R2); *Why misunderstandings occur in the communication between the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers?* Both R1 and R2 focus on the causes of the perceived misunderstandings. As for the resolution, Ting-Toomey's 1999) *Constructive Conflict Management Skills* answers the third (R3) research question: *How do the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS) solve misunderstandings in communication?*

Table 3.1: Theories Relating to Research Questions

Research Question	Theories
R1: What are the cultural communication styles of Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS)?	Hall's (1983) High/Low Context Communication Style
R2: Why misunderstandings occur in the communication between the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers?	Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimension Values
R3: How do the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS) solve misunderstandings in communication?	Ting-Toomey's (1999) Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills

3.2.1   Hall's (1983) High and Low Context Culture

Hall (1983) proposes High and Low Context cultures to explain different styles of communication skills between people of different culture. In the high context culture, meanings are embedded in the message conveyed and the listener should know how to read 'between the lines' (Nishimura, Nevgi & Tella, 2008). The culture with high context communication tends to beat around the bush in order to avoid confrontations and also to preserve their relationship with the other person (Gamsriegler, 2005).

In contrast, those with low context communication style are the opposite. They convey their messages explicitly without beating around the bush (Gamsriegler, 2005). They communicate in a direct manner and communication is based on feelings or true intentions (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua 1988). However, Gamsriegler (2005) further adds that those from the low context culture have low intuitive understanding which causes them to be less efficient than those of High Culture during communication. Hall (1983) suggests that countries that tend to have Low Context communication style are such as United States of America and Germany (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

In the context of this study, high context communication refers to a communication style that is indirect, explicit and the true meaning of the message is embedded. Messages conveyed may not be clear and the speaker may 'beat around the bush' to express their true intentions or feelings. Meanwhile, low context communication refers to a more direct

and implicit communication style. The meaning of the message is much clearer to the listener and does not require one to 'read between the lines'.

Hall's (1983) high and low context cultures theory has been used in most of the research on intercultural communication at the workplace (Gamsriegler, 2005; Nishimura, Nevgi & Tella, 2008; Kim et al., 1998). Most of past research found that most of the misunderstandings in intercultural communication occur due to the different styles of communication between the interlocutors (Collier, 1991; Goodman, 1994; DeVito, 2009; Hall, 2002; Oetzel, 2009). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, this theory will be used to answer the first research question (R1): *What are the cultural communication styles of Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS)?*

3.2.2   Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimension

Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimension theory is used to analyse the second research question as mentioned above in Table 3.1. In the context of this study, it was found that only two out of the five cultural dimensions fit into the findings. The two cultural dimensions found are Power Distance and Individualism/Collectivism dimensions. The following (3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.1) are descriptions for each of the cultural dimensions:

3.2.2.1 Power Distance

One of the dimensions in Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimension theory is power distance which refers to the role of distribution of power on cultures. It consists of *Low Power Distance* and *High-Power Distance*. Some of the countries that are said to value *Low Power Distance* are Denmark, New Zealand and Germany (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Meanwhile, some of the countries that are considered to value *High Power Distance* are Malaysia, Philippines, and Guatemala (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy 2013). The cultures that value low power distance believe that less hierarchy and equality in an organization is better whereas those who value high power acknowledge the role of power and authority (Brown, 2007; Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

In the context of this study, cultures that value power distance believe in hierarchy roles, respect and fearing the higher authority. They also conform to the orders given by those who are in superior ranks. Meanwhile, those who have a low level of power distance view that each individual is equal in an organisation. When two people with different values of culture power distance work together, their differences in this value may lead to conflicts on their roles in the organisation, which is in schools.

3.2.2.2   Individualism/Collectivism

Cultures that value individualism believe in independence over interdependence, rewards in achievement, rights and privacy and each individual is unique (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy 2013). Meanwhile, those who come from the collectivist culture prefer interdependence, harmony between group members and collaborative spirit (Ting-Toomey, 1988). In other words, those who are individualistic are more concern of 'I' whereas the collectivist is more of 'We' while working with one another. Their style of communication is more direct and they express their true intentions and meanings. Communication is direct when the verbal message shows the speaker's intent, needs, wants and wishes (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

Meanwhile, cultures that are collectivist usually have an indirect style in communication than those who are in the individualist culture. An indirect way in communication is when the speaker's true intent, desires and wants are not revealed directly and often the speakers have to 'read between the lines' in order to understand the message intended (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Ting-Toomey, 1999). According to Martin & Nakayama (2013), those with indirect communication often use high context communication where preserving the harmony in relationships is far more important than being forthright with the other person. Hofstede's dimension on individualism/collectivism is closely related to Hall's (1983) framework on *High/Low Context Communication* style.

As the individualist has a direct approach in communication and the collectivist believes in indirect communication fashion, conflicts may arise as both parties may not be able communicate well of their intent and opinions. The collectivist may not be able to make him or herself clear as their main goal is to keep harmony while communicating and most of the times, the individualist may appear to be insensitive or cold in their quest to communicate what is on their mind.

3.3 Ting-Toomey's (1999) Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills

Based on the preliminary data collected, Ting-Toomey's (1999) Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills will be used to answer the third research question on how do the native and non-native teachers in schools solve their perceived misunderstandings. It was found that Mindful Reframing, Communication Adaptability, Face-Management Skills, and Collaborative Dialogue skills fit into the findings of this study. An explanation for each aspect will be discussed further.

3.3.1.1 Mindful Reframing

According to Ting-Toomey (1999), Mindful Reframing skill refers to how both parties of different cultural background 'translate' verbal and non-verbal messages from the others' cultural viewpoint. Both parties involved need to be aware that the misunderstandings that have occurred may have been caused by different cultural habits and scripts. Therefore, in the context of this study, mindful reframing is a skill that we

use as we try to look at things from the other cultures' viewpoint and try to 'reframe' it according to the other person's culture.

3.3.1.2 Face-Management Skills

This skill addresses the issue of being respected and approved during interactions (Ting-Toomey, 1999). When trying to find a resolution, we should not humiliate others and also acknowledge their concerns or obligations (Ting-Toomay, 1999). Face-management skills can occur as both parties try to be tactful and not humiliate others while trying to resolve the perceived misunderstanding that occurred.

3.3.1.3 Collaborative Dialogue

Ting-Toomey (1999) describes Collaborative Dialogue skill as an inquiry process where both parties attempt to suspend their own assumptions regarding the misunderstanding that has occurred. By communicating and addressing the misunderstanding that has happened, the parties involved are using collaborative dialogue. As it may be challenging due to different communication styles, the individuals involved must communicate clearly to resolve conflicts such as misunderstandings (Ting-Toomey, 1999). In the context of this study, collaborative dialogue occurs when the parties involved discuss the perceived misunderstanding episode in order to seek resolution.

3.3.1.4 Communication Adaptability

Individuals from different cultures should be flexible or adaptable in their thinking rather than only adhering to their own set of thinking and behavioural patterns of their culture (Ting-Toomey, 1999). This is referred to as Communication Adaptability skill which requires us to change our behaviours or attitudes to meet the specific needs of the issue encountered (Duran 1992, as cited in Ting-Toomey, 1999). Ting-Toomey (1999) further adds that this skill requires the individuals involved to modify their behaviour, verbally and non-verbally in order to achieve effective communication. By accepting and adapting to the way things are done in a certain culture, we can minimise the misunderstandings that occurred.

3.4   Participants

For the purpose of this study, the participants selected for this study are Native (NS) and Non-Native (NNS) English as Second Language (ESL) teachers that were involved with The Native Speaker and English Teaching Assistants (ETA) programmes in Malaysian primary and secondary government schools. The NS are those who worked as a mentor to the NNS teachers or teacher assistants to the NNS mentors in both levels. As for the NNS, they were mentees to the NS mentors or mentors to the NS teacher assistants in schools. The numbers selected are five NS mentors/teacher assistants and five NNS mentors/mentees.

3.4.1   Pilot Study

As mentioned in 3.1, a pilot study was conducted prior to the present study. The purpose of the pilot study was to make sure that the NS and NNS teachers do experience misunderstandings while working together in schools. In addition, the pilot study aims to determine the scope of the study, objectives and the participants.

3.4.1.1   Native Speaker (NS) Participants

Prior to the study, four NS teaching assistants were approached to participate in the pilot study. The participants who responded were coincidentally of American nationality. Three participants in the pilot study were female and one male. All participants are aged 25 to 27 years old at the time of the pilot study. The four NS participants worked as teacher assistants in various places around Malaysia for a year or two. However, some of the participants had returned to their countries as their contract with their organization or company had ended. The data was collected through short narratives they have written on their experiences with misunderstandings while working in Malaysian schools. An informal interview with the male participant was conducted to obtain more information on the misunderstandings that occurred in schools. The remaining participants could not be interviewed as they have returned to their countries and also due to time constraints on the researcher's behalf.

3.4.1.2   Non-Native Speakers (NNS) Participants

As for the NNS mentors/mentees, only three teachers responded and were available to be part of the pilot study. The participants involved in the pilot study are Malaysian teachers who are currently working as English language teachers in primary and secondary schools. All participants are female aged between 26 to 28 years old when the pilot study was conducted. The participants are of Malay ethnicity. All of them consider Malay as their mother tongue and English as their second language although they mentioned that they use English more dominantly than their first language. Additionally, the NNS participants are optionist of English language subjects. An optionist teacher refers to teachers who are trained to teach English while the term non-optionist refers to those who are trained for other subjects but have to teach English due to shortage of English language teachers in schools (Goh, 2011 as cited in Noor Hayati & Mohd Sallehuddin, 2014). The participants had stayed abroad in English native speaking countries for a duration of time. In the pilot study, the three NNS participants managed to complete the narratives. No interviews were conducted as a follow up to the pilot study.

3.4.2   Present Study

Based on the findings of the pilot study, the current study employs ten NS and NNS ESL teachers comprising five NS mentors/teaching assistants and five NNS mentors/mentees who are currently or had worked in the programs mentioned in Chapter

1. The following paragraphs describe selection of participants, methodology of data collection and analysis of the present study.

3.4.2.1 Native Speaker (NS) Participants

One of the participants was introduced to the researcher by an individual who is not involved in this study and knows the participant through a mutual friend. Later, the participant introduced the researcher to four other NS teaching assistants. The selection of participants was done using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is the selection of participants according to the needs of the research (Chua, 2012; Dornyei, 2007).

All of the participants consist of American English native speakers who had worked as English Teaching Assistants (ETA) in secondary government schools and mentor to Malaysian teachers in primary school. As mentioned in the pilot study, all the participants were Americans. Therefore, the researcher decided to choose NS mentors/teaching assistants of American nationality for the purpose of this study. This was done as many of the NS comes from various countries with various cultural differences, especially those placed in the primary schools. In order to ensure consistency in the findings, the NS participants involved in this study are Americans.

The participants comprise two male respondents and three female respondents. All the five NS mentors/teaching assistants are still residing in Malaysia at the time this study

was conducted although some were in final preparations to go back to the United States of America.

In the first part of data collection, all participants were emailed with an instrument (Refer Appendix A) for narrative writing. The participants were required to describe incidents of misunderstandings that they have encountered. They were also asked to recall whether the misunderstandings were resolved or not and how they felt when it occurred. After a week, interview sessions were arranged with the NS participants to elaborate more on the narratives that they have written.

3.4.2.2 Non-Native Speakers (NNS) Participants

Five NNS participants agreed to become respondents in this study. All five participants that were available to participate in this study are female Malay English language teachers who were and is currently involved with the programmes as NNS mentors or mentees to the NS teaching assistants/mentors in government primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. Initially, the researcher managed to obtain one Malay English language teacher to participate in this study. The teacher later introduced the researcher to other teachers that she knew were involved with NS teaching assistants/mentors in their schools. This type of participants sampling is also known as snowball sampling (Chua, 2012). Only five NNS participants were maintained in this study (as explained, they were the only ones left at the time this study commenced). This was done to ensure the number of NNS participants are equal to the NS participants.

In the first part of the data collection, the instrument for narrative writing (Refer Appendix B) was emailed to the participants via email. The NNS mentors/mentees also had to describe the incidents that they have perceived to be misunderstandings, how did they feel and how it was resolved. For the second part of the data collection, the interviews had to be collected during school holidays as the teachers live in different states.

The NNS participants are currently teaching in various states in Malaysia. In the pilot study, only Malay English language teachers participated in the study. Therefore, in the context of this study, only Malay teachers selected as NNS respondents. This is also done to ensure consistency in the findings.

3.5   Data Collection

Table 3.2: Data Collection Process

STEP 1		STEP 2	
Narrations	Native Speakers (NS)	Interview	Native Speakers (NS)
	Non-Native Speakers (NNS)		Non-Native Speakers (NNS)

As seen in Table 3.2, data for this study was collected in two parts. In the first part of the study, data was collected through narrations written by the NS and NNS participants. Then, the participants were interviewed.

3.5.1   Narrations

This first part of data collection was done through narrations. Both NS and NNS participants were required to write narrations of a few incidents that they could recall and perceive to be misunderstandings while working in schools. In addition, they were also asked to describe whether the perceived misunderstandings were resolved and how did they feel while the misunderstanding occurred and after it was resolved or not.

This method of data collection employs discourse analysis method in a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2004). According to Cruikshank (2012), discourse analysis is a method used by researchers in interpreting spoken and actions of the individuals involved in situations. It is a method used to represent culture and society through analysis of the spoken and written texts (Antaki, 2008). Some of the spoken and written texts comprise of photographs, newspaper reports, journals and narrations (Gibson, 2014).

Prior to writing the narrations, both NS mentors/teaching assistants and NNS mentors/mentees were required to fill in a seven survey questions. The purpose of the questions is not to quantify the data but in order to collect additional demographic

information data. The additional information gathered from the survey will enable the researcher to get more insights on the participants' background. The survey questions were prepared separately according to the NS and NNS participants. The following are some of the survey questions asked for both NS and NNS participants.

A) Native Speakers Survey Questions:
- Age
- Gender
- Country of origin
- First language
- Previous non-native country (if any)
- Training prior to stay in Malaysia
- Position in school/organization

B) Non-Native Speakers Survey Questions:
- Age
- Gender
- Highest level of education
- Optionist/non-optionist of English language
- Any experience in native English-speaking countries

Questions on the respondents' age, gender, country of origin or highest level of education were asked to get some background information on the respondents. A few questions were prepared differently for the NS mentors/teaching assistants and NNS mentors/mentees. For example, the NS were asked to state whether they have been in

other non-native English speaking countries prior their stay in Malaysia. The relevance of this question is to make connections of their previous experiences to their adaptability to people of different culture. All NS mentors/teaching assistants stated that they have resided in another non-native English speaking country. Meanwhile, the NNS mentors/mentees were asked whether they have resided in English native speaking countries before their involvement with the NS in schools. This particular question was asked in order to find out whether the NNS have come in contact with English Native Speakers before the program. By having contact with NS previously, they may have had the experience working with the NNS and understand or have the exposure on their communication style.

A question was asked for the NS mentors/teaching assistants to state whether they have received any training prior to their stay in Malaysia. This question was asked in order to identify whether the NS mentors/teaching assistants were well-informed on Malaysian culture or ways of doing things prior to the program that they were involved in Malaysian schools. As for the NNS mentors/mentees, they were asked to state whether they are an English language optionist or non-optionist teacher. This was done in order to get additional information on the NNS mentors/mentees proficiency as not all non-optionist teachers may not have good command of the language and need to teach the subject due to lack of English teachers in schools (Noor Hayati &Mohd Sallehudin, 2014).

3.5.2   Analysis of Narrations

All of the narrations collected from both Native Speakers (NS) mentors/teaching assistants and Non-Native Speakers (NNS) mentors/mentees are analysed by coding. For the first analysis, the coding will be done under the theme '*communication styles*' in order to identify the differences in communication styles that might have caused conflict or perceived misunderstandings. The coding will be done based on the theoretical framework used for data analysis. As this study is using Hall's (1983) Low/Context Culture, coding is divided according to the two categories 'Low Context' and 'High Context'. Relevant examples are further discussed in Chapter 4 by linking related literature to the theory.

In addition to Hall's (1983) Low/Context Culture, this study also uses Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimensions to identify causes of misunderstanding that are related to the differences in cultural values. Two dimensions from this theory; Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism are identified as a major theme from some of the narrations. Key words/phrases/sentences that are relevant to the theories are underlined. A detailed discussion and excerpts taken from some of the participants' narrations are discussed in Chapter 4.

How the participants resolve the perceived misunderstanding are analysed using coding or theme with the heading 'Solution'. For this process, the analysis refers to the

theoretical framework used to analyse the resolution of conflict or misunderstanding in intercultural communication suggested by Ting-Toomey's (1999) Intercultural Conflict Management Skills. Sub-headings such as 'Collaborative Dialogue', 'Communication Adaptability', 'Face-Management' or 'Mindful Reframing' are used in matching the descriptions of the theory to the data obtained. Words, phrases or sentences that fit into the description of Ting' Toomey's (1999) skills are underlined for analysis.

3.5.3   Interviews

Once the NS and NNS respondents have completed their narrations, each participant is interviewed. The interviews conducted aims to gather more responses that the participants may have overlooked or does not state specifically in their narrations (Cruikshank, 2012). Questions used for this interview are semi-structured and open-ended questions. Some of the questions were prepared prior to the interview based on the narrations written by participants. A few other questions are added during the interview according to their responses with open-ended questions. By using open-ended questions, it is hoped that more data will be elicited from the respondents (Dornyei, 2007).

The interviews conducted with the NS participants were face-to-face. All interviews were conducted within two weeks with all of the respondents. The interviews were recorded using Apple's iPhone Voice Memo recorder application as it was more convenient for the researcher. The interviews conducted with the NS mentors /teaching assistants were ranging from 35 minutes to an hour.

As for the NNS participants, all interviews were conducted through pre-prepared questions. This was done due to the conflicting schedule of the researcher and the participants. The NNS respondents were not available to be interviewed face-to-face within the time frame and had to be interviewed through another medium such as e-mail. Only NNS 3 were able to be interviewed face-to-face. Other respondents typed their answers based on the questions that the researcher has sent through email. The researcher then added on more questions for further clarification. One of the drawbacks of this method of data collection was that the researcher was unable to observe non-verbal cues or gestures from the participants and replies are not prompt and elaborative.

3.5.4   Interview Analysis

Interviews conducted with the NS and the NNS were transcribed for further analysis. For the NS interviews, data was transcribed with the help of a transcriber. The transcriber helped the researcher to transcribe some of the interviews as there were some difficulties in listening to the respondents' answers due to their accents. All of the interviews were transcribed in verbatim. Verbatim technique in interview transcription is a process whereby spoken words are transcribed in the text in the exact way it is spoken (Jackson, n.d). Every word spoken during interview are transcribed as it was spoken and fillers such as 'um' and 'yeah' are also included in the transcription. In the addition, informal English words such as 'gonna', and 'wanna' are not changed to the formal form for the purpose of this study. Hesitations or pauses are indicated with ellipsis '……' in the transcription (Jackson, n.d). Words to convey emotions such as 'laugh' are represented in brackets. The use of verbatim approach in transcribing the interviews enables to preserve

the authenticity of the text. However, there is a limitation in the transcription of the interviews. Although the transcription uses verbatim approach, non-verbal gestures are not included in the transcription. Non-verbal gestures such as facial expressions may enable the researcher to obtain more information of the respondent's emotion (Dornyei, 2007). Each interview transcribed are also analysed using codes or themes under the headings 'Causes' and 'Resolution' with sub-headings from the theoretical framework such as 'Low Context', 'High Context' and 'Collaborative Dialogue'.

