

INSTRUCTIONAL PROXEMICS AND ITS IMPACT ON CLASSROOM TEACHING AND LEARNING

Heng Buai Chin¹
Cecilia Cheong Yin Mei²
Fauziah Bt Taib³

heng635@salam.uitm.edu.my
ceciliac@um.edu.my
fauziaht@gmail.com

Abstract:

Instructional proxemics refers to the use of space and spatial design in the instructional environment. This study aims at investigating the ways Chinese as Second Language (CSL) teachers use classroom physical space, body movement and positioning to convey interpersonal and pedagogical messages, and examine how such messages impact on classroom teaching and learning. Lessons conducted by four CSL teachers from the Selangor state were observed. Interview data gathered from both teachers and students were used to elicit information about teaching practices related to proxemics. Martinec's (2001) Engagement System was used to analyse the proxemics data. The present research findings indicate that the patterns of teachers' instructional proxemics in class are shaped by the existing classroom layout, students' seating arrangement, and the instructional activity of the day. The student-interview data also showed that students enjoyed having close interaction with their teachers. Therefore, teachers should vary their instructional activities and move around the class while teaching to ensure they have close social relations with their students. The findings also show that the sense of closeness between teacher and students enhance student learning.

Keywords: Proxemics, instructional proxemics, teacher immediacy, teaching and learning, Chinese as a Second Language (CSL).

INTRODUCTION

The job of teachers will become much easier if they can make their students trust them, like them, and come close to them (Richmond, 2002, p. 65). To build rapport with students, teachers resort to verbal resources like remembering students' names and addressing them by their names; praising students for their good behaviour and achievements; having a sense of humour; showing genuine interest and being concerned with each other; and even sharing and disclosing some personal information with students (Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Mottet & Richmond, 1998). Skilled teachers also resort to non-verbal resources to please students such as smiling frequently; using appropriate facial expression; displaying rich gestures and having eye contact with students while talking to them; and the like (Edwards & Edwards, 2001; Richmond et al., 2008). Teachers' behaviours that could reduce the physical and psychological distance in the interaction between teacher and students are known as teacher immediacy (Andersen, 1978, p. 7; Richmond, 2002, p. 68; Richmond, et al., 2008, p. 190). A useful non-verbal resource which is still neglected by many teachers in conveying intimacy to students is proxemics or

the use of space in class. The present paper aims to explore how Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) teachers use proxemics as a tool, be it purposeful or as personal unaware natural tendencies, to establish the sense of closeness between teacher and students in classroom interaction, and hence, promotes classroom teaching and learning.

The CSL class in this research refers to the Chinese Language for National Schools course, or better known in Malay as Bahasa Cina Sekolah Kebangsaan (BCSK). The present study focuses on the teaching of CSL specifically in Malaysian national primary schools to non-native speakers of the language, who belong to different ethnic groups, namely, Malay, Chinese, Indian and other minorities whose mother tongue is not Mandarin.

Objectives of the Study

This research investigates the use of proxemics by CSL teachers in classrooms to achieve their teaching goals. Two research objectives relating to this study are stated as follows:

1. to investigate the patterns of teachers' instructional proxemics in teaching CSL through their positioning and movement in class in relation to existing classroom layout and students' seating arrangement;
2. to study the impact of instructional proxemics on teacher-student interpersonal relationships and classroom teaching and learning.

Review of Literature

Proxemics is a study of "the interrelated observation and theories of man's use of space as a special elaboration of culture" (Hall, 1966, p. 1). The use of space also refers to the ways people structure their environment which is inherently informed by the sensory world they inhabit (Hall, 1966, pp. 2-4). When the use of space and spatial design were examined in the instructional environment, the knowledge and theories were named as instructional proxemics (McArthur, 2015, p. 1). Harrigan (2005, p. 137) summarized Hall's notion of proxemics as "the study of our perception and structuring of interpersonal and environmental space." These kinds of spatial relationships involve territory, proximity, and a range of personal space (Tulitatham, 2011, p. 2).

According to Hall (1966), there are four types of personal space defined in terms of distance which people maintain when they interact, namely, intimate (0 to 18 inches), personal (18 inches to 4 feet), social (4 to 12 feet) and public (12 to 25+ feet). Hall argued that his notion of distances in defining such personal spaces is associated with the American cultural acceptance. Hall reminds that, "any attempt to observe, record, and analyze proxemics systems, ... must take into account the behavioral systems on which they are based" (Hall, 1966, p. 4). This simply means that the nature of these spaces of intimate, personal, social and public for other cultures can be quite different. In order to gain a better understanding of proxemics, it should also take into account the interactants' co-deployment of other behavioral systems such as gaze (with or without eye contact), posture (lean forward or lean backwards, open or close), orientation (face to face, side to face, back to face), facial expressions (smile, frown, happy, sad), and the like, to mediate intimate relations with other people or vice versa, via its interplay with the interpersonal distances regulation (Harrigan, 2005, p. 143; see also Hall, 1963, 1973, 1979).

In response to this call, Martinec (2001) advanced Hall's social distance system by introducing the variable of angle of the body (orientation) and named his model as Engagement system. Table 1 shows the engagement system advanced by Martinec (2001). Obviously, it is indicated in Table 1 that instead of just relying on the sole factor of distance, Martinec uses the interplay of two factors, namely, the distance and the angle of body, to re-interpret social distances of Hall (1966).

Table 1: Engagement Categories as a Cross-classification of Distance and Angle (Reproduced from Martinec, 2001, p. 120)

Distance Angle	6 inches	18 inches	2.5 feet	4 feet	7 feet	12 feet
front	Close intimate	Far intimate	Close personal	Far personal	Close social	Far social
side	Close personal	Far personal	Close social	Far social	Public/dis.	Public/dis.
back	Far personal	Close social	Far social	Public/disengagement	Public/dis.	Public/dis.

Note: dis. = disengagement

The present paper uses Martinec’s engagement system to investigate how CSL teachers position their body and align their movement and distance themselves from students to accommodate their teaching goals.

Some researches on proxemics which are relevant to the present study are reviewed as follows. McArthur (2008) studied instructional proxemics in classroom communication discourse. Students were invited to respond to a survey assessing measures of student learning, teacher behaviours, classroom practices, and classroom perceptions. Results of this study indicate that learning spaces influence students’ perceptions across these measures. Arbaie et al. (2008) investigated the use of space and how the differences in using the space influenced a person when he/she is in the process of communication in the context of the Malay traditional house. The research findings showed that the use of space and the distance of a person when he/she communicates with his/her interlocutor will affect the individual’s calmness. Lim et al. (2012) who studied spatial pedagogy argued that the positioning and movement of the teacher in the classroom are fundamental to the pedagogical process. Spatial pedagogy is realised through the patterns of positioning and the directionality of movement, as well as the intersemiotic correspondences in the use of space with other semiotic resources (e.g. language, gesture and teaching materials). Parsons (2015) studied how the design of learning spaces influences student development and communication, and reveals that in-class use of technology can hinder dialogue and learning. Altinbasak (2016) investigated how classroom design influences teachers’ teaching behaviour and found that there is a co-relation between classroom arrangement and teachers’ behavioural outcome. To date, proxemics studies in the Malaysian classroom setting is still scant and the present study hopes to fulfill this research gap.

METHODOLOGY

Classroom observations, field notes, interviews, and audio and video recordings were used to gather the present research data. These methods provided information on classroom layout, students’ seating arrangements, the positioning and movement of the teachers, and the interpersonal distance between teacher and students in the classes while teaching. The research data are primarily used to determine how instructional proxemics impact classroom teaching and learning. Four CSL teachers from four schools in the Selangor state and 63 students who attended the Level 4 CSL course taught by these four CSL teachers in the schools participated in this study. These four classes are labeled as Class A, B, C and D, and the teachers who taught these classes are labeled accordingly as Teacher A, B, C and D. All the teachers are of the female gender and had at least three years of teaching experience. Their ages ranged between 30 and 33 years old.

Interview data gathered from both teachers and students were used to elicit information about teaching practices related to the impact of proxemics on classroom teaching and learning. 23 students who had been selected by the teachers as participants, and all four teachers were interviewed. Classroom observations were carried out with each teacher who was observed once for about one hour. The entire lesson conducted by each teacher was also audio and video recorded. For the sake of comparison, all the teachers were requested to teach the same topic during the classroom observations. The topic was “Mulan”, a female warrior who replaced her father in joining the army to fight for her country. It is a Chinese legend, extolling the virtues and bravery of Mulan who disguised herself as a man and fought in combat for 12 years. She has become an iconic character in Chinese culture.