As for the NNS interviews, all data were transcribed by the researcher. The interviews collected from the NNS were also transcribed using codes or themes under the headings 'Causes' and 'Resolution' with sub-headings based on the theoretical framework for further analysis. Relevant words, phrases or sentences that fit into the description of the frameworks are underlined for analysis.

3.5.5   Data Validation

Data from the analysis of narrations and interviews are used for validation. Each sub-heading of data decoded are compared to one another in order to determine the consistency of the information that the respondents have written in their narratives and also answered in the interviews (Antaki, 2008). Most of the narrations were written in short paragraphs. Therefore, information from the interview is needed to support the data obtained from the narrations. This is also done in order to determine the validity of data collected (Guion, 2002). By cross referencing the data, the validity of this study's findings

is strengthened (Holtzhausen, 2001). The NS and NNS participant did not state nationality and race of the persons mentioned in the narrations and analysis. In order to determine that the persons that they have had misunderstandings are American NS Malay NNS teachers, the researcher contacted the NS and NNS participants during analysis for confirmation. All of the persons mentioned are American NS and Malay NNS teachers according to the context of this study.

The researcher also refers to another party who is not involved in the research as a reference when analysing the data. The researcher's interpretation of the perceived misunderstandings may be biased and based on one person's viewpoint. In addition, what the researcher may have interpreted might have different interpretations to others. Therefore, in order to ensure the validity of the analysis, the researcher has referred the data to the supervisor of this study to determine that the interpretation of the data matches the theories used in this study. As for the data collected from the NS participants, the researcher refers to an American native speaker who is not involved with this study. The native speaker assisted the researcher in the analysis from the native speaker point of view. By using another party to analyse the data collected, it is hoped that the analysis is valid and reliable.

3.5.6   Ethical Procedures

A few steps of ethical procedure have also been taken into consideration prior, during and after the study was conducted. This was done in order to ensure that the respondents' identity is protected for the purpose of this study.

3.5.6.1 Prior to the Study

Prior to the study, each participant was approached informally for their interest and consent to participate in this study. The objective of the study was explained to each participant for their understanding or knowledge of the study that they are going to participate in. Next, a letter of invitation was sent to each participant. In this letter, the participants were more informed on the purpose of this study and also, they were given the option whether to participate or not in this study if they feel uncomfortable being an informant to this research and have the rights to withdraw from the study at any point of the research (Chua, 2012).

3.5.6.2 During the Study

For the narrations and interview, both NS and NNS participants signed a consent form stating their agreement to participate in this study. All the NS and NNS participants agreed to participate in this study and were aware of the purpose of this study. In the instrument for narrations, the participants are given the option of whether they agree to be interviewed as a follow up to the narration. If they wish to be interviewed, the participants are asked to leave their contact number or email address for them to be contacted by the researcher to participate in the interview. All the participants in this study agreed to be interviewed for the second part of this study.

As for the interview, each participant was required to sign consent form as a proof of agreement to participate in the interview that followed up from the narration writing task. The participants were then reminded again of the purpose of the interview and were informed that the data collected from the interview shall not be disclosed to another party other than the researcher and the institution affiliated to the researcher. The interviews were also conducted in places that the participants feel comfortable.

3.5.6.3 After the Study

After the data was collected, ethical procedures are also taken into consideration to ensure of no misconduct of use of data. Once the interviews were transcribed, any personal information such as the places where the NS and NNS worked in Malaysia, their names, the names of the organizations or school affiliated are omitted from the study. Some of the information omitted will be replaced with pseudonyms. Each NS participant is classified as NS 1, NS 2, NS 3, NS 4 and NS 5 in this study. As for the NNS participants, they are identified as NNS 1, NNS 2, NNS 3, NNS 4 and NNS 5. Only the researcher knows their personal information such as their names. This is done in order to keep their anonymity from other parties (Resnik, 2015).

3.5.7   Transcription of Data

As mentioned, a transcriber was asked to help transcribe a few interviews of the Native Speakers (NS) mentors/teaching assistants. Some of the interviews between the researcher and the NS mentors/teaching assistants had to be transcribed by a transcriber as the researcher was having some difficulties with the accent of few of the NS. Prior to transcription, an agreement of confidentiality was signed between the transcriber and the researcher. This was done in order to protect the data and also the respondents' personal information in anonymity.

3.6   Demographic Information

Data presented below are the analysis of the demographic data on the Native (NS) and Non-Native (NNS) ESL teachers that participated in this research. The information displayed are in bar charts and the purpose of the charts are only to provide information and make comparison of their age, gender, training on the host country prior/during stay and also their experiences in contact of people from another NS/NNS country.

3.6.1 Age

The Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 show the range of age for both NS and Non-Native NNS participants in this study. For the NS, Figure 3.2 illustrates the age of the four of the teaching assistants participated in this research. The NS participants are 23, 24 and 25 whereas two participants who worked as a mentor/trainer are aged over 30 with the male participant, NS 2, aged 41 and the female participant, NS 5, aged 33 years old.
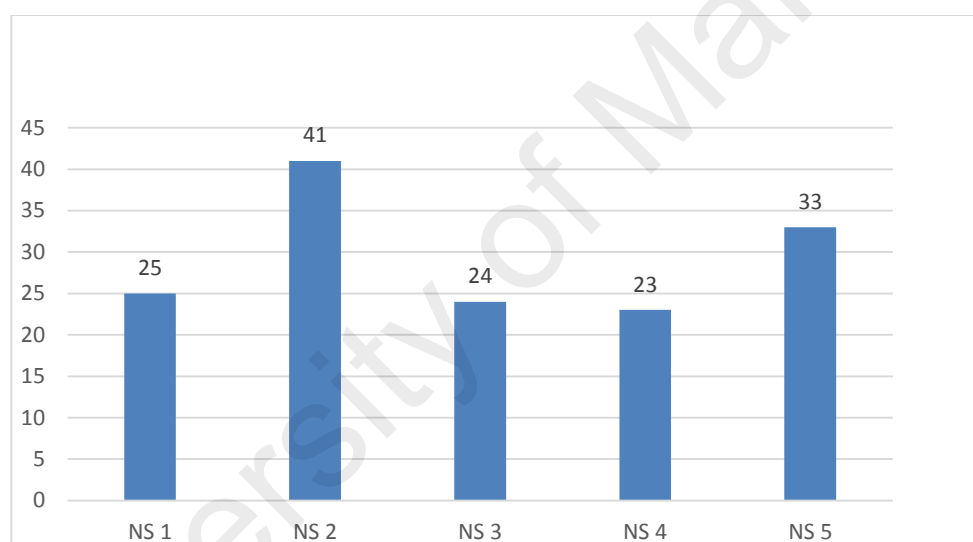
Figure 3.2 : NS Mentors/Teaching Assistants' Age

Meanwhile, Figure 3.3 shows the age of the five NNS participants. Four of the NNS participants are in their late 20's; three participants aged 28 and one 27 years old. Only one NNS participant is 31 years old.
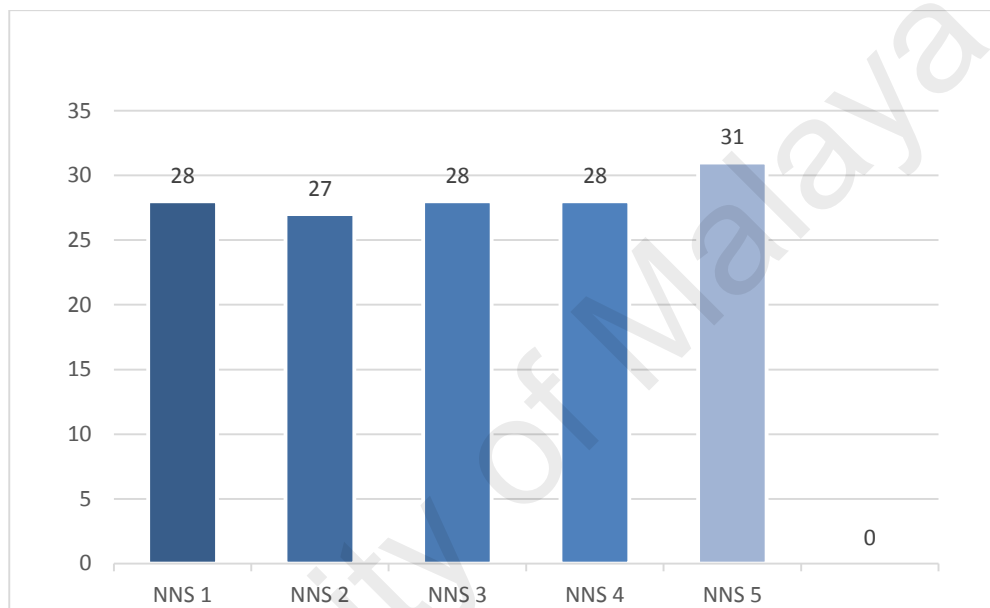
Figure 3.3 : NNS Mentors/Mentees' Age

3.6.2   Gender

The gender of the NS and NNS are presented in the following charts (Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5) with Male (M) =1 and Female (F) =2. There is an unequal gender distribution for the NS participants involved in this study as they consist of four females and two males.
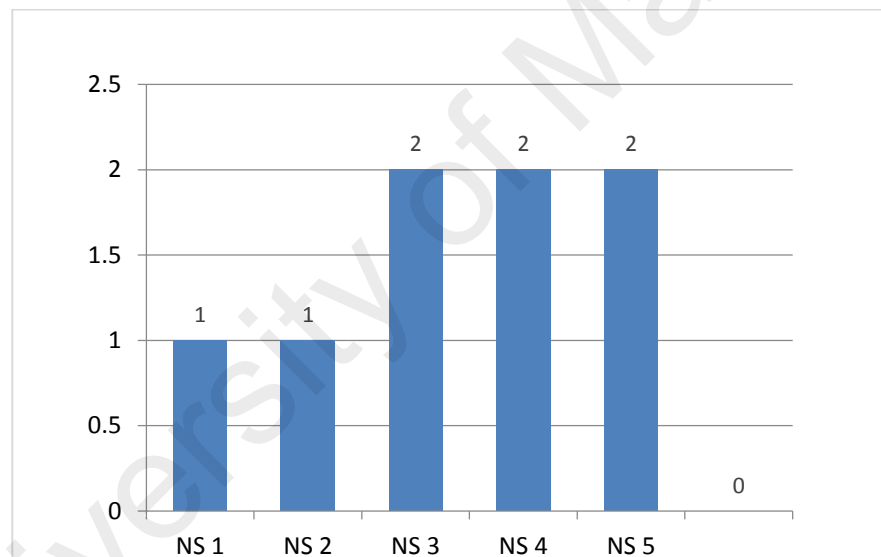
Figure 3.4 : NS Mentors/Teaching Assistants' Gender

As for the NNS participants, all five participants are of female gender as illustrated in Figure 3.5. No male gender participated in this study, therefore no data obtained in form of narratives and interviews from male NNS.
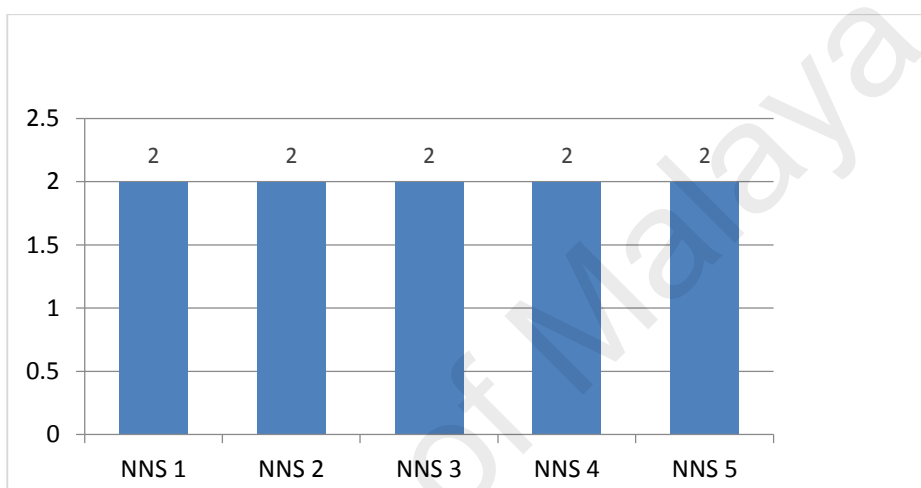
Figure 3.5 : NNS Mentors/Mentees' Gender

3.6.3   Roles in Malaysian Schools

The participants in this study consist of NS and NNS working in government primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. As mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, there are two programs for each primary and secondary school in Malaysia. In primary schools, the NS teachers hold the position as mentors to the local English NNS teachers/mentees. Meanwhile, in secondary schools, the NS participants work as English language teaching assistants alongside their NNS mentors. Although the NS and NNS have different roles

in primary and secondary schools, their aims are the same; to encourage cultural exchange between the NS and the school and to improve students' language skills and classroom experiences. The comparison of their roles in schools is illustrated in Figure 3.6 for NS participants and Figure 3.7 for NNS participants.
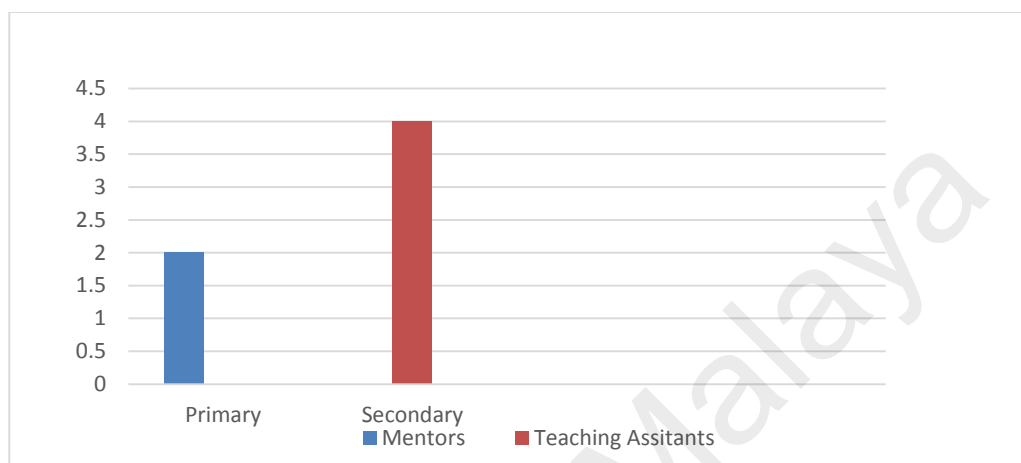
Figure 3.6 : Roles of NS Participants in Schools

In Figure 3.6, only two NS participants worked as mentors in primary schools and three worked as English Teaching Assistants (ETA) in secondary schools.

As for Figure 3.7, only two NNS participants were mentees in primary schools and the remaining three were mentors to the ETAs in secondary schools.
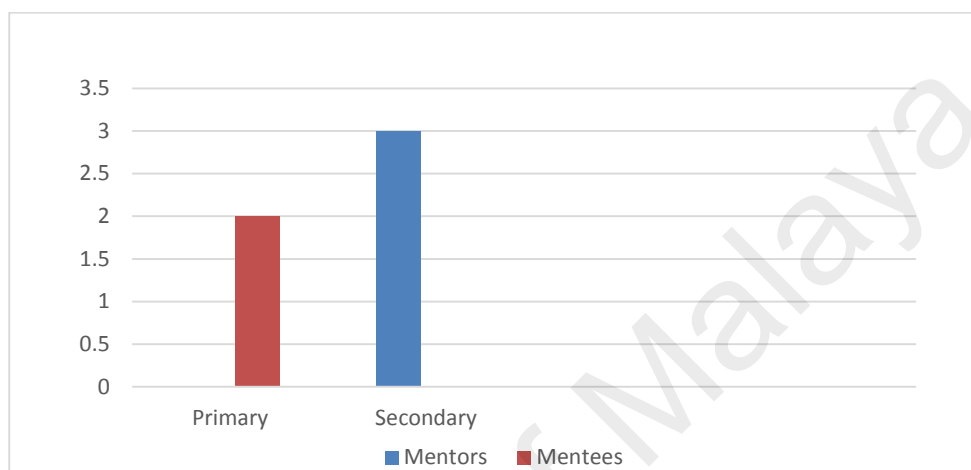
Figure 3.7 : Roles of NNS Participants in Schools

3.6.4   Length of Stay in NS/NNS Country

For ethical purposes, the names of the countries that both NS and NNS participants of this research is eliminated from the chart. Only their length of stay is displayed in Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9. In the narrations' instrument, NS and NNS participants were required to state the number of years and NS/NNS countries that they have stayed previously. The purpose of this question is to investigate whether the NS or NNS have had any experiences of having contact with English native or non-native speakers from different countries.