Field notes were also taken during the classroom observations. For proxemics analysis, Martinec’s (2001) Engagement system is used to analyse the teacher-students social distance through their interpersonal distance. In transcribing the data on proxemics, the positioning and movement of the teachers shown in the video recordings were observed. The teachers’ location, distance and angle were examined and recorded accordingly to reflect the teachers’ actual movement in the classroom. A snapshot via a computer software (i.e. Cyberlink Powerdirector 10) of every complete move was taken. Besides, the exact time in the video clip when the movement was performed was recorded. These still images were then transferred to a document file. They were placed in the sequence, according to the pace of the movements. The total duration of the teachers’ positioning at each location in the class was counted. After the analysis, the social relations between the interactants and a sketch of the teacher’s positioning and movement for each class were drawn.

The researchers also intend to investigate the utilization of proxemics by the teachers in relation to four types of instructional activities, namely, whole group instruction, small group instruction/consultation, classroom supervision, and lesson preparation. Whole group instruction refers to the time when a teacher presents a lesson to the whole class with little differentiation in either content or assessment of any student’s ability. Small group instruction typically refers to a teacher working with a small group of students on a specific learning objective. Classroom supervision refers to a teacher’s classroom management in monitoring students’ behaviour and work during group activities or individual work. Therefore, the present study also examined the utilization of proxemics in various forms of instructional activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of proxemics in this study focuses on teachers’ instructional activities, classroom layout and teachers’ movements in class, and the proximity between teacher and students. The research findings are discussed as follows.

Teachers’ Instructional Activities

Table 2 shows the teachers’ instructional activities in each class. The main instructional activity in the four classes was whole group instruction. Teachers A, B, and D spent over 90% of their teaching time on whole group instruction. Compared with the other three classes, the teaching activities of Class C were more varied. In addition to whole group instruction (62.57%), classroom supervision (3.86%), lesson preparation (6.56%), and small group activities were also practised in Class C. Small group activities took up 27.01% of the total teaching time, and this can be considered as fairly long. Teacher D conducted the least number of classroom activities. Table 2 reveals that in Class D, whole group instruction was predominant (99.13%), with the rest of the time spent on lesson preparation (0.87%). Teacher D did not give any personal consultation or supervision to any student during the lesson observed. The detailed data on the instructional activities in each class can be seen in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 2: Teacher’s Instructional Activities in Each Class

Types of Instructional Activity	Teacher A Duration (%)	Teacher B Duration (%)	Teacher C Duration (%)	Teacher D Duration (%)
Whole Group Instruction	1966s (98.15%)	2130s (90.37%)	1135s (62.57%)	1479s (99.13%)
Individual/ Small Group Consultation	13s (0.65%)	0	490s (27.01%)	0
Classroom Supervision	0	40s (1.7%)	70s (3.86%)	0
Lesson Preparation	24s (1.20%)	187s (7.93%)	119s (6.56%)	13s (0.87%)
TOTAL	2003s (100%)	2357s (100%)	1814s (100%)	1492s (100%)