For the NS participants, they had to state the NNS countries that they have stayed previously and the duration of their stay. Likewise, the NNS participants had to state whether they have stayed in an English native speaking country and the length of their stay. All of the NS participants had resided in the 'expanded circle' countries where English is considered as a foreign language and used for business and communication purposes.
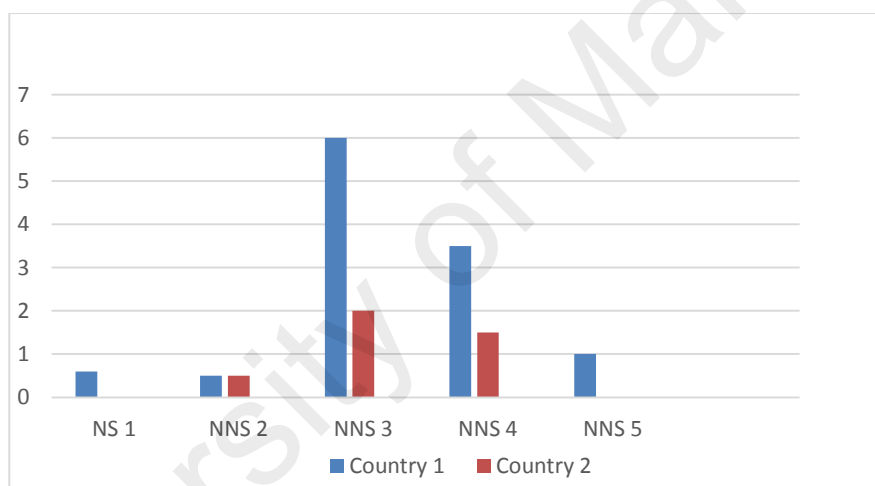
Figure 3.8 : NS Length of Stay in Non-Native English Speaking Countries

In Figure 3.9, all five NNS participants had studied abroad had teaching experiences in English native-speaking classrooms. Based from the data collected from the interview, they had to attend classes, live in the same house, work part time jobs together and also be involved in extra co-curricular activities with other English native speakers of their host country. Therefore, it can be said that both NS and NNS participants in this study have experiences dealing with people of different cultures and linguistic background.
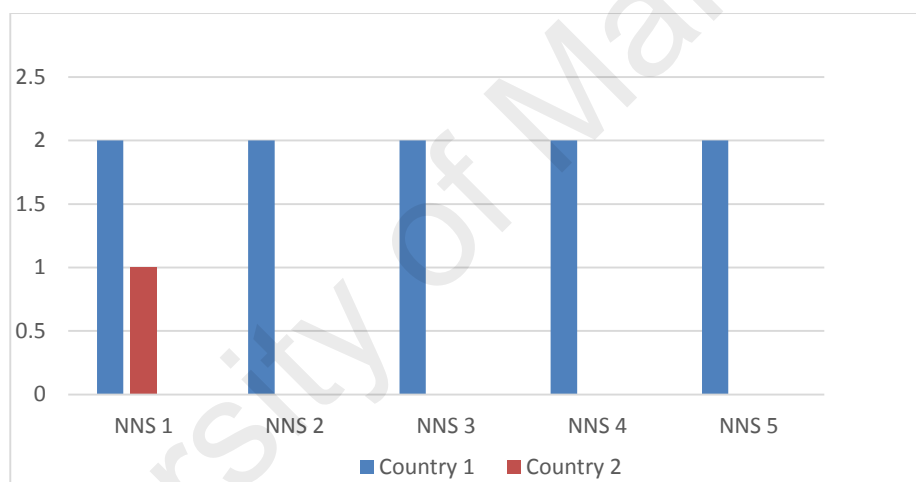
Figure 3.9 : NNS Length of Stay in Native English-Speaking Countries

3.6.5 Training Prior or During Stay

In addition, NS participants had to state whether they had training or exposure to the host countries prior to their stay. The purpose of this question is to know whether the participants have received any training and are well informed of their host country's culture. Out of the five NS participants that participated in this research, only three stated that they had been trained on Malaysian cultures such as how to greet the opposite sex, about the customs and general way of doing things. Based on the interviews, NS 1 stated that workshops were conducted by the organization that they worked with and also the state education department of the state that they resided as part of their 'orientation' program. However, one teaching assistant and two mentors that worked in the government primary school state that they did not receive such training before they started working. The data presented in Figure 3.10.
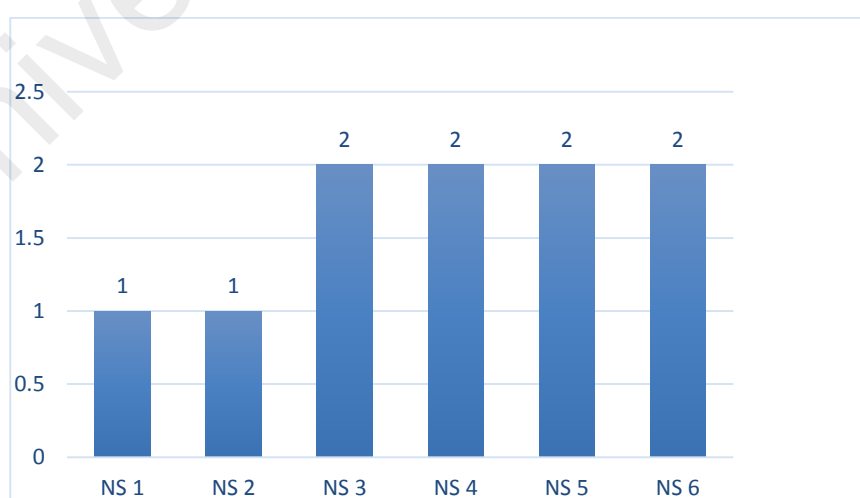
Figure 3.10 : NS Training Prior/During Stay in Host Country

3.6.6 English Language Optionist

The NNS participants were asked to state whether they are English language optionist teachers or not. The term 'English language optionist' refers to teachers who are trained to teach English as their core subject or received training that specializes in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in Malaysia. The question is included in the NNS' narration instrument in order to obtain information whether the teachers are trained to teach English as some teachers in the primary and secondary schools are non-optionists and have to teach English due to shortage of English teachers in their respective schools. Some of the English non-optionist teachers may not be proficient in the language and have to struggle teaching English to the students (Jai Shree, Parilah & Juhaida, 2009). All of the NNS participants in this study are English language optionist and were government scholars who had their training in English native speaking countries. In addition, the NNS participants were able to carry out the interview using English well; thus, the NNS participants are able to communicate with their respective NS mentors/teaching assistants while working together. The data is presented in Figure 3.11 with 1=Yes and 2=No:
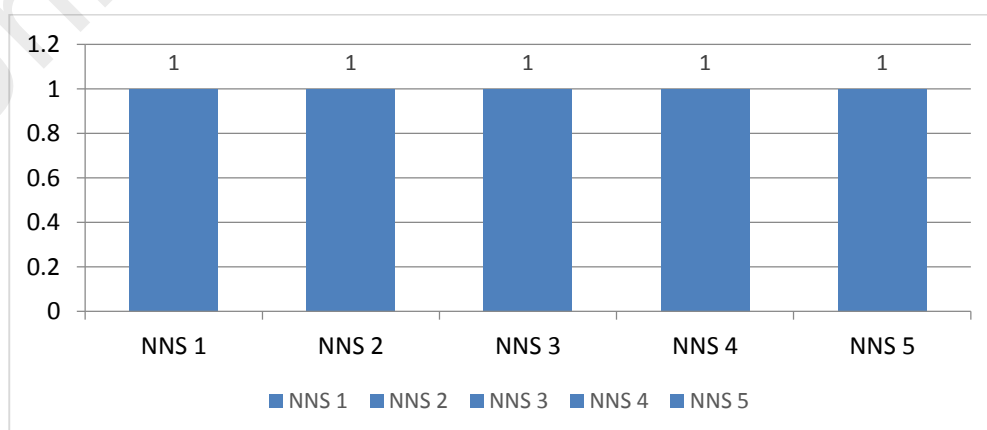
Figure 3.11: NNS Optionist/Non-Optionist Teachers of English Language

3.6.7   Profile of NS Participants

As mentioned above, each of the English Native Speakers (NS) are coded NS1, NS 2, NS 3, NS 4, NS 5 and NS 6. Table 3.3 provides the profile of each participant, in order to give more understanding of their background.

Table 3.3: Profile of NS Participants

Participants	Profile
NS 1	A male participant who comes from the United States of America. At the time of the study, he is 25 years old. He worked as an English Teaching Assistant (ETA) in a secondary sub-urban school in Johor for a year. Previously, he spent six months in a country in South America for an internship.
NS 2	A male participant who comes from United States of America. At the time of the study, he is 41 years old. Previously, he was an English high school teacher in America. He worked as a mentor in a primary sub-urban school in Selangor for 3 years. Later, he worked as a Pro-ELT mentor for a year. He had live in Asia for almost 13 years. Previously, he had taught in two Asian countries.

NS 3	A 23-year old female English Teaching Assistant (ETA). She comes from United States of America. At the time of the study, she had worked in a rural secondary school in Sabah for a year. Prior to her stay in Malaysia, NS 5 had worked in a country in Africa for 5 months as an English teacher.
NS 4	A 24-year old female English Teaching Assistant (ETA). At the time of the study, she had worked in a rural secondary school in Sabah. Prior to her stay in Malaysia, NS 4 had worked in a country in the Africa continent for 5 months as an English teacher.
NS 5	A female mentor in primary school since 2011. She has also worked as a Pro-ELT mentor. At the time of the study, she was 33 years old and had worked in a sub-urban secondary school in Kuala Selangor, Selangor. Prior to her stay in Malaysia, NS 5 had worked in three countries in Asia and South-East Asia.

'Table 3.3 continued'

3.6.8   Profile of NNS Participants

Each of the English Non-Native Speakers (NNS) is also coded as NNS1, NNS 2, NNS 3, NNS 4, and NNS 5. The following table (Table 3.4) displays the profile of each participant, in order to give more understanding of their background.

Table 3.4: Profile of NNS Participants

Participants	Profile
NNS 1	A 28-year old female English teacher. At the time of the data collection process, she was working in a sub-urban secondary school in Pasir Gudang, Johor. She had stayed in an English-speaking country for two years while studying in university.
NNS 2	A 27-year old female English teacher. She also works in a sub-urban secondary school in Pasir Gudang, Johor. She stayed in English speaking country for two years while doing her degree.

NNS 3	A 28-year old female English teacher in a primary school. At the time of data collection, she was teaching in a rural school in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan. She also stayed in English speaking country for two years while doing her degree
NNS 4	A 28-year old female English teacher in a primary school. At the time of data collection, she was teaching in a sub-urban school in Klang, Selangor. She also stayed in English speaking country for two years while doing her degree.
NNS 5	A female English teacher in a secondary school. At the time of data collection, she was teaching in a sub-urban school in Manjung, Perak and aged 31 years old. She also stayed in an English-speaking country for two years while doing her degree.

'Table 3.4 continued'

3.7   Conclusion

This chapter discuss the methodology used in data collection and analysis of this research. This study employs qualitative research with discourse analysis method. Data from the NS and NNS participants are collected through narrations of their perceived misunderstanding and whether it was solved or not. In addition, the participants are also interviewed to find consistency in their narrations and obtain clarification and more information that were not written in the narrations. The data collected then are analysed using the theoretical framework of this study Hall's *High and Low Context Cultures* (1983), Hofstede's (1984) *Cultural Dimensions* and Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills* to answer the three research questions.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter shows the findings of the study. Data obtained from some the narrations and interviews are presented as excerpts. Not all the data obtained from the narrations and interviews were relevant to the study. In particular, NNS 4's narration and interview are not analysed as the data did not help to answer the research questions. All he data were analysed qualitatively based on the themes emerged. As mentioned in Chapter 3, each participant will narrate incidents that they perceive to be misunderstandings while working with NS or NNS teachers in the schools they served. The narrations written are analysed according to the theme. Each participant was then interviewed via a set of semi-structured questions. The interviews are transcribed verbatim and analysed. Salient information such as specific descriptions were coded. The data from the interviews were then used as a cross-reference to the data collected from the narrations.

Data displayed in 4.1 answer Research Question 1 and 4.2 answer Research Question 2 which aims to investigate why and what may have caused the perceived misunderstandings between the native and non-native teachers. Meanwhile, data displayed in 4.3 answer Research Question 3 which aims to investigate the steps taken to resolve the perceived misunderstanding. The data in 4.1 is analysed using Hall's (1983) *High/Low Context Culture* theory. Data presented in 4.2 is analysed using Hofstede's (1984) *Cultural Dimensions* theory. As for data displayed in 4.3, the resolutions are analysed using Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills*. Excerpts obtained from the narrations and interviews are also displayed in this chapter.

4.1   Cultural Communication Style

Data presented below shows the cultural communication style that might have caused perceived misunderstanding. The data are collected from the excerpts taken from some of the NS and NNS' narrations and the interviews. It was found that differences in cultural communication styles might have caused the perceived misunderstandings that occurred.

The findings of this study suggest that some of the NS participants found the NNS teachers that they have worked with have high context communication style. Based on Hall's (1983) distinction on high/low context communication style theory, those who are in high context communicate in an indirect and explicit manner. In addition, they also tend to 'beat around the bush' before getting to the real intention. Although language factors such as lexical and colloquial phrases were mentioned as part of the perceived misunderstandings, the way some of the NS and the NNS teachers encounter and deal with the misunderstandings shows differences in ways of communication between two cultures. This somehow might have caused tension or conflicts among the NS and NNS teachers while working together in schools. As mentioned by Ting-Toomey (1999), conflict in form of misunderstanding may occur when there is discrepancy in the ways each culture communicates.

4.1.1 Native Speakers (NS)

The data obtained from some of the NS participants' narrations and interviews suggest that some of the NNS teachers that they have worked with communicate high context communication. The excerpts taken and analysed are the most relevant with the research objectives. For the NS participants, excerpts from NS 1, NS 2, NS 3 and NS 5 were found to be relevant for the purpose of this study. Therefore, the data obtained should not generalise that all NNS teachers communicate in high context style as there were some exceptions found. As mentioned previously, those who are in the high context group communicate in an explicit and indirect manner.

NS 1, who worked as an English Teaching Assistant (ETA) in Johor narrated an event that he perceived as a misunderstanding.

Table 4.1: NS 1 Narration

> There was this ETA who had a communication problem with his mentor. PPD officers were visiting his school. They had to prepare the necessary documentation for the visit. The mentor in question wanted the ETA to be more prepared for the visit and kept on saying, "I feel like something's missing". The ETA did not really understand what the mentor really wanted. He told me that he thought that the mentor wanted him to help find something that he has lost. I thought that the mentor could have referred to the PPD's visit. The mentor should have been more direct with the ETA.

In the interview, NS 1 further elaborated on the perceived misunderstanding in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 : NS 1 Interview

I:	Why do you think it happened?
NS 1:	He thought his mentor was <u>not clear</u>, <u>He would not say what he wanted to say</u>…. he would <u>ask five questions around the topic behind</u>, <u>beating around the bush</u> to get to it which you think, it's not big of a deal but after a year of working together, it really ruins the ETA's perceptions of the mentor….... He was saying you know, his mentor like hey, "<u>I feel like something's missing</u>." That was all he said. The ETA was very confused, what was he saying? Like what was missing? Did he lose something? Your wallet? Your keys? Like whatever, what do you need? Can I help you? He was in the middle of working with students and he was trying to get back to the students and the mentor kept on repeating <u>"I think something is missing. I feel uneasy"</u>. The mentor, I think was trying to communicate was that PPD officer is coming tomorrow. "Do we have all the paperwork in line? Should we go over it one more time? See that we have everything…Should we like, talk about it? Do we have a game plan? How do we talk to the PPD officer?" The ETA just went over his head, he didn't hear that, he just heard "Hey, I lost something, help me" and he thought the mentor was being selfish and said "You know what? I gotta go work with these students, <u>if you have something you wanna say</u> to me, <u>please say it clearly</u> "…. and so, it created a bad tension there when they just weren't understanding each other.

In Table 4.2, NS 1 described that the ETA mentioned in this narration complained that the mentor was 'not clear', 'would not say what he wanted to say', 'beating around the bush' while communicating with the him. Instead of expressing his concerns on the visit implicitly, the ETA's mentor was described to keep saying "I feel something is missing. I feel uneasy". It seemed that the ETA could not comprehend the intended message and this had led to a conflict between him and his mentor. This except suggests that the mentor communicated with his ETA in a high context style. The mentor could have been more

direct in expressing his concern instead of using ambiguous statement such as "I feel something is missing. I feel uneasy". He might have expected that the ETA could read the intended message and comply with the request.

Similarly, NS 2, who worked as a mentor in a primary school in Selangor also perceived an incident that happened in one of his workshops as a misunderstanding. In his narration, he mentioned that the one of the teachers only informed him regarding the matter the following week.

Table 4.3: NS 2 Narration

In 2010, I moved to Malaysia. In my first workshop with teachers, I played a game where I asked them questions, and then I threw a piece of candy to them. The <u>next week</u>, one of the teachers told me <u>the teachers were very uncomfortable</u> with that exercise because <u>throwing food seemed rude</u>. This misunderstanding happened because I was naïve about Asian etiquette. I didn't do it again.

NS 2's narration if supported by this excerpt taken from the interview in Table 4.4. In this excerpt, he further commented on the incident.

Table 4.4: NS 2 Interview

I:	You mentioned something about throwing candies and one of the teachers told you it's very rude. When did she tell you that? Was it right after the workshop?
NS 2:	I think it was the next day or the next week. Anyway, the next time I saw her again...yeah, <u>nobody said anything</u> <u>during the workshop</u>. <u>Nobody said</u> that <u>it was very uncomfortable</u> for us.

I:	So, they participated in the activity?
NS 2:	It seemed like they were having fun. You know. I mean they didn't say, "Hey let's do this every week." You know. Yeah but I think it seemed like they were perfectly fine with it. And then, because I think they were wearing a 'face.' They were <u>wearing a face</u> of being tolerant and being accepting of the workshop. But that's part of the diplomacy, you know. Again, this is culture. And then the next time I saw one of them, a woman about my age. So late 30's at the time, she said to me, "Hey you know, that was that was a little awkward for us. Just so you know, you could continue doing that if you really want to. But if it's not something that we would do,"

'Table 4.4 continued'

Although his mentees did not agree with his method of throwing 'candies' or sweets during the workshop, they participated in the activity and showed no sign of discomfort. NS 2 were informed of the issue later by one of the teachers. In the interview, he reflected that the teachers may have put on a 'face' and tolerated with the activity and did not inform him immediately of their concern. However, one of the teachers was honest with him and explained how uncomfortable it was for them. The NNS teacher's action showed that she was being honest and expressed what the others felt. The teacher was using low context communication style whereby communication is direct or straightforward. Therefore, it could not be generalised that all non-native teachers use high context communication style.

NS 3, an English Teaching Assistant (ETA) who taught in a rural school in Perlis, narrated an incident that she perceived as a misunderstanding which occurred while she and her friends were planning to organise an English Camp on Women's Empowerment in her school. Although the camp was approved by her organisation and the state education department, she felt most teachers misunderstood the aim of the camp and asked them to include male students as well. In the excerpt below, she said that the teachers were not direct in giving their excuses until another NNS teacher stated that they need to include male students in the camp for equal opportunities.

Table 4.5: NS 3 Interview

I:	Were the teachers straight forward about it?
NS 3:	<u>Initially, no</u> and then when we realized that the reason was they just wanted to provide the same thing for the boys then it was easy to compromise and tell them we would have a program for boys.
I:	Did you explain well the reason the camp was dedicated to the girls?
NS 3:	Yes, so it was something that the 5 mentors had discussed together and <u>we sort of had filtered responds</u>, different responds from them like "Oh, well you know," <u>not really getting straight to the point</u> but then one mentor said that we have to provide the same opportunity to the boys….
I:	So, initially the mentors were '<u>beating around the bush</u>'?
NS 3:	<u>Yes.</u>

From the excerpt, NS 3 explained that the NNS teachers were not direct in their request and gave NS 3 and her friends 'filtered responds' and 'not really getting straight to the point' until one of the teachers expressed the real intention of their request. This suggest

that the mentors used high context communication style in expressing their intention to NS 3 and her ETA friends.

Another incident narrated by NS 5, who previously worked as a mentor in primary schools, indicates that the NNS teachers that she worked with used high context communication to avoid observation sessions.

Table 4.6: NS 5 Narration

I had made an appointment with a teacher that I worked with in the mentoring program to visit her class at school for a formal observation. When I showed up on date agreed upon, she was not in the classroom, nor were the children. I waited around 30 minutes in her classroom, but she didn't show up. At the time, I felt annoyed that I had driven all the way to her school and was unable to do my job. I sent her a text message and called her, but was unable to reach her.

I spotted another teacher known to me in the hallway and explained the situation. This teacher then passed this on to the teacher I was supposed to meet. The teacher in question then sent me a message, saying she had forgotten about our appointment. I then sent her a message proposing a new date and time for the observation, and she did not respond. I ask her KP to pass the message along to her. She confirmed the date, and when I showed up on that day, I found out that she had taken MC, but had neglected to inform me. I then made another appointment to visit her class on another day. An hour before I was supposed to meet her at school, she sent me a text message, saying the class I was supposed to visit would be having library time instead of the class she had planned.

In Table 4.6, it can be seen that the teacher in the narration was trying to avoid the observation and used high context communication such as indirectness as a way to say 'no' to NS 5. Based on the excerpt, it is suggested that the teacher mentioned was using silence and avoidance as a strategy of indirectness. The teacher might have thought that

NS 5 could read between the lines that she did not want to be observed and used indirectness strategies to avoid conflicts with her mentor. Phrases such as 'she did not respond' and 'unable to reach her' when NS 5 tried to contact her suggest that she was using silence as a way of being indirect. Meanwhile, when the teacher 'didn't show up', 'had taken MC, but had neglected to inform me' and give reasons such as 'the class I was supposed to visit would be having library time instead' indicate that the teacher was trying to avoid the observation.

In the interview, NS 5 elaborated more on the incident in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: NS 5 Interview

NS 5:	So anyways, I tried to put her at ease. But she did that to me for years...hiding on me. I suspect telling fibs about how she forgot.
I:	Did she tell you directly that she doesn't want you to come into her class?
NS 5:	No, no she would not say this directly. She would let me know this by not answering text messages on the phone, not telling me her schedule has changed. Making up excuses when I showed up. She would also, not just for observations, I did very little team teaching or any work with her because I knew she would do to this. It became a pattern.

The excerpt in Table 4.7 further support that the teacher was using indirectness strategies such as avoidance and silence. NS 5 commented that the teacher was 'hiding on me', 'would not say this directly' by 'not answering text messages' and 'telling me her schedule has changed'. These examples from the interview support that the teacher

used high context communication style. She might have used avoidance and silence as a way of avoiding confrontations with NS 5. Silence is one of the strategies often used by the Malay community to avoid conflicts (Kuang, Wong & David, 2015). Meanwhile, avoidance is often used as a direct way of showing indirectness in communication (Kaur, 2013). In addition to silence and avoidance, the excerpt also suggests the use of lie in indirectness. NS 5 suspected that by 'making up excuses', the teacher was 'telling fibs'. Lying in indirectness is also used by the Malay community as a mean to avoid conflicts (Teo, 1996).

4.1.2 Non-Native Speakers (NNS)

For the NNS participants, excerpts from NNS 1 and NNS 3 narrations were found salient for analysis. NNS 1 is a secondary school teacher in a sub-urban area in Johor. She recalled a perceived misunderstanding incident while organising an English Camp together with an ETA in school. She narrated:

Table 4.8: NNS 1 Narration

> However, on the first day of the camp, J assumed his role as the organiser and assigned me tasks to be done together with other teachers. I was confused as I thought we were running the camp together but because the camp was going we did not talk about it. Later that night after we were done with the first day of the camp J asked me what I thought about it so far so <u>I addressed my confusion</u> to him. He understood where I came from and <u>we discussed</u> about how we could manage the camp better for the second day. A week after the camp we sat down to have our camp post-mortem. <u>We touched on</u> the subject of our roles again and he clarified by telling me that he thought having one person taking charge of the whole camp would be the way to do it, which is why he did. But he also admitted that <u>he was so relieved</u> that <u>I was opened enough to express my confusion/dissatisfaction to him</u>, which he said <u>rarely happened to him</u> throughout his stay in Malaysia.

From Table 4.8, it could be seen that NNS 1 talked about her confusion on her roles with the ETA. She described that the ETA felt relieved with her honesty, which he thought was unusual throughout the time he worked in Malaysia. NNS 1's description of how she communicated her confusion suggest that she used low-context communication style. This excerpt suggest that the use of high context communication style or indirectness should not be generalised among NNS teachers.

However, in another narration, an excerpt taken from a NNS participant's narration suggest the tendency of using indirectness or high context communication. NNS 3, a primary school teacher in a rural school in Negeri Sembilan recalled an incident that she perceived as a misunderstanding while working with her NS mentor. The perceived misunderstanding occurred while she was conducting a literacy screening in her classroom.

Table 4.9: NNS 3 Narration

> Initially, what I had in mind was that she would come to class and teach while I will be given the time to call each student individually for the screening. When she came a few minutes before class I actually told her this but to my surprise she said "Yeah, so I will take a few students and you'll take some of them". So, we did exactly what she had in mind. I felt bad throughout the whole session as the normal procedure would be the teacher have to teach first, assign the students with some tasks and then carry out the screening on a few students. In addition, I also felt that she had misunderstood the concept of the screening because I thought she was well informed from other teachers. One of my regret was, <u>I did not address the issue straightaway</u> and <u>just play along</u>.
>
> The next day, she came again with the intention to help me with the screening. Instead of addressing the misunderstanding that occurred the day before, <u>I was giving excuses such as "Oh, it's okay...I need to do something else"</u>. <u>I felt that I was not being honest to her</u> and it really upset me as I really value her as my mentor and a friend.

In the narration, NNS 3 wrote that she did not address the confusion immediately and 'just play along' when her NS mentor had carried out the screening wrongly. She also wrote that she was 'giving excuses' instead of explaining the perceived misunderstanding. She might have done this to discourage her NS mentor to join her in class and help conduct the screening indirectly. The excerpt also suggests the use of avoidance strategy in indirectness. By giving the mentor excuses, she might have tried to avoid confrontation, trying to dissuade the mentor indirectly and expect the mentor to read between the lines that the mentor's assistance was not needed. This further support indirectness is still prevalent among the Malay community.

4.2   Causes of Misunderstanding

To answer Research Question 2; *Why misunderstandings occur in the communication between the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English speakers?* the data obtained from some of the narrations and interviews are analysed using Hofstede's (1984) Culture Dimensions theory. Based on some of the excerpts, it is suggested NS teachers value individualism and the NNS teachers are more of a collectivist. The findings from this study also suggest differences in power distance values are present in the NNS teachers.

4.2.1   Native Speakers (NS)

Excerpts from NS 1 and NS 4 were found salient for analysis. From the excerpts analysed, it is suggested that the NNS teachers that they have worked with are collectivists. This is consistent with Hofstede's (2001) and Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov's (2010) scores on Malaysian's culture on individualism, which indicates Malaysians are more of a collectivist culture. This suggests that the NS teachers are more of individualists, which is supported by the findings of Hofstede (2001; 2011). Meanwhile, excerpts from NS 1, NS 2 and NS 3's interviews and narrations indicate differences of power distance values between the NS (American) and NS (Malay). This might have caused the perceived misunderstandings to occur while they worked together.

4.2.1.1 Individualism/Collectivism

In the previous interview (Refer Table 4.1 and Table 4.2), NS 1 elaborated an incident that he perceived as a misunderstanding between a fellow ETA and his mentor.

Table 4.10: NS 1 Interview

> ……the ETA felt confident that he has done a bunch of programmes…he was feeling good. He just wanted to talk to the PPD officer and to be honest it was very low stake for the ETA because they sorted of work for our organization and gonna leave in a few months, he may or may not go into education again, it's not like radically gonna affect his career what the PPD officer thinks of him at the moment ….so if he's happy with his work, he's okay.

Excerpt from NS 1 interview in Table 4.11 further elaborated on the perceived misunderstanding.

Table 4.11: NS 1 Interview

> …. the mentor, I think was trying to communicate was that PPD officer is coming tomorrow "Do we have all the paperwork in line? Should we go over it one more time? See that we have everything…Should we like, talk about it? Do we have a game plan? How do we talk to the PPD officer?"

From the excerpts (Table 4.10 and Table 4.11), it is suggested that the ETA described in NS 1's interview was more focused and confident on what he had accomplished and satisfied of the program. NS 1 perceived that the misunderstanding occurred as the ETA's mentor was more concerned whether their preparation for the visit was sufficient. This suggests that the ETA in NS 1's interview valued individualism, whereas his mentor was more of a collectivist which value accomplishment as a group. In addition, the high-context style that the mentor used in communication shows indirectness. Indirectness is described as the communication style of a collectivist (Nakayama, 2013). Therefore, the excerpts shown indicate that the NNS mentor is a collectivist. The differences in their cultural values, may have caused the perceived misunderstanding between the ETA and his mentor.

As mentioned, indirectness in communication is practiced in a collectivist culture. Indirectness is one of the strategies used in communication of the Malay culture (Lailawati, 2005). In the excerpt below, NS 4 further explained how her mentor would act as a 'mediator' on behalf of the other teachers:

Table 4.12: NS 4 Interview

I:	Would she just tell you, or would she, you know, not tell you directly?
NS 4:	She was good at telling me...it <u>wasn't always very direct</u>, but we'd have to have a conversation, just checking in, and <u>at the end of our talk she'd bring up something</u>, like, "This other English teacher wanted me to tell you that something, something; or she won't be coming to class this week because you can do it." So, I used my mentor a lot to learn about Malaysian culture, and <u>she was very much a go-between</u>, to explain things. Like, "She's too

	nervous to tell you that no, she couldn't help you with your project," Which wouldn't bother me, but I know that...
I:	So, she told you that on behalf of the other teacher?
NS 4:	Yeah.
I:	And the other teacher is an English teacher? But she didn't have the guts to tell you?
NS 4:	Yeah. <u>She was afraid that I would get mad</u>, but actually it was more like, "Thank you for asking," so my mentor would be like a liaison with the other teachers. That was mostly at the beginning of the year, when I was still new, I was still learning a lot. By the end of the year, the other teachers were a lot more comfortable with me.

'Table 4.12 continued'

By using NS 4's mentor as 'mediator', this strategy indicates the use of indirectness in a collectivist culture. The use of a third person in communication between the sender and receiver is referred to as a 'surrogate'. The use of 'surrogate' is one of the four types of indirectness that can be found in the communication style of the Malay culture (Asmah, 1996). In addition, the mentor also appeared to beat around the bush before she informed NS 4 about the other teachers. From the interview, NS 4 described that her NNS mentor 'wasn't always very direct' and '…she'd bring something up' at the end of the talk. Beating around the bush is another strategy of indirectness in the Malay culture whereby the speaker talks about other topics before revealing their true intentions (Asmah,1996; Kamisah & Norazlan, 2003). This further supports that the Malay community values collectivism. Being indirect is one of the approaches used by collectivists to preserve harmony with others.

4.2.1.2 Power Distance

From the narrations and interviews obtained from NS 1, NS 2 and NS 3, it appears that some of the perceived misunderstanding were caused by the differences in the power distance value. The Malaysian and American culture differs in power distance value scores with 100 to 40 (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). This may have caused the perceived misunderstanding between the NS and the NNS teachers to occur while working with each other in schools.

NS 3 recalled and further commented on an incident that she perceived as a misunderstanding between her and her NNS mentor. The perceived misunderstanding occurred when her mentor was constantly asking for additional paperwork that was not part of the requirement.

Table 4.13: NS 3 Narration

Towards the beginning of my teaching experience in Malaysia, my mentor teacher was constantly asking me for paperwork and reports in addition to the paperwork that was required for my position. This seemed unnecessary to me and since it wasn't required of me by my boss I pushed back and resisted a little bit. It wasn't until a couple months into the experience that I realized the amount of pressure that my mentor was under from the JPN.

She explained the perceived misunderstanding and described how she felt in Table 4.14 below:

Table 4.14: NS 3 Interview

NS 3:	Our requirement from the organization both Malaysia & America was they had agreed on 5 different papers that were standardized for all ETAs across Malaysia. So, when my mentor was asking for additional paperwork or reflections, I was frustrated because that was not included in the 5 papers that I had understood that all I needed to do. So, at first I was annoyed by that because it felt just like a pointless paperwork but then after I got to know her a little bit more and understood where <u>the directives</u> <u>were coming from</u> that she needed to provide more for <u>the principle</u> and <u>the JPN</u> to make herself look good and make the program successful in our school, then I was happy to provide her with anything that she needed and we really started to work more as a team but initially, when I didn't understand……kind of where that was coming from and why she needed it.
I:	How did you handle the situation? Did you and your mentor discuss about it?
NS 3:	Um….at first, I was just really confused but once I started to realize that I have <u>multiple different bosses</u> that I was answering to and she was also answering to. I think just what helped me to get my head around was understanding of the structure of the Malaysian education system and expectation of teachers and she needed things for her file because she had a whole file about me and my work there….so of course she had the basic paperwork, she wanted more success stories or lesson plans or photographs…anything that would make it the work that we are really doing look good.

From the excerpts in Table 4.13 and Table 4.14, it seemed that NS 3's mentor might have requested 'additional paperwork or reflections' due to the pressure that she received from her superiors, the school principal and the JPN (Education State Department). Although additional paperwork was not included in the 5-standardised paperwork, NS 3's mentor may have felt that it was necessary for her and NS 3 to prepare the additional paperwork requested. The Malaysian culture scores high with power distance value of 100. (Hofstede, 2001). Cultures that score high in power distance value respect those who rank high in the hierarchy order and they are expected to do what they are told unquestioningly (Hofstede, 2010; Martin & Nakayama, 2013). As NS 3 comes from low power distance culture, this issue may appear to be unnecessary and caused the perceived misunderstanding.

Similarly, NS 1, an ETA in secondary school and NS 2, who worked as a mentor in primary school also mentioned the hierarchical order in the school organisation in the interview. The following are the excerpts taken from NS 1 and NS 2 interviews.

Table 4.15 : NS 1 Interview

And then, so, the culture gets in a little bit like, <u>hierarchy </u>or…. sometimes we are seen because we are American and coming from this programme seems to have the backing of the <u>top level</u> of the government…

Sometimes the Malaysian teachers, even though they are much senior, much more experienced, certainly know the school far better, they won't wanna comment on the programme what the Americans are doing even because they think this is like "<u>above my position</u>, I just don't want deal with this, <u>if it causes some dispute</u> I'm gonna get <u>a lot of negative reaction towards me</u> so I'm just gonna let this person do what they wanna do" ….

….so there's <u>position thing </u>there and sometimes <u>will cause them not to speak out</u> to help a situation that they know is going wrong and similarly <u>the Americans</u> that who come in <u>don't understand the hierarchy</u> so they'll go to a person for help just because that maybe because they know that person, that person is friendly but that person may not be the right person to deal with to get permission or approval for something…..

The following excerpt taken from NS 2's interview also echoed the theme of high power distance among the NNS teachers in the following excerpt (Table 4.16):

Table 4.16: NS 2 Interview

> I think the teachers were not fully told who these mentors are and more importantly they weren't really told what the main goals and limitations were of the Mentor's job. So, a lot of the teachers at the SKs and the SJKs thought that these <u>mentors were like authorities</u>. You know they were like the <u>Ministry of Education's watchdogs</u>. Coming to observe them and then to give the bosses feedback like, "This teacher is not very good,"

Both NS 1 and NS 2 perceived that the misunderstandings in the excerpts caused by the NNS teachers' perceptions that the NS mentors or ETAs are above them in the school hierarchical order and report them to the officers or ministry. This had created fear among the teachers and might affect their working relationship. In the excerpt, phrases and words used by NS 1 such as 'hierarchy', 'top level' 'above my position', and 'position thing' suggest the presence of high power distance value among the NNS teachers. This is also consistent when NS 2 uses comparison such as 'mentors like authorities' and 'Ministry of Education's watchdogs' to suggest high power distance value among the NNS teachers. Differences in power distance value may lead to conflicts such as misunderstanding on the roles of NS and NNS teachers while working together.

4.2.2   Non-Native Speakers (NNS)

The narrations and interviews obtained from some of the NNS participants also seem to suggest that NS teachers value the individualistic culture. The excerpts that indicate individualistic culture were found in NNS 1, NNS 2 and NNS 5 narrations and interview. The findings obtained from these excerpts further supports Hofstede's (2001, 2010) scores on Malaysian and American culture values (Refer Chapter 2). In addition, the findings are also consistent with the data obtained from the NS participants.

4.2.2.1 Individualism/Collectivism

In the incident narrated by NNS 1, the ETA that she had described in her narration seemed to be individualistic. This can be seen in Table 4.17 in the following page.

Table 4.17: NNS 1 Narration

> We decided to organise an English camp for our schools together. However, on the first day of the camp, J assumed his role as the organiser and assigned me tasks to be done together with other teachers. I was confused as I thought we were running the camp together but because the camp was going we did not talk about it. Later that night after we were done with the first day of the camp, J asked me what I thought about it so far, so I addressed my confusion to him. He understood where I came from and we discussed about how we could manage the camp better for the second day. A week after the camp we sat down to have our camp post-mortem. We touched on the subject of our roles again and he clarified by telling me that he thought having one person taking charge of the whole camp would be the way to do it, which is why he did.

Although NNS 1 and the ETA, 'J' decided to organise the camp together, the ETA thought that he should run the camp as the sole organiser and assigned NNS 1 tasks with other teachers. The ETA's action described in the excerpt suggests individualism cultural values. This is further supported with an excerpt taken from NNS 1's interview in Table 4.18

Table 4.18: NNS 1 Interview

I:	In the first incident (English Camp), how did you feel throughout the first day of the camp when J took over as a sole organizer?

	Whenever I was given orders by John, I felt frustrated. I thought that we agreed that both of us should run the camp together. He managed the camp and made most of the decision by himself. Maybe he did not want to trouble me but I thought that as a team, we should be doing things together, rather than all by himself.
NNS 1:	

'Table 4.18 continued'

Those come from individualism culture are self-reliant and independent in completing the task given (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Martin & Nakayama, 2013). In contrast, a collectivist person values co-operation and team spirit while working together (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy 2013). From the excerpt, it is suggested that the ETA, 'J' comes from an individualist culture and perceived that it is his sole responsibility as the organiser. Meanwhile, NNS 1 perceived that both of them should run the camp together as they have agreed initially. The differences in individualism/collectivism cultural values might have caused the perceived misunderstanding.

The data obtained from NNS 1 is further supported by the data obtained taken from NNS 2's narration (Table 4.19) and interview (Table 4.20). NNS 2 described one of her perceived misunderstanding in the following excerpts;

Table 4.19: NNS 2 Narration

> There were also misunderstandings when it came to working together. As we were raised and live in different settings, it is easy to have a dispute over who was in charge and who should do which work especially for camps. However, this might have occurred not because cultural or language barriers, but rather work ethics and work culture. <u>He was more comfortable</u> doing work <u>on his own</u> so assigning people to do work or tasks became a complicated thing.

In Table 4.20, NNS 2 wrote that the ETA that she worked with were 'more comfortable working on his own' and find it difficult to assign work to others. This also suggests that the ETA comes from individualist culture. He preferred to work individually as he perceived that it was more effective and did not want to rely on others. According to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), those who belongs to the individualist culture look after themselves and their direct families. In addition, they do not want to rely on others excessively.

Table 4.20: NNS 2 Interview

I:	You mentioned that he was more comfortable working on his own. Was he a difficult person to work with?

NNS 2:	I think when it comes to handling tasks, my ETA <u>was used to doing everything individually</u>, and so it became a hassle as he wasn't getting everything ready like how <u>we teachers</u> would prefer to but we couldn't meddle too much as it was his project. He wasn't difficult to work with per say, but we did get frustrated when he was not on top of his work especially when it comes to preparing for camps.

'Table 4.20 continued'

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the individualist is defined by 'I' while the collectivist is defined by 'we'. In the interview, NNS 2 used the word 'we' as a reference to herself and the other teachers. In addition, NNS 2 also mentioned that her ETA had difficulties in assigning other tasks. This might have been that he perceived other teachers as equals. Equality is seen as important in an individualistic culture and it is also related to low power distance scores. The two excerpts taken from the narration and interview show that NNS 2 and her colleagues valued collectivism the ETA valued individualism. This may cause the perceived misunderstanding from NS 2's point of view.

Other than indirectness, the collectivist culture also values humility as one of the ways to preserve harmony between the group members (Martin, 2014). In the excerpt taken from NNS 5's narration and interview, she described how a perceived misunderstanding occurred between an ETA and another English teacher.

NNS 5, a secondary school teacher in a rural area in Perak recalled the incident in Table 4.21:

Table 4.21: NNS 5 Narration

Between ETA and another English teacher

ETA: That's such a nice dress you have!

Teacher: No lah, it's an old dress.

Later, she told me that she was offended because <u>she was complimenting</u> how nice the dress is <u>but the teacher said "NO"</u>.

It was funny really as <u>it's in our culture to be humble when somebody compliment you</u>. It was all-good when I explained it to her though.