Figure 6.5: Teacher’s Instructional Activities in Each Class

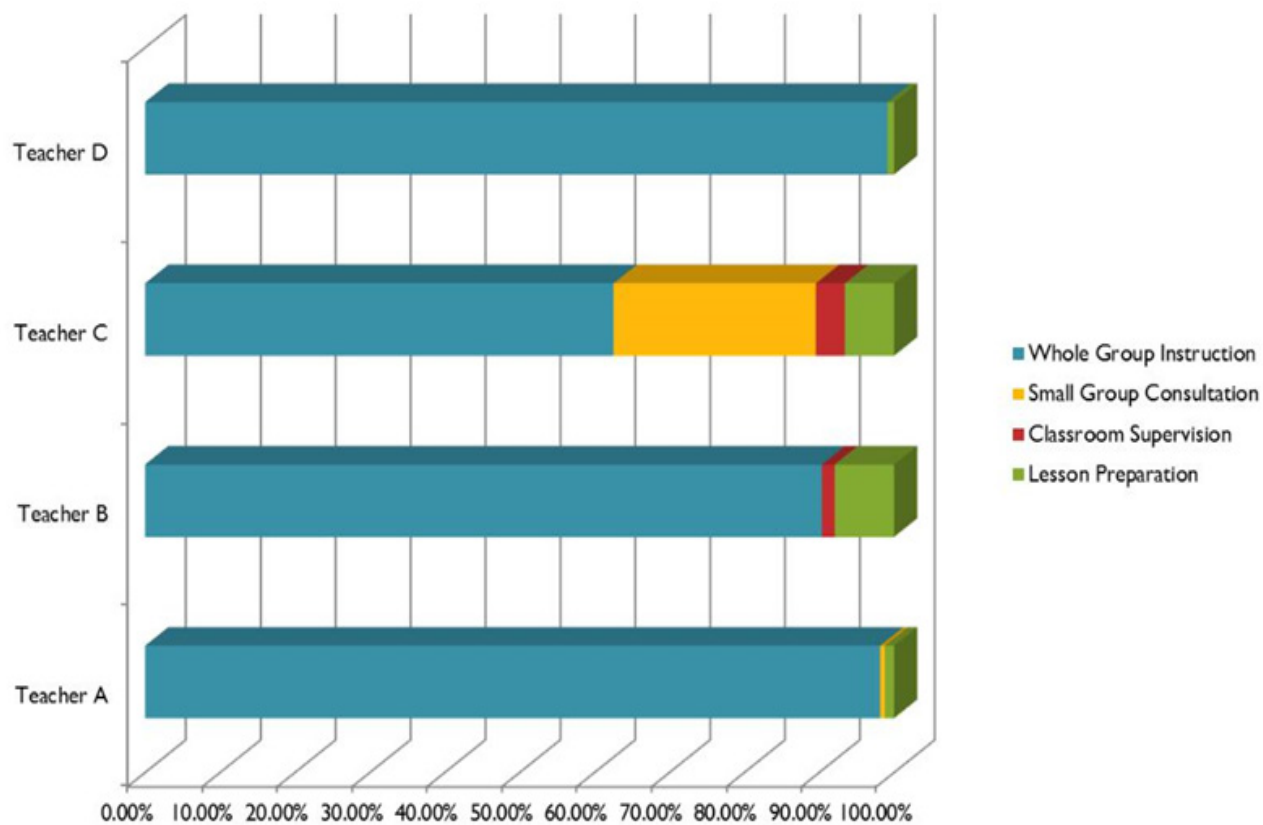
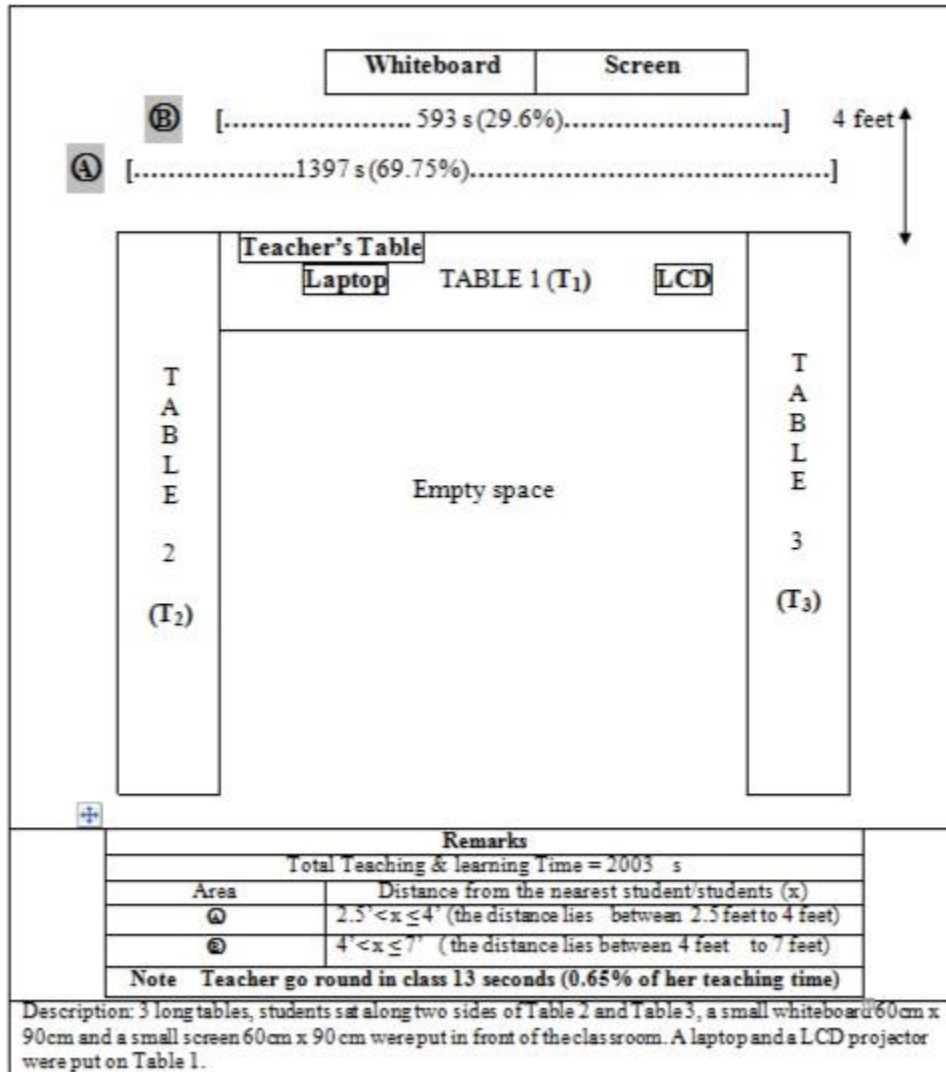