NNS 5 perceived this incident as a misunderstanding as the ETA felt offended when the teacher did not accept the compliment given. Instead of acknowledging the compliment, the teacher commented that 'No lah, it's an old dress'. Her intention was probably to show humility but somehow it clashed with the ETA mentioned in the excerpt. Humility is one of the values that has high importance in the Malay culture (Asmah, 1987; as cited in Kamisah & Norazlan, 2003).

Table 4.22: NNS 5 Interview

I:	Referring the first narration, why do you think the teacher was being humble about the dress? Does it happen with others?
NNS 5:	I think it's common or cultural thing among the Malays to be humble whenever somebody compliment them.

The is further supported by the excerpt taken from NNS 5's interview in Table 4.22. In the Malay culture, compliments given are accepted in a manner that avoids self-praise or makes the person look boastful (Teo, 1996). This is done by downgrade the compliment given, verbal disagreement or the person may show that he or she is embarrassed by the compliment given (Teo, 1996; Normala, 2011). In the Table 4.21, the teacher voiced her disagreement on the compliment instead of thanking the ETA. She might have done it in order to avoid looking boastful and preserve the relationship between her and the ETA. Her value clashed with the ETA's own values and caused the perceived misunderstanding.

4.3   Ways Used to Solve Misunderstandings

Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills* framework were used to analyse the data obtained from the narrations and interviews. The theory used aims to answer *Research Question 3; How do the Native English Speakers (NS) and the Non-Native English Speakers (NNS) solve misunderstanding in communication?* Some of the perceived misunderstanding solved but some were not for both NS and NNS teachers who participated in this study. It was found that most of the perceived misunderstandings were solved by using *collaborative dialogue*, *mindful reframing*, *face-management* and *communication adaptability* skills.

4.3.1   Native Speakers (NS)

As for the NS participants, it was identified a few of the perceived misunderstandings were solved by using *collaborative dialogue*, *mindful reframing*, *face-management* and *communication adaptability* skills. The findings are described in the excerpts in the following pages:

4.3.1.1 Collaborative Dialogue

For the NS participants, an excerpt from NS 2's interview suggest that a perceived misunderstanding was solved with collaborative dialogue skill. In the 'candy' incident (Refer to Table 4.3 and 4.4), NS 2 narrated that one of the teachers in his workshop informed him of how the other teachers were uncomfortable with him throwing candies the next time he saw her. In the interview, NS 2 elaborated how the perceived misunderstanding was solved.

Table 4.23: NS 2 Interview

NS 2:	And then the next time I saw one of them, a woman about my age. So late 30's at the time, she said to me, "Hey you know E, that was that was a little awkward for us. Just so you know, you <u>could continue doing</u> that <u>if you really want</u> to. But it's not something that we would do,"
I:	How did she tell you?
NS 2:	Just like that. I mean just like that. Just like that, <u>she has been honest</u> about it. Yeah. And she said again, "I'm <u>not telling you not to do it</u>. But <u>it's not something we would do</u>," So, I think that that was the best way to put it. So, I realized, okay…obviously, I'm not going to do it again. If it's <u>worth saying it to me</u>, it's <u>worth for me listening</u>.

From the interview, both NS 2 and the teacher were open to discuss the issue that NS 2 perceived as a misunderstanding. The teacher explained that it was awkward for the teachers when he threw candies as part of the game during a workshop. She informed him that he could continue using candies for the next session but it was not something that they would do. This suggests that although the teacher has expressed discomfort of using candies in the game, she and the other teachers do not restrict what he could or could not do in his workshop sessions. This excerpt suggests that both parties were using collaborative dialogue by addressing how they felt in an honest manner and considered each other's feelings. It seems that NS 2 considers how the other teachers felt and decided not to use candies again out of respect for the teachers when he said, "If it's worth saying it to me, it's worth for me listening".

4.3.1.2   Face-Management Skill

Face-management is another skill that is only identified in NS 2's interview in solving a perceived misunderstanding. Referring to the NNS teachers' fear of the NS mentor roles in schools, NS 2 described a strategy that he would use to reduce the teachers' fear or embarrassment that might have caused misunderstandings.

Table 4.24: NS 2 Interview

I:	How did you make them not to feel ashamed?
NS 2:	Good question. I mean I <u>try to make it really light</u>, I <u>try to joke around</u> with them and you know, I <u>try to give honest praise</u>. I always try to tell them, "Hey you know, you guys, your English is really good, believe me I've been in Asia a long time. All of the teachers who I work with have really good English, you know. And <u>they deserve to be English teachers</u> and <u>I wasn't just saying that to make them feel better</u> although I know that that was of course the point of my saying. You know. Yeah. And I also said it because <u>I believe</u>. But I think the teachers really need that. That <u>positive reinforcement</u>. Especially when they are working with a native English speaker. They need that <u>positive reinforcement</u>.

The excerpt from the interview suggest that NS 2 tried to make the teachers feel at ease by 'make it really light' and 'joke around with them'. These are some of the strategies that could be used to save the 'face' of the other party. According to Brown & Levinson (1987; as cited in Kuntsi, 2012), jokes are one of the strategies that could be used in saving one's 'face'. The teachers might have felt insecure and embarrassed while working with an English native speaker. They might have felt that NS 2 is scrutinising their language competency and also the way they teach English. They may have also felt that they are not equipped to teach English. By giving them positive reinforcement such as praises, NS 2 tried to save the teachers' 'face' and improve their self-esteem. 'Face' saving relates to one's self-esteem (Kuntsi, 2012). By using such 'face' saving skill, the dignity of the other person is maintained.

In addition, the repeated phrase 'I try' in Table 4.24 indicate that NS 2 put effort in saving the 'face' of his teachers. Based on his experiences in two non-native English speaking countries (Refer to Chapter 3), NS 2 could have an awareness on the importance of 'face' among those in Asian countries. By attempting to save his teachers' 'face' in certain situations, NS 2 showed empathy towards the teachers and able to put himself into others' feelings.

4.3.1.3 Mindful Reframing

In addition, only one excerpt found in NS 1 interview suggest that a perceived misunderstanding was solved by using Mindful Reframing skill. In one of the misunderstandings recalled by NS 1, he described how the misunderstanding happened between himself and a senior teacher in his school. He perceived the misunderstanding to have occurred due to the different values and beliefs that he and the teacher had (Refer Appendix). In the excerpt taken from interview below, he explained further on what might have possibly be the resolution to the misunderstanding.

Table 4.25: NS 1 Interview

NS 1	I thought it was okay because they were learning something and it was culturally different for her; she thought it was rude what they were doing to me. She wanted to correct it and that was what she thought appropriate. She thought she was standing up to me and maybe feel bad if she didn't correct the 'situation'. I totally understand their values and beliefs; it's totally justified but it clashed a little bit with my strategy.
I:	Did she clarify later?
NS 1:	We talked about it later but then I had to recognize that she was a senior teacher and later that year I recognizes that she is a super strict teacher. She's a sweet lady outside of the class but she's also strict and made the students do things in a very methodical way. I learned a lot. By the end of the year, the teacher in question had to transfer and I thought that she's the best teacher in the school. That was how she was raised and that was how she was taught and how she sees the value of teaching.

In the excerpt (Table 4.25), NS stated that he 'totally understand' the teacher's teaching values and beliefs and 'recognizes' that the teacher is a strict teacher. This suggests that NS 1 realised and acknowledged that the teacher has different teaching values and beliefs that clashed with his own and he accepted it. This is supported when he said 'That was how she was raised and that was how she was taught and how she sees the value of teaching'. Although he might have disagreed with her beliefs and values, he accepted and acknowledged her differences. As mentioned by Ting-Toomey (1999), mindful reframing is a skill that both individualists and collectivists use in order to interpret each other based from the other's point of view. In Table 4.25, NS 1 tried to put himself in her shoes. NS 1 respected the teacher's action and values although it may have

clashed with his own. This suggest NS 1 is using mindful reframing in solving the perceived misunderstanding.

4.3.1.4 Communication Adaptability

Other than understanding and accepting the other person's cultural values and beliefs, both parties may also need to be flexible and adaptable in changing their initial goal in order to meet the particular needs of the situation. From the narrations and interviews, it was found that only a perceived misunderstanding from NS 3's interview was solved by using Communication Adaptability skill.

In a perceived misunderstanding between NS 3 and other teachers on the women empowerment camp (Refer to Appendix), she explained how she and the other ETAs negotiated with the teachers and school in order to solve the perceived misunderstanding in the excerpt below:

Table 4.26: NS 3 Interview

NS 3:	…..and that wouldn't be fair to the students so, they shut it down so that we couldn't do it and that really upset the other girls that I was working with and we tried to work around it in many different ways and it ended up just going through the JPN and getting approval that way, and then <u>our compromise with the teachers</u> was that we work our way and <u>just have a</u>

	camp for the boys after that and so they ended up letting us do it and it was really successful.
I:	Why do you think that they said that it wasn't fair for the boys? Was it because of the language aspect?
NS 3:	Yeah, definitely. They just didn't want to provide the female students with the opportunity that the boys didn't have so um, that make sense to me, we understood that but we have limited time and resources and we really want to make this happen for the girls because it is something that my friends are passionate about.
I:	Were the teachers straight forward about it?
NS 3:	Initially, no and then when we realized that the reason was they just wanted to provide the same thing for the boys then it was easy to compromise and tell them we would have a program for boys.

'Table 4.26 continued'

From Table 4.26 above, NS 3 and other ETAs reached a compromise with the school and adapted to the needs of the school in order to solve the perceived misunderstanding between them and the other teachers. Although they had planned for Women Empowerment Camp, the school insisted that they would include male students in the camp as it would not be fair for the female students only to benefit from the program organised by the NS 3 and other ETAs. NS 3 mentioned that 'we understood' but 'we have limited time and resources', suggesting that although they understand what was requested by the school, the ETAs did not have much time and resources to change the objectives of the camp. Instead, they 'compromised' with the school and suggested to organise a camp for the male students after the Women Empowerment Camp. By compromising, NS 3 and the other ETAs were being flexible and adaptable to the needs

of the situation. In addition, they changed their own interest and goals in order to solve the perceived misunderstanding that occurred. By doing this, they are applying Communication Adaptability in solving the perceived misunderstanding by trying to adapt to the needs of the situation.

Another perceived misunderstanding might have been solved in using the Communication Adaptability skill. In the incident between her and her mentor on the additional paperwork (Refer to Appendix), NS 3 was willing to change her initial goal to adapt to the situation in order to solve the misunderstanding as explained in the excerpt below:

Table 4.27: NS 3 Interview

NS 3:	So, at first I was annoyed by that because it felt just like a pointless paperwork but then after I got to know her a little bit more and <u>understood where the directives</u> were coming from that she needed to provide more for the principle and the JPN to make herself look good and make the program successful in our school, then <u>I was happy to provide</u> her with anything that she needed and <u>we really started to work more</u> as <u>a team</u> but initially, when I didn't understand…... kind of where that was coming from and why she needed it.
I:	How did you handle the situation? Did you and your mentor discuss about it?
NS 3:	Um….at first, I was just really confused but once <u>I started to realize</u> that I have multiple different bosses that I was answering to and she was also answering to…… I think just what helped me to get my head around was understanding of the structure of the Malaysian education system and expectation of teachers and she needed things for her file because she had a whole file about me and my work there….so of course she had the basic paperwork, she wanted more success stories or lesson plans or photographs…anything that would make it the work that we are really doing look good. So, <u>even though</u> again <u>it wasn't required</u>, <u>I was happy</u> to do it once <u>I understood</u> that.

Although NS 3 initially was confused and could not understand why she had to prepare the additional paperwork, she was willing to change her initial perceptions and adapt to the needs of the particular situation once she realised and understood how important the additional paperwork was to her NNS mentor. Once she had the realisation and understanding, she was willing to prepare the additional paperwork without resentment. This shows how NS 3 modified her own behaviour and goal in order to solve the perceived misunderstanding. It seemed that she was happy and willing to cooperate with her mentor's request and prepared the additional paperwork, although it was not in her initial goal. Ting-Toomey (1999) states that when we use Communication Adaptability skill, we are aware of the others' interests and goals and willing to change our own in order to find solutions.

4.3.2 Non-Native Speakers (NNS)

As for the NNS participants, it was identified that two of the perceived misunderstandings were solved using Collaborative Dialogue and Face-Management. This was found in NNS 1's narration and NNS 3's narrations and interview. The remaining participants' perceived misunderstandings were unresolved.

4.3.2.1 Collaborative Dialogue

The narration written by NNS 1 on an incident between her and her ETA on the English

Camp suggest that both of them might have used Collaborative Dialogue in solving the

perceived misunderstanding. The excerpt from the narration in Table 4.28

Table 4.28: NNS 1 Narration

Later that night after we were done with the first day of the camp J <u>asked me</u> what I thought about it so far so <u>I addressed</u> my confusion to him. <u>He understood</u> where I came from and <u>we discussed</u> about how we could manage the camp better for the second day. A week after the camp we sat down to have our camp post-mortem. <u>We touched on</u> the subject of our roles again and <u>he clarified</u> by telling me that he thought having one person taking charge of the whole camp would be the way to do it, which is why he did. But <u>he also admitted</u> that he was so relieved that I was opened enough to express my confusion/dissatisfaction to him, which he said rarely happened to him throughout his stay in Malaysia. He said having someone to co-run the camp the second day made it so much easier. <u>We both agreed</u> that we felt comfortable working with each other, seeing how we have similar way of communicating and resolving conflicts. We ended up organising/running another camp together and doing a whole lot of different events/activities for our schools 'til the end of J's stay as an ETA at that school.

From the excerpt, it is suggested that NNS 1 and her ETA, 'J' used Collaborative

Dialogue skill in solving the perceived misunderstanding. The phrases underlined suggest

that both parties are actively engaged in a discussion in solving the misunderstanding.

According to Ting-Toomey (1999), by addressing the issues, making clarifications and be open to the other person is one of the ways that one could do in using collaborative dialogue skill. It is a process of enquiry whereby both parties involved express their feelings towards the situation and try to seek for a solution.

Excerpt from the narration above indicates that Collaborative Dialogue is practised by NNS 1 and her ETA, in order to clarify the perceived misunderstanding that occurred during the English Camp. At the end of the narration, both parties resolved some of the issues and it seemed that it has helped to improve their working relationship. The description narrated by NNS 1 in the excerpt above suggest that the solution is in sequence with process of Collaborative Dialogue suggested by Ting-Toomey (1999); *differentiation phase*-by addressing the confusion, *mutual problem description*-clarification and *integration*-display of mutual interest by agreeing and finding solution.

4.3.2.2 Face-Management Skill

In this study, it was also found that only two perceived misunderstandings from NNS 3 were solved with face-management skill. These two excerpts taken from NNS 3's narration, a primary school teacher in Negeri Sembilan suggest that she tried to solve the misunderstanding by trying to save the 'face' of the other NNS teachers in the school.

In the narration, NNS 3 recalled how her NS mentor, 'M' initially wore blouses and skirts that she considered appropriate for schools. However, as 'M' worked in a rural area, the teachers thought her choice of clothing was inappropriate and she started to wear '*baju kurung'* to conform to the community. However, once the teachers started to make her wear the headscarves, she took offense and expressed her disbelief to NNS 3. The teachers may not be serious with her persistence as she is not a Muslim, but she may have perceived that they were trying to get her to wear the headscarves.

A majority of Muslim women in Malaysia cover their head with headscarves or '*hijab'* as it is one of the teachings of the religion (Nurzihan Hassim, 2014). Furthermore, it has become a 'social expectation' for a Malay Muslim woman to dress up decently and cover her head with '*hijab'* (Mouser, 2007). The 'hijab' is usually worn with the 'baju kurung'

by the Muslim woman to cover up according to the religion and is also based on what the Malay society expects them to wear (Hochel, 2013). The teachers may have suggested that M wear a 'hijab' to compliment her 'baju kurung' but she may have perceived that the teachers were trying to force her to cover her head, although she is not a Muslim.

In another incident involving a different NS mentor, NNS 3 narrated what she perceived as a misunderstanding that the NS mentor had towards 'baju kurung'. She recalled the perceived misunderstanding in Table 4.30

Table 4.30: NNS 3 Narration

> Another one was with L. She seemed okay and interested to learn about the Malaysian cultures. But sometimes, she gets on my nerves when she starts to make remarks about how things are done here. Once, she complimented on a '*baju kurung*' that my colleague wore. All of us (the teachers) were jokingly tell her that she should try the '*baju kurung*'. All of the sudden she got a bit defensive and said ''I can't wear the *baju kurung*! It's for the Muslims!''. My fellow colleague understood that she got religion and culture confused. Both of us corrected her that the '*baju kurung*' is a traditional costume. It has nothing to do with religion.

In Table 4.30, NNS 3 wrote how 'L' was confused with the idea that 'baju kurung' denotes the religion instead of culture. NNS 3 perceived this as a misunderstanding caused by her mentor's confusion on the concept of '*baju kurung*'. From the excerpt, it seemed that 'L' assumed that '*baju kurung*' is the religious costume worn by the Muslims, instead of the traditional costume worn by women from the Malay ethnic. 'L' may have

this perception as the features of the 'baju kurung' may have resembled a costume that a Muslim woman would wear. According to Hanisa, Biranul and Imam (2013), the features of a '*baju kurung*' reflects the Malay culture's identity as a Muslim as it is a symbol of decency by covering the entire body except for the face and hands, which is also prescribed by the teachings of Islam. Therefore, the NS in this excerpt, it is possible that 'L' had misunderstood the function of '*baju kurung*' and its representation.

To solve the perceived misunderstanding, NNS 3 tried to explain to her NS mentor in a manner that preserves the 'face' of the other teachers in the school. She explained further during the interview in the excerpt below:

Table 4.31: NNS 3 Interview

I:	In the two incidents described on 'baju kurung', how did you resolve it?
NNS 3:	Well, I had to explain to M that I'm sure that the teachers may have tried to joke with her…. maybe they really meant it because you know, in *kampung*, the teachers could be ignorant. I don't want her to have bad impressions on the community so I just told her to brush it off, you know?
I:	What about the incident where the baju kurung was confused as a religious costume?
NNS 3:	It's the same with L's case. Although we were a bit surprised that she thought that you have to be a Muslim to wear baju kurung, we explained it to her and just laughed it off. I mean, I do get her fear, with the bad press Muslims get in America for terrorism and all that but we tried to make it less embarrassing for her when we explained it to her……and I don't want the Americans to have negative impressions on the Malay people, especially.

The excerpt in Table 4.31 suggests that NNS 3 tried to 'save' face not only for the two native speakers but also the teachers in the school. She tried to solve the misunderstanding on 'baju kurung' in a way that any humiliation is minimized and also to preserve the 'face' of her community (other teachers). When her NS mentor mentioned the 'baju kurung' incident, she quickly reasoned out that the teachers may have done it as a joke. Indirectly, she might have done so to save the face of her fellow NNS teachers and also tried to diminish any negative perceptions that they may have caused with their remark.

4.4   Discussion of Findings

Some of the findings obtained from this study suggest that the NS and NNS participants in this study perceived to have experienced misunderstandings while working with other NS and NNS teachers in Malaysian schools. In the context of this study, the word 'perceived' is used as the misunderstandings narrated by the participants were based on their own perceptions. Therefore, the results obtained from this study should not be generalised. A summary of the findings is illustrated in Table 4. 32.

Table 4.32: Summary of Findings

	NS Participants	NNS Participants
Communication Style	• High Context- NS 1, NS 2, NS 3 and NS 5	• High Context-NNS 3 • Low Context- NNS 1
Causes	• Collectivism- NS 1 and NS 4 • Power Distance- NS 1, NS 2 and NS 3	• Individualism- NNS 1, NS 2 and NNS 3
Solutions	• Collaborative Dialogue- NS 2 • Face-Saving – NS 2 • Mindful Reframing-NS 1 • Communicative Adaptability- NS 3	• Collaborative Dialogue- NNS 1 • Face-Saving - NNS 3

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and Chapter 3, three research questions are specifically formulated for the purpose in this study. The first question aims to investigate the cultural communication style of the NS and NNS teachers. The second research question aims to investigate why misunderstandings occur in the communication between NS and NNS teachers. The third research question aims to find out how the NS and NNS solve the misunderstandings that have occurred. Three frameworks are used in order to answer the research questions. Hall's (1984) *High/Low Context Communication* theory are used in order to answer the first research question, Hofstede's (1984) *Cultural Dimensions* theory are used to analyse and answer the second research question. As for the third research question, Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Constructive Intercultural Conflict Management Skills* are used to investigate how the participants solve the perceived misunderstandings. The following paragraphs are the discussion for each research questions.

4.4.1   Communication Styles of NS and NNS teachers

The findings obtained from this study indicate that the American NS teachers have low context communication style whereas the Malay NNS teachers have high context communication style. In the excerpts taken from some of the NS narrations and interviews, it was mentioned that most of the teachers that they have worked with were 'not clear' with their intentions, would 'beat around the bush' and not direct in expressing their true intentions. These descriptions fit the communication style of a high context culture as suggested by Hall (1983). Hall describes high context communication style as a message or a way of communicating that is internalized, explicit, indirect and coded

(Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988). While communicating with a high context individual, one must read between the lines as the individual would expect the person to already know what is on their mind and figure out the intended meaning. Message in a high context communication is also ambiguous to the listener.

Most Asian cultures are considered to communicate in a high context manner (Wiseman & Koester, 1993; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Martin & Nakayama, 2013). As the NS participants worked with mostly Malay NNS teachers in school, the findings of this study suggest that the Malay culture are high context in their communication. Furthermore, some of the excerpts taken from the narrations and interviews of the Malay NNS participants indicated and support that the Malay community is high context in their communication. This is consistent with Lailawati (2005) that the Malay community is a high context culture.

Indirectness also refers to high context communication style. As mentioned, the NS participants in this study found that some of the Malay NNS teachers that they worked with are indirect in their communication. Avoidance and silence are one of the strategies used in indirectness as mentioned in the narration of NS 5 and NNS 3 (Refer Table 4.6 and 4.9). This is consistent with previous research that the Malay community is indirect in their communication (Asmah, 1992; Lailawati, 2005; Kuang, Wong & David, 2015).

However, it should not be generalised that all Malays use high context and indirect communication style. In NNS 1 narration (Refer to 4.8), it was found that NNS 1 was

direct in solving the perceived misunderstanding that occurred with her ETA. This suggests that NNS 1 used low context communication. Factors such as the person's own experiences and exposure to other cultures may have influenced their communication style. According to the demographic information gathered, NNS 1 had stayed in English native speaking countries before and this may have influenced how she communicated with the ETA in her school. According to Lailawati (2005), our prior experiences with other cultures might have influenced our way of communicating. Therefore, it should not be generalised that every individual in a community shares the same beliefs, values and communication style. The findings of this study suggest that not all Malays are indirect or use high context communication style as it may vary, based on their experiences and exposure to other cultures.

As for the American NS participants in this study, the findings obtained from the some of the narrations and interviews suggest that the NS teachers used low context communication style. They value direct style communication thus resulting in the conflicts encountered with the NNS teachers.

This is due to the NNS teachers' high context communication style. The findings are consistent with related research and relevant literature such as Hall (2002), Hofstede (2001, 2011), Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010).

4.4.2   Cause of Misunderstanding Between NS and NNS teachers

Differences in cultural values may have contributed to the perceived misunderstandings between the NS and the NNS teachers. Using Hofstede's (1984) *Cultural Dimension Values* theory of cultural differences, it is suggested that the American NS teachers and the Malay NNS teachers might have experienced the perceived misunderstandings due to differences in individualism/collectivism and power distance values.

In this study, the findings suggest that some of the NNS teachers use high context communication style while the NS teachers use low context communication style. Those who communicate in high context are indirect in expressing their true intended meaning; those with low context style are more direct (Hall, 2002). Indirect and directness are closely related to the individualism/collectivism value dimension. Those who are indirect are considered to be collectivist while those with direct communication style are individualist (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Hofestede, 2001 & 2010). A person from a collectivist culture uses indirect/high context communication style to maintain harmony within the community that they belong to (Lailawati, 2005). Being indirect is one of the ways that can be used in communication to avoid offending the feeling of others (Ting-Toomey, 1999). The Malay culture is known to use indirectness in their communication (Kuang, Wong & David, 2015). Therefore, the findings in this study also suggest that the Malay NNS teachers are collectivists. From the excerpts, it can be suggested that some of the NNS teachers used indirect/high-context communication

because they want to preserve harmony among the NS teachers. In addition, collectivists are also known as those who avoid confrontations (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). By being indirect, confrontations could be avoided at all cost and harmony could be maintained.

Although all the NNS participants in this study have had the experience of living in a native speaking country, the findings suggest that they are indirect and collectivist. In the case of NNS 3 (Refer 4.9), she used indirectness in her communication with her NS mentor because she may not want to hurt her NS mentor's feelings or probably to save herself from embarrassment. Being direct in communication could cause further friction, thus being tacit is their strategy to avoid any awkward situation from becoming worse. The Asian culture is said to be collectivist and they use an indirect manner of communication as they feel the need to preserve harmony among the group members Hybels & Weaver (2009). According to Kamisah & Norazlan (2003), indirectness is one of the values that is deeply rooted in the Malay culture no matter how Westernised or modernised a Malay person could be.

In addition, being collectivists suggests that the Malay NNS teachers are emphatic. Empathy is defined as a person's ability to put themselves in another person's perspective or feel their emotions (Davis, 1980, as cited in Duan, Wei & Wang, 2009). By trying to not offend the other person, the collectivist might have put themselves in the other person's position and try to deal with the problem in the least offensive way. This can be seen in the excerpt taken from NNS 3's perceived misunderstanding, the instances on 'baju kurung' and wearing the hijab. This further supports the notion that collectivists are more of a 'we' oriented culture; they put the feelings and interests of others above their

own. This is consistent with the results found in a study conducted by Duan, Wei & Wang (2009), which indicate that the collectivist culture is more emphatic than their individualist counterpart.

Meanwhile, the findings of this study suggest that the American NS teachers are individualists. This is consistent with Hofstede's (2001) findings that the American culture is highly individualistic with the score of 91%. Individualists are those who look after his or her own interest whereas the collectivist protects the interest of its group members and are tightly integrated (Brown, 2007). This is consistent with previous research and literature which states that the American culture scores high in the individualism values (Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Khalid & Rashad, 2015).

Furthermore, it was found that the differences in the power distance value between the NS and the NNS teachers might have contributed to the perceived misunderstandings. This dimension of the value orientation explores on how certain cultures accept the role of hierarchy in the culture or organisations (Samovar, Porter & Daniel, 2009). The excerpt from NS 1 and NS 3's interviews and narrations suggested that the Malay ESL teachers have high power distance values. It seems that some of the perceived misunderstandings occurred because the NNS teachers perceived the NS teachers' as people who are of high rank; instead of equals that they worked with.

As mentioned in previous chapters, those with high power distance accept the role of power in the hierarchy while those with low power distance accept that all individuals in the hierarchy are equal (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988). Their different values on the power distance may contributed to some of the perceived misunderstandings between the NS and NNS teachers in the context of this study.

However, the findings of this study should not generalise that the NNS teachers are more empathic than the NS teachers. There are a few excerpts that suggest that the NS teachers are also empathic. In these excerpts, the NS teachers also seemed to be able to put themselves in the NNS teachers' position and tried to understand some of the values, although it clashed with their own. Therefore, generalisation on empathy should not be made only on the collectivist. As mentioned, individual discrepancies exist in cultural group due to the person's previous experiences (Lailawati, 2005). The NS teachers' previous experiences in other NNS countries might have influenced their perceptions on other cultures and this might have contributed to the factor.

4.4.3   Ways Used to Solve Misunderstandings

The findings obtained found that only a few of the perceived misunderstandings analysed were solved. As for the solved misunderstandings, the findings suggest that the perceived misunderstandings were solved using Ting-Toomey's (1999) *Collaborative Dialogue*, *Communicative Adaptability*, *Mindful Reframing* and *Face-Managing* skills.

When conflict arises, addressing the issues that we feel is important in solving the conflict. People from different cultural backgrounds are unaware of the differences in cultural communication styles and values (Floyd, 2011). By being unaware, we may perceive their actions and spoken words from our own viewpoints and this may cause us to misunderstand the situation. By addressing the issues and expressing how one felt during the perceived misunderstanding, the individuals involved are clarifying some of the confusion that arises and are then able to discuss how to solve the conflict. Collaborative Dialogue skill allows the individuals involved to engage in a dialogue where they share stories, feelings and expectations and to find solutions for improvement (Ting-Toomey, 1999). In addition, it also enables one to show empathy towards the other person's situation (Calloway-Thomas, 2010; DeVito, 2009).

Those who belong to the collectivist culture must understand and use direct or low context communication style when addressing the issues that arise from the perceived misunderstanding (Ting-Toomey, 1999). In the excerpt taken from NNS 1 narration and interview, it is evident that the use of Collaborative Dialogue skill helped to mitigate the perceived misunderstanding between her and her ETA. Similarly, although NS 3 was informed much later of the mistakes that he had made during one of his workshops, he admitted that the NNS teacher was open to express the dissatisfaction felt by other teachers and felt glad that the teacher had addressed the issue directly. When engaging in a discussion, it enables the individuals involved to address the issues and their feelings directly and seek possible solutions for the conflict that arises (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Sorrells (2013) supports the use of dialogue in solving intercultural conflicts as it

provides the opportunity to seek understanding and plan for further actions in solving the conflict.

Other than being open for dialogue, those interacting with people of a different culture must also be flexible and adaptable to the situation. It was found that a perceived misunderstanding was solved by using Mindful Reframing and Communication Adaptability skills. The former skill requires the individuals involved to understand the situation from the other person's cultural viewpoint while the latter requires the individuals to adapt and change the conflict goal or behaviours to accommodate to the context of the situation (Ting-Toomey, 1999). By trying to understand the issues from the perspective of the other person, it requires us to empathise with others and try to accommodate to their situation (Calloway-Thomas, 2010). This allows us to be more considerate and mindful of other people's culture. Although it is said that collectivist has higher empathy level than the individualist (Changming, Meifan & Lizhao, 2009; Duan, Wei & Wang, 2009; Triandis, 1995), the findings of this study suggest that NS teachers could also show empathy as they try to understand the situations. Words and phrases used such as "I totally understand", 'I understood', 'recognised' used suggest that the individualist culture is able to empathise and understand the situation from the collectivists' cultural values. This could have been influenced by their experiences with dealing with different cultures. Therefore, the results of the empathy level between collectivist and individualist could not be generalised due to the individual differences in a cultural group (Caldwell-Harris & Aycicegi 2006; Cheon, Marthur & Chiao, 2010).

In addition, the findings also suggest that Face-Management Skill is used in the excerpts taken from N2 and NNS 3. The concept of saving 'face' of oneself and the others are crucial in solving intercultural conflicts such as misunderstanding (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2003). The excerpt taken from NS 2 suggests that native speakers teachers may utilised the 'face' saving strategy as a way to minimise discomfort between the mentor and his NNS mentees. This could have been triggered by the NNS teachers' low self-esteem on their language proficiency and pedagogical skills. As mentioned in Chapter 2, English NNS teachers are often being compared to the NS teachers whereby the preference is given to the NS teachers (Braine, 2005; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2008). By giving compliments, NS 2 is trying to protect the dignity of the NNS teachers that he had worked with. Therefore, the findings indicate that saving the others' 'face' is not only applicable to collectivists but also to individualists. Although that 'face' saving is more concerned with the characteristics of collectivist, it should not be generalised (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

Two incidents related to 'face' saving were found in the excerpts shown from the narration and interview of NNS 3. The excerpts taken indicate that the act of saving 'face' is more concerned with protecting the dignity of other members of their culture. This is consistent with the characteristics of collectivists whereby they are more concerned with maintaining harmony between members in the group (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2003). In the context of this study, NNS 3 tried to maintain harmony between the NS mentor and other teachers in school. In addition, the excerpts taken also show that she wanted to protect other NNS teachers from having a negative impression of their NS mentor.

4.5   Conclusion

It was found that the Native Speakers (NS) and Non-Native Speakers (NNS) participants felt that they have experienced misunderstandings while working in schools. The findings of this study show that as both NS and NNS teachers come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, conflicts such as misunderstandings may occur as both parties have different perceptions and viewpoints on the goals that they have set to achieve while working together. The findings of this study are consistent with some of the literature mentioned in Chapter 2. However, it was also found that the results obtained from this study should not be generalised. Factors such as the NS and NNS participants' previous experiences might have influenced individual discrepancy in a cultural group.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the general view of this study, the findings and implications. The first section focuses on the general view and the summary of the study. This is followed by suggestions for future research.

5.1   Summary of Findings

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study aims to investigate the perceived misunderstandings that occurred in the workplace among native (NS) and non-native (NNS) English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Malaysian primary and secondary schools. The objectives of this study are threefold; to investigate the communication style of the NS and NNS teachers, why misunderstandings occurred and how it was resolved. By combining Hofstede's (1984) Cultural Dimension, Hall's (1983) High/Low Context Cultures and Ting-Toomey's (1999) Mindful Cultural Resolution theories, the findings of this study suggest that the NS and NNS teachers who participated in this study experienced misunderstandings.

It is suggested that most of the NS teachers use low context communication style while the NNS teachers have high context communication style. The findings obtained from this study are consistent with Hall's (1983) theory of high/low context communication style in intercultural communication. Hall described cultures with high context

185

communication style tend to be indirect, communicate explicitly and those who communicate with them need to read between the lines to interpret the intended messages. Meanwhile, those with low context communication style are the opposite; they communicate in a direct and implicit manner. From some of the narrations and interviews with the participants, it was found that the Malay NS teachers used high context communication style while the American NS teachers used low context communication style. The findings obtained are congruent with previous research on cultural communication style of Malay culture (Hofstede's 2001; Lailawati, 2005) and American culture (Hofstede, 2001).

In investigating the causes of misunderstandings that occurred, it was found that the differences in cultural values caused the perceived misunderstandings. In the context of this study, it was found that most perceived misunderstandings occurred due to the differences in Individualism/Collectivism and Power Distance values. The findings obtained suggest that the NS teachers belong to the individualistic culture while the NNS teachers are collectivist. An individualistic culture is a culture that values individuality and self-reliant (Goodman, 1994). The focus is more on the person and his or her immediate family members and friends and using directness in their communication style.

In contrast, those in the collectivist culture tend to value the group that they belong to and in preserving the relationship of the group members above one's needs. They also use indirectness in communication as a way of not hurting the feelings of others and to preserve harmony among group members. It is suggested that NS teachers are more direct in their communication, thus indicating that they are individualistic in their cultural

values. Meanwhile, the findings obtained show that the NNS teachers belong to the collectivist culture due to their indirectness in communication. This is mainly due to their intentions of avoiding confrontation and to preserve harmony with the NS teachers in schools. The findings of this study on individualism and collectivism of the Malay and American culture is consistent with previous studies (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Lailawati, 2005).

The findings obtained also imply that most of the perceived misunderstandings occurred due to the differences in Power Distance Values. While working together, the findings suggest that the American NS teachers have Low Power Distance values; they see everyone they have worked with as an equal and do not emphasise much on the role of hierarchy in the school system. This finding is consistent with previous studies and related literature (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Zimmermann, 2015). Meanwhile, the Malay NNS teachers were found to have high Power Distance values. Some of the perceived misunderstanding might have occurred due to their lack of understanding of the role of the NS teachers and also their fear of the officers from the district/state education departments and the Ministry. These factors might have caused tension that further leads to the perceived misunderstandings with the NS teachers while working together in schools.

Only some of the perceived misunderstandings were found to be solved. It was identified that most of the perceived misunderstandings were solved by using Ting-Toomey's (1999) Mindful Reframing, Communication Adaptability, Collaborative Dialogue and Face-Management skills. From the narrations and interviews, it is suggested that some of the NS and NNS teachers solved the perceived misunderstandings by using Collaborative Dialogue. Collaborative Dialogue is a conflict management skill that can be used during intercultural communication conflicts such as misunderstandings. It requires the parties involved to engage in discussion whereby they discover how each other feel and try to find solutions to the problems that arise. The findings of this study suggest that some of the perceived misunderstandings were solved through verbal discussions between the NS and NNS teachers.

One has to understand the other person's cultural perspectives and change their behaviour or goals in order to accommodate to the other person in solving intercultural communication misunderstandings. By applying Mindful Reframing and Communication Adaptability, this could be achieved. Mindful Reframing refers to how a person can look at the perspectives or cultural viewpoints of the other and try to understand the misunderstanding (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Meanwhile, Communication Adaptability looks at how a person changes their initial goal in order to accommodate the other person. These two skills are related as both parties have to give and take in the negotiation to solve the misunderstandings that occurred. It is suggested that NS and NNS teachers tried to solve the perceived misunderstandings by trying to understand the actions of the other and sometimes having to change and adapt to the other person in order to solve the perceived misunderstandings.

In addition, it was found that some of the perceived misunderstandings were solved by using Ting-Toomey's (1999) Face-Management skill. Face-Management skill is a conflict resolution skill used by not allowing the other person or the community from losing 'face' during a conflict such as misunderstanding. From the findings, it is suggested that both NS and NNS teachers tried to solve the misunderstandings by not shaming or allowing the person they are having misunderstanding with or their own community to lose 'face'. In the case of the NNS teachers, this is probably done in order to preserve the working relationship with the NS teachers and also to protect the dignity of their ethnic group. Face saving is one of the concerns in preserving harmony in groups for collectivist (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2002). As for the NS teachers, the use of Face-Saving skill suggest that the NS teachers want to motivate the NNS teachers without making them feel uneasy or embarrassed with their pedagogical skills and language proficiency.

5.2   Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings, misunderstanding is the type of conflict that could occur in an intercultural communication. If misunderstanding could occur between speakers with similar language and cultural background, it is more likely to occur between those with different cultural values. If misunderstandings are not dealt carefully, it may affect the working relationship of those involved. Based on the findings, the following are some of the implications and recommendations for the teachers and stakeholders involved.

5.2.1   NS and NNS ESL teachers

Both English NS and NNS teachers need to be able to understand each other's cultural values while working together. In this study, it is suggested that the Malay NNS teachers are collectivists while the American NS teachers are individualists. Both parties must learn to understand each other from their cultural viewpoint in order to work together effectively. Working in an intercultural environment demands the individuals involved to try to 'translate' the values ingrained within the other culture and try to adapt according to the norms and values of the culture (Wursten & Jacobs, 2013).

While working with a person from the individualist culture, the collectivist must learn how to be more direct and express their true intentions. As the individualist communicates in a direct and explicit manner, the collectivist must not use indirectness or not get straight to the point when making requests, addressing confusion and expressing one's feeling and intentions. By doing so, communication between the individualist (NS teachers) and collectivist (NNS teachers) could be improved. As a result, both parties will have a clear understanding of the other person's feelings. In addition, misconception towards the other person could also be reduced in order for both parties to trust one another (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2002). Therefore, the teachers should be informed of the difference in cultural communication style and values between the collectivist and individualist. By having awareness of the differences, the collectivists and individualists are able to understand each other better and minimise conflicts such as misunderstanding. Working relationship

between the collectivist and individualist could also be improved. This would help to enable them to work together effectively in their schools.