Figure 1: The Allocation of Teaching Time in Teacher's Instructional Activities in Each Class

The proximity between teacher and students is related to the teacher's instructional activities. The data showed that when a teacher was giving whole group instruction, the distance between the teacher and the students was less intimate as compared to when the teacher was giving small group consultations, probably because the teacher was standing relatively far away from the students. Small group instruction or consultation allowed the teachers to work more closely with each student. This was evident in Class C, where the teacher spent over 27% of her teaching time with smaller groups while conducting group activities in class (refer to Table 2, Figure 1). When the teacher was supervising the students, the distance of her body and her position was also more intimate as compared to when the teacher was preparing the lesson's teaching materials for the next stage of the lesson (lesson preparation) at the teacher's table. Therefore, the proximity between teacher and students is affected by the type of instructional activities in class. It was observed that the nearer the teacher was to the students; the more intimate the teacher was towards the students, validating earlier observations (Andersen & Andersen, 2005, p. 114).

Classroom Arrangement and Teachers' Movement

According to Kress et al. (2005), the classroom arrangement can be seen as "an expression of the teacher's preferred spatial and social relations with the students. This spatial relation is a sign made by the teacher to express his sense of the social relation, of the pedagogic relationship with the students, as well as his sense of how the students might work with each other and with him" (p. 24). The arrangement of the tables and students' seating position in the four classes was noted during the data collection period. Except for Class C where tables and chairs were arranged in clusters (Figure 4), Classrooms B and D had a rather traditional layout where chairs and tables were arranged in rows. Classes B, C and D were located in the school multimedia rooms, while Class A was in the school library. There were three long tables in Class A. The two longer tables T2 & T3 shown in Figure 2 were of equal length and were put in parallel positions, with a large space separating them from each other. A shorter table T1 was perpendicular to the two longer tables. Table T1 was parallel and nearer to the whiteboard compared to the other two tables. The students were seated along the two sides at Tables T2 and T3, facing the space in the middle of the classroom. Class B (Figure 3) and Class D (Figure 5) had similar layouts. Students were seated in rows and filled up the seats from the front to the rear of the classroom, parallel to the whiteboard.