In addition to the differences in communication style and values of collectivists and individualists, English NS and NNS teachers should also have awareness of differences in other cultural values such as Power Distance, and Uncertainty Avoidance. Differences in cultural values may contribute to intercultural conflicts such as misunderstandings (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua, 1988; Thije, 2003). By knowing the variability in cultural values, NS and NNS teachers are able to be flexible and adaptable to one another and find suitable solution to any misunderstandings that occurred (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Therefore, it is important that NS and NNS teachers are equipped with the knowledge of the differences in cultural values prior to working together.

5.2.2   Stakeholders

Stakeholders involved must also have awareness and knowledge in issues of intercultural communication at the work place. Stakeholders such as organisations that employ the NS teachers and the district/state education department and the education ministry should make improvisations for future programs relating to NS and NNS teachers.

Based from the findings in this study, related stakeholders could improve in giving explicit description to the roles of the NS and the NNS teachers while working together in schools. Some of the perceived misunderstandings might have been caused due to the lack of understanding to their roles in school. This is evident in the differences found in Power Distance values among some of the NS and NNS teachers (Refer to Chapter 4). This might have caused friction in the form of misunderstanding between the teachers. Companies hiring the NS teachers and the education department could give explicit guidelines on the roles of the NS/NNS teachers to school administrators and teachers.

In addition, the findings of this study suggest that more training should be provided on intercultural communication issues between NS and NNS teachers who work together in schools. Although the NS and NNS teachers might have been briefed on their roles and responsibilities while working together in the program, the findings of this study suggest that the NS and NNS teachers need to be advised on the differences in communication styles and cultural values while working together. It is crucial that those working with another individual from another culture and country to have awareness on intercultural issues in order to minimise misunderstandings caused by the cultural differences (Goodman, 1994). This will further assist them to navigate themselves better in understanding and in handling intercultural conflicts such as misunderstanding better.

5.3   Towards Achieving Intercultural Competence

While engaging in intercultural communications, conflicts such as misunderstanding may arise due to the differences such as cultural communication style and values (Hall, 2002; Sorrells, 2013; Tunde, 2016). The individuals involved are able to achieve successful intercultural communication by having intercultural competence. Intercultural competence refers to the ability to develop necessary knowledge, skills and attitude that leads to effective behaviour and communication and appropriate behaviour and communication in the context of intercultural communication (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, in order to achieve successful intercultural competence, a few recommendations are suggested for those dealing with intercultural communication at the workplace.

It is crucial that one recognises and become more sensitive to others' cultural ways. This process is referred to as cultural sensitivity. Bhawuk and Brislin, (1992, as cited in Knutson, Komolsevin, Chatiketu & Smith, 2003) suggest that intercultural communication could be successful through sensitivity towards the culture of others. Being able to recognise the differences that each culture has will help individuals engaged in intercultural communication to perceive situations in accurate manner (DeVito, 2009). Cultural sensitivity requires individuals to equip themselves with knowledge on others' culture. By having knowledge on the differences in cultural communication styles and values, communication between the interlocutors becomes more affective (Martin & Nakayama, 2013).

Knowledge enables those engaged in intercultural communication to achieve intercultural competence. Such knowledge that interlocutors need to have are self-awareness of one's own culture, culture specific knowledge, sociolinguistic awareness and knowledge on global issues and trends (Deardorff, 2006). By having awareness on our own and other's cultural ways, we could achieve mindfulness, a concept which refers to awareness of one and others' cultural ways and paying attention to the process of communication between us and other interlocutors (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

In addition, cultural sensitivity could be achieved through attitudes that are attributes to intercultural competence. This could be achieved through empathy. Empathy refers to the capacity to imagine or position ourselves in the other person's situation. In an intercultural communication perspective, empathy is crucial as it enables us to understand the context of the other person's cultural perceptions and experiences (Martin & Nakayama, 2013). Ting-Toomey (1999) describes the ability of being empathic as the attributes of cultural sensitivity in achieving intercultural competence. Calloway-Thomas (2010) further supports that empathy is an important aspect for a successful intercultural relation while working together.

Furthermore, openness and respect towards one another are important in accomplishing intercultural competence. Openness in intercultural competence refers to the ability to respond to others by suspending our own criticism and non-judgmental ways while respect is defined as the ability to display positive regard to another person and value the diversity (Deardorff, 2006; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Both openness and respect are

crucial in minimising conflicts in intercultural communication. The findings in Chapter 4 suggest that some of the perceived misunderstandings were solved when the participants use Mindful Reframing and Communicative Adaptability skills. Both skills require the individuals to be more open and respect the way people from other cultures conduct themselves, even though it conflicts with their own cultural values. With openness and respecting others, we are also showing flexibility and the ability in adaptation. Cultural adaptation is important as it helps one to be comfortable with the culture encountered and to minimise cultural shock (Fabrizio & Neill, 2005).

5.4   Suggestion for Future Research

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are a few limitations found in this study. The first one is that the NS and NNS who participated in this study do not work together in schools. The individuals that they had perceived to have misunderstanding with are not involved in this study. Thus, all of the misunderstandings narrated and obtained from the interviews are considered as their perceptions. The participants might have felt that it was a misunderstanding but it could have been perceived differently by the other person involved. Therefore, it is best to get a response from the person directly involved in the perceived misunderstanding. As a suggestion for future research, data could be obtained from both individuals that are directly involved in the perceived misunderstanding. By obtaining data from both parties involved, more perspectives could be gathered for further analysis.

As this study employs qualitative research method, the findings of this study should not be generalised. Out of the five NS and NNS participants, only a few examples were found to be significant and more examples of narrations and interviews could be collected. Not all participants were able to provide the data required for this study, as in the case of NNS 4. Although some of the findings indicate consistency with previous research and relevant literatures, the findings of this study are only relevant to the context of this particular study. More research needs to be conducted in order to support the findings. In addition, the number of participants in this study is also not sufficient. As a suggestion for future research, a study on a bigger scale could be conducted in order to obtain more information and to make generalisation.

Furthermore, some of the demographic factors in this study could be improved for future research. The present study lacks male participants. There are only two male participants in the NS group and all females from the NNS group. Perspectives from a male NNS teacher could have been different than the female NNS teachers. This factor could be attributed to the lack of male teachers in primary and secondary schools (Ivan, 2015). Discrepancy in gender could have influenced the findings of this study. Therefore, a balanced number of male and female participants are suggested for future research.

Some of the incidents recalled by the participants had occurred for quite some time. This might have influenced the data obtained from narrations and recollections from the interviews. The participants might have not recalled correctly or might have missed out on important details that might be useful for this study. As a suggestion, future research

could be conducted in a given context whereby the researcher is present to observe for data collection. This may enable the data collected to be more authentic and obtain more information on how misunderstandings occur and resolved from other perspectives such as non-verbal cues, facial expression and tone of voice.

5.5   Conclusion

This study finds that perceived misunderstanding occurs between English native and non-native teachers while working in schools. Factors such as differences in cultural communication style and values might have caused the perceived misunderstanding narrated by the native and non-native English teachers. Some of the perceived misunderstandings were solved by using intercultural conflict management skills such as dialogue, mindful reframing and adaptability and face-saving management. These are some of the skills that could be used to achieve intercultural competence while working in an intercultural context such as the school. Further training on intercultural awareness is recommended for stakeholders for future improvements. In addition, both native and non-native teachers must also equip themselves on knowledge and awareness in developing intercultural competence.

REFERENCES

Abdul Razak, Kamaruddin & Kamarulzaman, Kamaruddin. (2009). Malay culture and consumer decision-making styles: An investigation on religious and ethnic dimensions. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*, 14, 37-50.

Aneas, M.A. & Sandin, M.P. (2009). Intercultural and cross-communication research: Some reflections about culture and qualitative methods. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *10*(1), Art. 51, http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0901519

Andersen, P.A. & Wang, H. (2009). Beyond language: Nonverbal communications across culture. In Samorvar, L.A., Porter, R.E. & McDaniel, E.R. (eds.). *Intercultural communication. A reader*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cencage Learning.

Antaki, C. (2008). Discourse analysis and conversation analysis. In Alasuutari, P., Bickman, L., and Brannan, J. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of social research methods*. London: Sage (pp.431-446).

Asmah Haji Omar (1996). Indirectness as a rule of speaking among Malays. In Loga Baskaran and Zainab Abdul Majid (eds.). *Verbal interactions at play*. Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications.

Asmah Haji Omar (2012). Pragmatics of maintaining English in Malaysia's education system. In Ee-Ling Low and Azirah Hashim (Eds.). *English in the southeast Asia. Features, policy and language in use*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Arent, R. (2009). An introduction to intercultural communication. *Bridging the cross-cultural gap: Listening and Speaking Tasks for Developing Fluency in English*. Michigan ELT.

Avruch, K. (n.d). *Cross-cultural conflict*. Retrieved November 20, 2016 from https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/ctccs/projects/translating-cultures/documents/journals/cross-cultural-conflict.pdf

Baker, C. (2006). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism. 4th Edition*. Clevedon, United Kingdom: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Bazzanielo, C., & Damiano, R. (1999). The interactional handling of misunderstanding in everyday conversations. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 817-836

Beal, C. (1990). It is all in the asking: A perspective on problems of cross-cultural communication between native speaker of French and native speaker of Australian English in the workplace. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, Series S, Vol.7, pp.16-32

Bell, A. (1984). Hot Air: Media, Miscommunication and the Climate Change Issue. In In N. Coupland, H. Giles & Wiemann, J.M (Eds.), *"Miscommunication" and Problematic Talk* (pp.259-264). United States of America: Sage Publications Inc.

Berry, J.W. (1980). *Acculturation as varieties of adaptation*. In A.M Padilla, (Eds.), Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings (pp.9-26). Colorado: Westview-Boulder.

Boecher, Y. (2005). Native and nonnative English-speaking teacher distinctions: from dichotomy to collaboration. *The CATESOL Journal, 17 (1)*, 67-75.

Booher, D. (2012). *Communicate with Confidence! How to say it right the first time and every time.* United States of America: McGraw-Hill.

Bowe, H. & Martin, K. (2007). *Communication across cultures. Mutual understanding in a global world*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Braine, G. (2005). A history of research on non-native speaker teachers. In E. Lurda (Ed.), *Non-Native Language Teachers: Perceptions and challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp.13-23). New York: Springer

Brown, H.D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (5th Edition)*. New York: Pearson Longman.

Cahn, D. & Abigail, R. (2007). *Managing conflict through communication*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Caldwell-Harris, C.L. & Aycicegi, A. (2006). When psychology and culture clash: The psychological distress of allocentrics in an individualist culture and idiocentrics in collectivist culture. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, Vol 43(3), 331-361

Calloway-Thomas, C. (2010). *Empathy in the global world. An intercultural perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cambridge Dictionary (2016). 'Miscommunication'. Cambridge Online Dictionary. Retrieved February 16, 2015 from http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/miscommunication

Cambridge Dictionary (2016). 'Misunderstanding'. Cambridge Online Dictionary. Retrieved February 16, 2015 from http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/misunderstanding

Cardon, P.W. (2008). A critique of Hall's Contexting Model: A meta-analysis of literature on intercultural business and technical communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, Vol. 22 No. 4, October 2008, 399-428

Canelon, J. & Ryan, T. (2013). Facework, gender and online discussion. A negotiation perspective. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, Vol.2, No.1, pp.110-124

Central Intelligence Agency. (2016). *The World Factbook. North America: United States*. Retrieved July, 9 2016 from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html

Cesar Felix-Brasdefer, J. (2005). Indirectness and politeness in Mexican requests. Selected Proceedings of the 7th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium, ed. David Eddington, 66-78. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

Cheon, B.K., Marthur, V.A., & Chiao, J.Y. (2010). Empathy as cultural process: Insights from the cultural neuroscience of empathy. *World Cultural Psychiatry Research Review*, ISSN 1932-6270, 32-42

Christmas, C.N. & Barker, G.G. (2014). Assessing intercultural experience: Differences in acculturation, intercultural sensitivity and cognitive flexibility between the first and the second generation on Latino immigrants. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 7(3), 238-257

Chua, Y.P. (2012). *Mastering research methods*. Selangor, Malaysia: McGraw-Hill Education.

Chuang, R. (2003). A postmodern critique of cross-cultural and intercultural communication research: Contesting essentialism, positivist dualism and eurocentricity. In Starosta, W.J. & Gen, G.M (eds) *Ferment in the intercultural field: Axiology/Value/Praxis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 24-53

Clark, E. & Paran, A. (2007). The employability of non-native speaker teachers of EFL: A UK survey. ScienceDirect, System 35 (4), 407-430

Collier, M.J. (1991). Conflict competence between with African, Mexican, and Anglo American Friendships. In Ting-Toomey, S. & Korzenny, F. (Eds.). *Cross-cultural interpersonal communication* (pp.132-154). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Cruikshank, J. (2012). The role of qualitative interviews in discourse theory. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, Vol. 6 (1), 38-52

Coupland, N., Wiemann, J.M., & Giles, H. (1991). Talk as "Problem" and communication as "Miscommunication": An integrative analysis. In N. Coupland, H. Giles & J.M Wiemann (Eds.), "*Miscommunication" and Problematic Talk* (pp.1-17) United States of America: Sage Publications Inc.

Cowden, P.A. & Jinyang Huang. (2009). Are Chinese students really quiet, passive and surface learners? A cultural studies perspective. *Canadian and International Education*, Volume 38 Issue 2, Article 6

Creswell, J.W. (2004). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches.2nd Edition*. California: Sage Publications.

Cuellar, I. (2000). Acculturation and mental health: Ecological transactional relations of adjustment. In Cuellar, I. & Panigua, F.A. (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural mental health* (pp.45-62). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

David, M.K. & Kuang, C.H. (2005). Requests and cultural norms. *Journal of Communication Practices*, 2(1): 95-110

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internalisation at institutions of higher education in the United States. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10, 241-266

Dewaele, J.& Van Oudenhoven, J. (2009). The effect of multilingualism/multiculturalism on personality: No gain without pain for third culture kids? *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6(4), 443-459

Duan, C. & Hill, C.E. (1996). The current state of empathy research. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 43(3), 261-274

Duan, C., Wei, M. & Wang, L. (2009). The role of individualism-collectivism in empathy: An exploratory study. *Asian Journal of Counselling*. Vol.15, No.1, 57-81

DeVito, J.A. (2009). *The interpersonal communication book. 12th Edition*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Dornyei, Z. (2007). Research methods in applied linguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dumanig, F.P, David, M.K & Hanafi Hussein (2012). Attribution resulting in miscommunication between Malaysian employers and Filipino domestic helpers. *Journal of the South-East Asia Research centre for Communication and Humanities*, Vol.4 No.2, 2012, pp.1-20

Eades, D. (2000). I don't think it's an answer to the question: Silencing aboriginal witnesses in court language. *Language and Society*, Vol.29, pp.161-95

EurekaFacts (2014). *Evaluation of ECA' English Language Programs: Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program. Evaluation Report*. Washington, DC: Evaluation Division, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, United States Department of State.

Fabrizo, S.M. & Neill, J.T. (2005). Cultural adaptation in outdoor programming. *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, 9(2), 44-56

Fatiha Senom & Juliana Othman. (2014). The Native Speaker Mentors: A qualitative study on novice teachers' professional development. *Social and Behavioural Science* 141 (2014), 617-622

Fleishman, J., Sherbourne, C. & Crystal, S. (2000). Coping, Conflicting social interactions, social support and mood among HIV-infected persons. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28, 421-453.

Floyd, K. (2011). *Communication Matters: Second Edition*. New York, McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Fries, S. (n.d.). Cultural, multicultural, cross-cultural, intercultural: A moderator's proposal. TESOL France. Retrieved October 24, 2009 from http://www.tesolfrance.org/articles/fries.pdf

Gamble T.K. & Gamble, M. (2002). *Communication works: 7ᵗʰ Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Gamsriegler, V. (2005). *High-context and low-context communication styles*. Paper presented at Fachhochschul-Studiengang Informationsberufe, Germany

Gass, S.M. & Varonis E.M. (1991). Miscommunication in non-native speaker discourse. In N. Coupland, H. Giles & J.M., Wiemann (Eds.), *"Miscommunication" and Problematic Talk* (pp. 121-145). United States of America: Sage Publications Inc.

Gibson, R. (2010). *Intercultural Business Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gibson, W. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis*. Institute of Education, University of London.

Goodman, N.R. (1994) Cross-cultural training for the global executive. In Brislin, R.W. & Yoshida, T. (Eds.) *Improving intercultural interactions. Modules for cross-cultural training programs*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Grubbs, S., Jantarach, V., & Kettem, S. (2010). Studying English with Thai and native-speaking teachers. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 16:5, 559-576

Gudykunst, W.B., Ting-Toomey, S. & Chua, E. (1988). *Culture and interpersonal communication*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Gudykunst, W.B. (2003). *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.

Gudykunst, W.B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of individualism-collectivism, self-construal and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research*, 22, 510-543

Guion, L.A. (2002). Triangulation: Establishing the validity of qualitative studies. Retrieved August 5, 2016 from https://sites.duke.edu/niou/files/2014/07/W13-Guion-2002-Triangulation-Establishing-the-Validity-of-Qualitative-Research.pdf

Gumperz, J.J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hafiz Muhammad Abdullah Shaiq, Hafiz Muhammad Sufyan Khalid, Aisha Akram & Bakhtiar Ali. (2011). Why not everybody loves Hofstede? What are the alternatives approaches to the study of culture? *European Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 3, No. 6, 2011

Hall, E.T. (1983). *The dance of life*. New York: Doubleday.

Hall, B.J. (2002). *Among cultures. The challenge of communication*. Orlando; Florida: Harcourt College Publishers.

Hanisa Hassan, Biranul Anas Zaman & Imam Santosa (2013). *Identities and values of Malaysian Muslims among women and their metaphor in fashion*. The Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities, Official Conference Proceedings.

Harnisch, S.I., David, M.K. & Dumanig, F.P. (2009). Crosstalk and communication breakdown in professional interactions in English. *Language in India*; Volume 9:6 June 2009, ISSN 1930-2940

Harrison, L.E. & Huntington, S.P. (2000). *Culture matters: How Values Shape Human Progress.* New York: Basic Books.

Hazrati, A. (2015). Intercultural communication and discourse analysis: The case of aviation English. *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 192 (2015) 244-251

Hochel, S. (2013). To veil or not to veil: Voices of Malaysian Muslim women. *Intercultural communication studies* XXII: 2 (2013)

Hofstede, G. (1984). Hofstede's cultural dimensions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 15, 417-433

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviours, institutions, and organizations across nations. Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede Model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1)

Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G.J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organisations: Software of the Mind. Revised and Expended 3rd Edition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Holden, N. (2002). *Cross-cultural management: A knowledge management perspective*. Harlow: Pearson

Holmes, P. (2016). Intercultural dialogue: Challenges to theory, practice and research. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 14:1, 1-6

Holtzhausen, S. (2001). *Triangulation is a powerful tool to strengthen the qualitative research design: The Resource-based Learning Career Preparation Programme (RBLCPP) as a case study*. Presented at Higher Education Close Up Conference 2, Lancaster University, 16-18 July 2001. Retrieved January 2, 2016 from http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001759.htm

Hunsinger, R.P. (2006). Culture and cultural identity in intercultural technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 15, 31-48

Hybels, S. & Weaver, R.L (2009). *Communicating Effectively: Ninth Edition*. New York, McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Hynes, M.K. (2007). *A case study: Cross cultural misunderstanding in the workplace*. Retrieved November 19, 2015 from http://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/download.php/PDF%C2%A5AN 10032394-20071220-0011.pdf?file_id=14462

Ivan Loh (2015, June 5). *Fewer men in teaching profession*. The Star Online. Retrieved December 3, 2016 from ww.thestar.com.my/metro/community/2015/06/05/fewer-men-in-the-teaching-profession-many-said-to-be-shying-away-due-to-lack-of-interest-and-other-f/

Jai Shree Bipinchandra, Parilah Mohd Shah & Juhaida Abdul Aziz. (2014). Proficiency standards of Melaka non-optionist in-service teachers. *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol. 5, No.6, 110-117

Jackson, A. (n.d). *Example transcription instructions*. Retrieved November 20, 2016 from http://data-archive.ac.uk/media/285633/ukda-example-transcription-instructions.pdf

Jamaliah Mohd. Ali. (1995). Indirectness in Malay diplomacy (With particular reference to business dealings and labour relations). *Journal of Modern Languages*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, 1995, 19-27

Jamaliah Mohd. Ali. (2002). Why we don't say what we mean: A study of verbal indirection in communication. *Journal of Modern Languages and Linguistics*, Vol. 14, Issue 1, 2002, 34-43

Jeannot, Abdul Karim, Ong, Fon-Sim, Md Nor Othman and Sofiah Abd. Rahman (2014). Dimensions of the malayness construct: Scale development and empirical analysis. *International Journal of Business and Society*, Vol. 15 No.3, 2014, 519-546

Jones, M.L. (2007). Hofstede-Culturally questionable? Paper originally presented at *Oxford Business and Economics Conference*. Oxford, UK. 24-26 June, 2007

Kamisah Ariffin & Norazlan Anual (2003). Indirectness in speaking: Courtesy or a cause of backwardness? In Asmah Hj Omar, Halimah Mohd Said & Zainab Abdul Majid (Eds.) *Language and Empowerment* (pp. 190-199). Persatuan Bahasa Moden Malaysia. Faculty of Languages and Linguistics of University Malaya; Kuala Lumpur.

Kastanakis, M.N. & Voyer, B.G. (2013). The effect of culture on perception and cognition: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Business Research*. 67.(4)., pp. 425-433

Kaur, J. (2011). Intercultural communication in English as a lingua franca: Some sources of misunderstanding. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 8-1 (2011), 93-116

Kaur, N. (2013). *Refusals strategies on Facebook among primary school children*. Unpublished research report, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Keating, C.F. (1994). World Without Words: Messages from Face and Body in *Psychology and Culture* (175, eds.), Lonner, W.J. & Malpass, R.S. (1994). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Kenton, S.B.& Valentine, D. (1997). *Crosstalk: Communicating in a multicultural workplace*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall

Khalid Mohamed & Rashad Yazdanifard. (2015). Cultural, racial and gender comparison of the workforce in Malaysia and United States of America. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*. Vol.15, No. 4 57-64

Kim, D., Pan, Y., & Park, H.S. (1998). High versus low context culture: A comparison of Chinese, Korean and American cultures. *Psychology & Marketing*, 15, 507-521

Kittler, M.G., Rygl, D., & Mackinnon, A. (2011). Special review article: Beyond culture or beyond control? Reviewing the use of Hall's high-/low-context concept. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*. 11(1) 63-82

Knutson, T.J., Komolsevin, R., Chatiketu, P. & Smith, V.R. (2003). A cross-cultural comparison of Thai and US American rhetorical sensitivity: Implications for intercultural communication effectiveness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27 (2003), 63-78

Koyama, T. (1992). *Japan. A handbook in intercultural communication*. Sydney, NSW: Macquarie University.

Kuang, C.H., Jawakhir Mior Jaafar & Saroja Dhanapal (2012). A typology of address forms used in Malaysian government agencies. *International Journal of English and Education*. Vol. 1, Issue 1, July 2012, 61-78

Kuang, C.H., David, M.K., Lau, S.K. & Ang, P.S. (2011). Openings and closings in front counter transactions of government hospitals. *The Journal of the South-East Asia Research Centre for Communication and Humanities*. Vol. 3, 2011, pp 13-30

Kuang, C.H., Wong, N.L., & David, M.K. (2015). The perceived value of silence and spoken words in Malaysian interactions. *The Journal of the South-East Asia Research Centre for Communication and Humanities*. Vol.7 No.1, 2015, pp 53-70

Kuntsi, P. (2012). *Politeness and impoliteness strategies used by lawyers in the 'Dover Trial'-A case study*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Eastern Finland, Finland.

Ladegaard, H.J. (2007). Global culture-myth or reality? Perceptions of 'national cultures' in a global corporation. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 36(2), 139-163.

Lailawati Mohd Salleh. (2005). High/Low context communication: The Malaysian Malay style. *Proceedings of the 70th Annual Convention of The Association for Business Communication*. Irvine, California.

Laleh Toupa Esfandiari. (2013). The status of English in the educational system of India. *ELT Voices-India*, Vol.3, Issue 4, 2321-7170

Lee, I. (2004). Preparing non-native English speakers for EFL teaching in Hong Kong. In *Learning and teaching from experience: Perspectives on non-native English speaking teacher's classroom*. TESOL Quarterly 37, no. 2: 213-245

Lightbrown, P.M. & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned*. Third Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Manjanen, S. (2008). *English as a lingua franca. Teachers' discourses on accent and identity*. Masters Dissertation. University of Helsinki, Finland.

Mauranen, A. (2006). Signalling and preventing misunderstanding in English as lingua franca communication. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 177. 123–150.

Marriot, H. (1990). Intercultural business negotiations: The problem of norm discrepancy. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, Series S, Vol.7, pp.33-65

Martin, J.N. & Nakayama, T.K. (2013). *Intercultural communication in context. 5th Edition*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Medgyes, P. (2001). When the teacher is a non-native speaker. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language, Third edition* (pp. 415-428). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

McDaniel, E.R, Samovar, L.A, & Porter, R.E. (2009). *Understanding intercultural communication: The working principles. In Intercultural communication. A reader*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

McSweeney, B. (2000). The fallacy of national culture identification. *6th Interdiscipinary Perspectives on Accounting Conference*, Manchester, UK

Mei Yun Ong & Siew Eng Lin (2015). Reaction of mentors and mentees in the Native Speaker Programme of a rural primary school in Malaysia: A phenomenological study. *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 11, No.22, 2015

Milroy, L. (1984). Comprehension and context: Successful communication and communicative breakdown. In Trudgill, P (Ed), Applied sociolinguistics (pp.7-31). London: Academic Press.

Ministry of Education. (2012). Frequently asked questions - To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to Strenghten the English Language (MBMMBI) policy. Retrieved April 2, 2015 from http://www.moe.gov.my/en/soalan-lazim-view?id=150&cat=28&keyword=&page=1&

Nations Online (2016). United States of America. Retrieved July 11, 2016 from http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/united_states.htm

Ngai, P. & Janusch, S. (2015). Intercultural communication training for English language teachers: A case study of an immersion program for South Korean teachers. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, Vol.44, No.4, 345-368

Nishimura, S., Nevgi, A., & Tella, S. (2008). Communication style and cultural features in High/Low context communication cultures: A case study of Finland, Japan and India. Retrieved September 1, 2015 from http://www.helsinki.fi/~tella/nishimuranevgitella299.pdf

Noor Hayati Romli & Mohd Sallehudin Abd Aziz, (2014). The use of Bahasa Melayu in English language classroom by 'Non-Optionist' teachers. *Global conference on Business and Social Science-2014*. GCBSS-2014, 15TH & 16TH December, Kuala Lumpur.

Normala Othman. (2011). Pragmatics and cultural considerations of compliment responses among Malaysian-Malay speakers. *Asiatic*.Vol. 5, No.1, June 2011, 86-103

Nurzihan Hassim (2014). A comparative analysis on hijab wearing in Malaysian Muslimah magazines. *The Journal of the South-East Asia Research Centre for Communications and Humanities*. Vol.6, No.1, 2014 pp. 79-96

Oetzel, J.G. (2009). *Intercultural communication. A layered approach*. Vango Books.

Oetzel, J.G., Ting-Toomey, S., Yokochi, Y., Matsumoto, T., & Takai, J. (2000). A typology of facework behaviours in conflicts with best friends and relative strangers. *Communication Quarterly*, Vol.48, No.4, pp. 397-419

Oxford Dictionary. (2016). 'Miscommunication'. Oxford Online Dictionary. Retrieved February 16, 2015 from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/miscommunication

Oxford Dictionary. (2016). 'Misunderstanding'. Oxford Online Dictionary. Retrieved February 16, 2015 from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/misunderstanding

Pauwels, A., D'Argaville, M. & Eades, D. (1992). Problems and issues of cross-cultural communication in legal settings. In Pauwels, A. (Ed.) *Cross cultural communication in legal settings* (pp.77-105). Language and Society Centre, National Languages and Literacy, Institute of Australia, Melbourne: Monash

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Language imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University press.

216

Photongsunan, S., & Suwanarak, K. (2008). Native and non-native dichotomy: Distinctive stances of Thai teachers of English. *ABAC Journal*, 28(2), 10-30

Reilly, R.G. (1984). Miscommunication at the person-machine interface. In N. Coupland, Giles, Giles & J.M. Wiemann (Eds.), *"Miscommunication" and Problematic Talk* (pp. 283-300). United States of America: Sage Publications Inc.

Resnick, D.B. (2015). *What is ethics in research and why is it important?* National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Retrieved October 26, 2016 from https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/

Reza Eshtehardi. (2014). Pro-ELT; A teacher training blended approach. *Advances in Language and Literature Studies*. Vol.5, No. 5, 106-110

Rodriguez, G.A. (1999). *Bringing Up Latino Children in a Bicultural World*. New York: Fireside.

Roh, S. (2006). A research methods for English native speakers' teaching in Korean EFL classes. *English Language and Literature Teaching*, 12(3), 51-78

Rozana Sani (2016, February 11). Fulbright ETAs: A lasting impression. *The New Straits Times Online*. Retrieved June 21, 2016 from http://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/02/126941/fulbright-etas-lasting-impression

Rozina, G. (2001). The language of business: Some pitfalls of Non-native/Native speaker interaction. *Studies about languages*, 1648-2824

Saadiyah Darus. (2009). *The current situation and issues of the Teaching of English in Malaysia*. Retrieved March 5, 2016 from http://rcube.ritsumei.ac.jp/bitstream/10367/4130/1/LCS_22_1pp19-27_DARUS.pdf

Samovar, L.A., Porter, R.E., McDaniel, E.R. & Roy, C.S. (2013). *Communication between cultures: 8th Edition*. Singapore, Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Satesh Raj. (2014). *Malaysian graduates: Relevant yet irrelevant?* News. Astro Awani. Retrieved March, 15, 2016 from http://english.astroawani.com/budget2015-news/malaysian-graduates-relevant-yet-irrelevant-45433

Schmidt, J. & Uecker, D. (2007). Increasing understanding of routine/everyday interaction in relationships. *Communication Teacher*, 21,111-116

Schmitz, L. & Weber, W. (2013). Are Hofstede's dimensions valid? A test for measurement invariance of uncertainty avoidance. *Interculture Journal*, 13/22, 2014

Shahrini A/P Nadarajah. (2003). *The contributions of Native and Non-Native Teachers to ESL teaching*. Masters Dissertation. University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

Shasel, P. (1985). Restore Malay/ Islamic Courtliness (Online) Retrieved November 2, 2016 from

Singer, M.R (1985). Culture: A perceptual approach. *In Intercultural communication: A reader. 4th Edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Singer, M.R. (1987). *Intercultural Communication: A perceptual approach*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Sondergaard, M. (1994). Hofstede's consequences. A study of reviews, citations and replications. *Organizations Studies*, 15(3): 447

Sorrells, K. (2013). *Intercultural communication. Globalization and social justice*. United States of America: SAGE Publications Inc.

Spencer-Oatey, H. & Xing, J. (2003). Managing rapport in intercultural business interaction: A comparison of two Chinese and British welcome meetings. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Vol.24, No. 1, pp. 33-46.

Sueda, K. (2014). Negotiating multiple identities: Shame and pride among Japanese returnees. *Science and Business Media*, XX1V, pp.19-36

Suryani Awang, Noraini Ibrahim & Marlyna Maros. (2012). Malay values in intercultural communication. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, Vol.2, No, 3, May 2012, 201-205

Sweeney, E. & Zhu Hua (2011). Accommodating towards your audience: Do native speakers of English know how to accommodate their communication strategies toward non-native speakers of English? *Journal of Business Communication*, 47(4), 477-504

Tang, C. (1997). The identity of non-native ESL teacher: On the power and status of non-native ESL teachers. *TESOL Quarterly* 31(3), 577-580

Tannen, D. (1985). Cross-cultural communication. In *Handbook of discourse analysis*, Vol. 4, Discourse analysis in society. Retrieved January 20, 2016 from ttps://static1.squarespace.com/static/5523ffe4e4b012b2c4ebd8fc/t/56d9c7b51bbee07 6a4c2783f/1457113014028/crossculturalcommunicationhandbook.pdf

Teo Kok Seong. (1996). The Acquisition of Malay as a Second Language: A Case of the Essentiality of Culture Learning. A paper presented at *Southeast Asian Linguistics Society* VI, May 10 – 12, University of Oregon, Eugene, USA.

Tham, S.C (1985). *Religion and modernization: A study of changing rituals among Singapore's Chinese, Malays and Indians*. Singapore: Graham Bush

Thatcher, B. (2001). Issues in validity in intercultural communication research. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 46, 177-195

The Malay Mail Online. (2013, Spetember 23). *Survey: Motivated, English speaking grads are more likely to find jobs*. The Malay Mail online. Retrieved January 13, 2016 from http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/survey-motivated-english-speaking-grads-more-likely-to-find-jobs

The Star. (2015, October 25). *Decision on hiring of English teachers from India*. The Star Online Retrieved January 20, 2016 from

http://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2015/10/25/decision-soon-on-hiring-of-english-teachers-from-india/

Thije, J.D. (2003). The transition from misunderstanding to understanding in intercultural communication. In Komlosi, L.I., Houtlosser, P. & Leezenberg, M. (Eds.). *Communication and culture. Augmentative, Cognitive and Linguistic Perspectives*. Amsterdam: Sic-Sac, 197-213

Thonginkam, N. (2000). Thai ABAC student's perceptions of the English teachers' qualities suitable to different language skills. Unpublished Master' thesis, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand

Tili, T.R. & Barker, C.G. (2015). Communications in intercultural marriages. Managing cultural differences and conflicts. *Southern Communication Journal*, Vol.80, No.3, July-August 2015, pp. 189-210

Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). Intercultural Conflict Styles: A face negotiation theory. In Y.Y Kim & W. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Handbook of international and intercultural communication* (pp. 213-235). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. New York: The Guildford Press.

Ting-Toomey, S. (2005). The matrix of face: An updated face negotiation theory. In Gudykunst, W. (Eds.) *Theorizing about intercultural communication*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ting-Toomey, S. (2006). Managing intercultural conflict effectively. In Samovar, L.A., Porter, R.E., & McDaniel, E.R (Eds.) *Intercultural communication: A reader*. (pp.366-377). Belmondt, CA: Wadsworth

Ting-Toomey, S.& Oetzel, J.G. (2001). *Managing intercultural conflict effectively*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ting-Tomey, S. & Oetzel, J.G. (2002). Cross-cultural face concern and conflict styles. Current status and future directions. In Gudykunst, W.B & Mody, B. (Eds.), *Handbook of international and intercultural communication. 2nd Edition* (pp.143-206). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ting-Toomey, S. & Oetzel, J.G (2003). Face concerns in interpersonal conflict: A cross-cultural empirical test of the face negotiation theory. *Communication Research*, Vol. 30, No.6, 599-624

Todd, R.W. & Punjaporn, P. (2008). Implicit attitudes towards native and non-native speaker teachers. *ScienceDirect*, System 37 (2009) 23-33

Triandis, H.C. (1995). Individualism and collectivism. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Tsuda, S. (1993). Indirectness in discourse: What does it do in conversations? *Intercultural Communication Studies*. III:1 1993

Tunde, B. (2016). *The most common barriers of successful intercultural communication*. International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference, University of Miskolc, Hungary ISBN 978-963-358-113-1

Vargas-Urpi, M. (2013). Coping with non-verbal communication in public service interpreting with Chinese immigrants. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, Vol.42, No.4, 340-360

Waldman, K. & Rubaclava, L. (2005). Psychotherapy with intercultural couples: A contemporary psychodynamic approach. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 59(3), 227-245

Walkinshaw, I. & Oanh, D.H. (2014). Native and non-native English language teachers: Students perceptions in Vietnam and Japan. *SAGE Open*, April-June 2014:1-9

Weiner, I., Healy, A. F., & Proctor, R. W. (2003). *Handbook of psychology: experimental psychology*. New York: Wiley.

West, C. & Frankel, R.M. (1991). Miscommunication in medicine. In N. Coupland, H. Giles & J.M., Wiemann (Eds.), *"Miscommunication" and Problematic Talk* (pp. 166-194). United States of America: Sage Publications Inc.

Wood, J.T. (2014). *Communication Mosaics: An Introduction to the Field of Communication*. Singapore, Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Wood, J.T. & Duck, S.W. (2006). *Composing relationships: Communication in Everyday Life*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Wong Fook Fei, Noraini Ibrahim, Yuen Chee Keong & Nurjanah Mohd Jaafar. (2015). *Impact of the Brighton Education native speaker Teaching English Language and Literacy Programme 2 TELL 2*. Executive Summary. Brighton Education Group and National University of Malaysia

Wursten, H. & Jacobs, C. (2013). The impact of culture on education. Retrieved November 3, 2016 from ttps://geert-hofstede.com/tl_files/images/site/social/Culture%20and%20education.pdf

Yuen Meikeng. (2015, November 15). Poor English a major handicap. *The Star Online*. Retrieved December 28, 2015 from http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2015/11/15/poor-english-a-major-handicap-its-not-just-young-doctors-workers-in-various-sectors-too-have-a-weak/

Yiswaree Palansamy. (2015, June 12). At least teach Maths and Science in English, Dr M tells Muhyiddin. *The Malay Mail Online*. Retrieved December 28, 2015 from http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/at-least-teach-maths-and-science-in-english-dr-m-tells-muhyiddin

XiZhen Qi (2011). *Towards understanding misunderstanding in cross-cultural communications: The case of American learners of Chinese communicating with Chinese people in Chinese language*. Retrieved June 13, 2016 from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file%3Faccession%3Dosu1299607062%26disposition%3Dinline

Zimmermann, K.A. (2015). *American culture: Traditions and customs of the United States*. Retrieved December 18, 2016 from http://www.livescience.com/28945-american-culture.html

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS PRESENTED

1. 5th MELTA International Research Conference in English Language Education, 28th November 2015. Presenter.

2. 6th Faculty of Languages and Linguistics Postgraduate Research Conference, 5th October 2016. Presenter

3. Faculty of Languages and Linguistics Research Expo 2016, 27 May 2016. Presenter.

4. 25th MELTA International Conference, 30th May-1st June, 2016. Presenter.

5. 43rd JALT International Conference, 17-20 November 2017. Presenter.