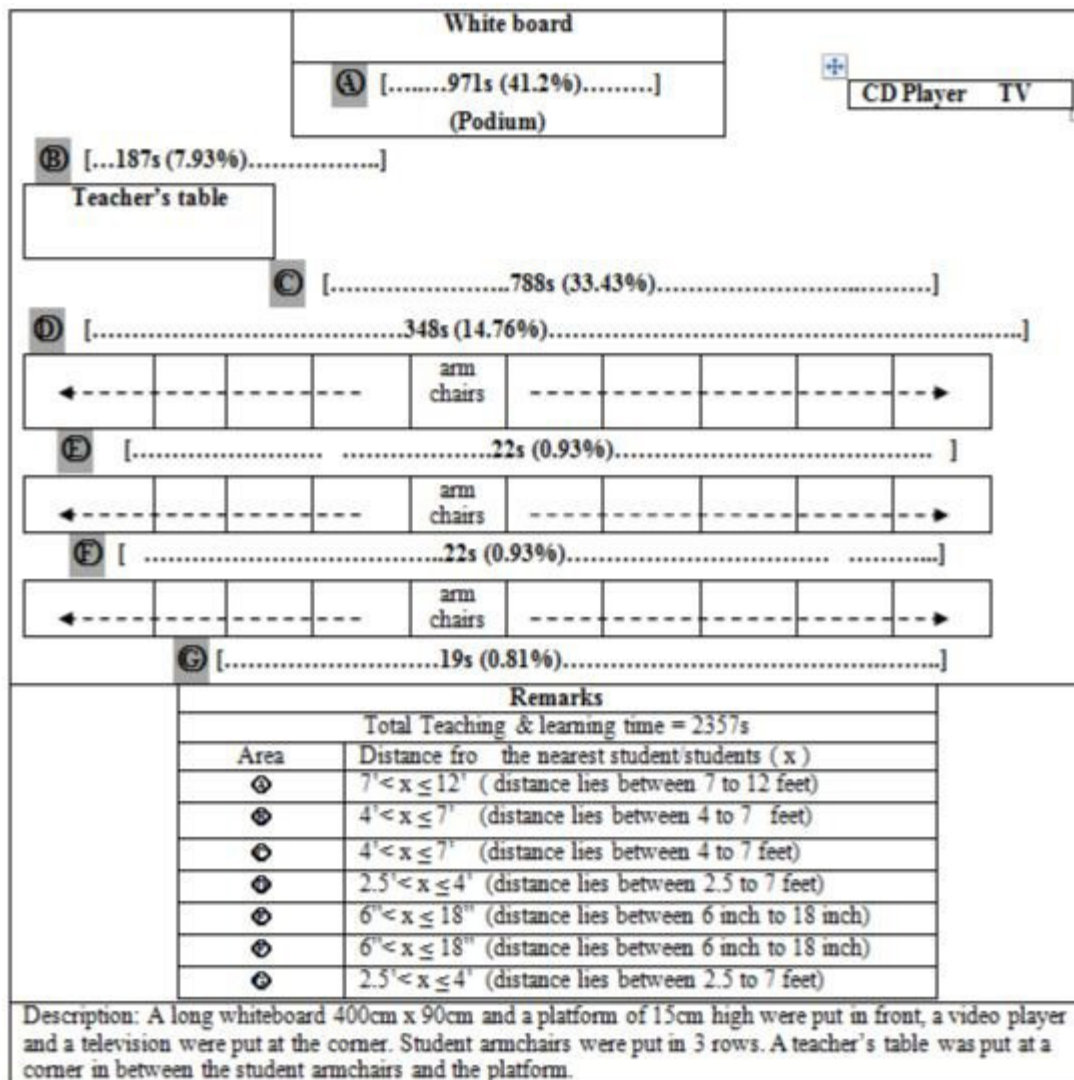
Notes: Teacher goes

Figure 2: Classroom Layout & Teacher's Movement in Class A

Kress et al. (2005, p. 26) assert that the movement of the teacher in the classroom has meaning. According to them, the meaning is produced in the interaction of three factors: the teacher's movement, the meaning of the space in which the teacher moves (i.e. at the front, in between the desks), and the movement of the students. This study focused on the movement of the teachers. The classroom layout and teacher's movement in Class A is shown in Figure 2.

The classroom arrangement has an impact on the teacher's movement in class. The moving space for Teacher A between the whiteboard and the three long tables was not spacious. It only allowed easy access for one person and as such the teacher's movement was particularly restricted in the place denoted as [.....] as shown in Figure 2 (99% of lesson time). Within this area, she sometimes moved to the whiteboard to write or put up pictures on it. As such, this did not promote a sense of physical closeness between the teacher and students, especially those who sat at the back and the sides of the room. Although she did move around the class while monitoring the students doing class work at the end of the lesson, it only accounted for about merely 1% of her lesson time.

With regard to Class B, the space between the whiteboard and the first row of students' seats was quite spacious in contrast to that of Class A. Teacher B used 7.93% of her lesson time at the teacher's table (Area B in Figure 3) where she prepared her lesson, taking out pictures and putting adhesive material behind the pictures; she referred to her textbook and arranged flashcards. When delivering her lesson via whole group instruction, Teacher B stood at the podium in front of the whiteboard (Area A in Figure 3) for about 41.2% of her teaching time. She was standing at the podium to write on the board, paste pictures she had drawn on the board, lead the students in reading, and related the new content to the students' previous learning experience. This area was about 7 to 12 feet away from the first row of students' seats in class. For the remaining teaching time, she spent about 33.43% of the time standing at Area C and 14.76% of the time at Area D. When explaining the new content, she normally stood at Area C. When she wanted to involve students in discussion, she moved to the area in front of the students seated at the first row in Area D. She spent the rest of the time, moving between Areas E, F, and G to distribute handouts and to supervise students (about 2.67% of her teaching time). Her movements are tracked as [.....] in Figure 3.

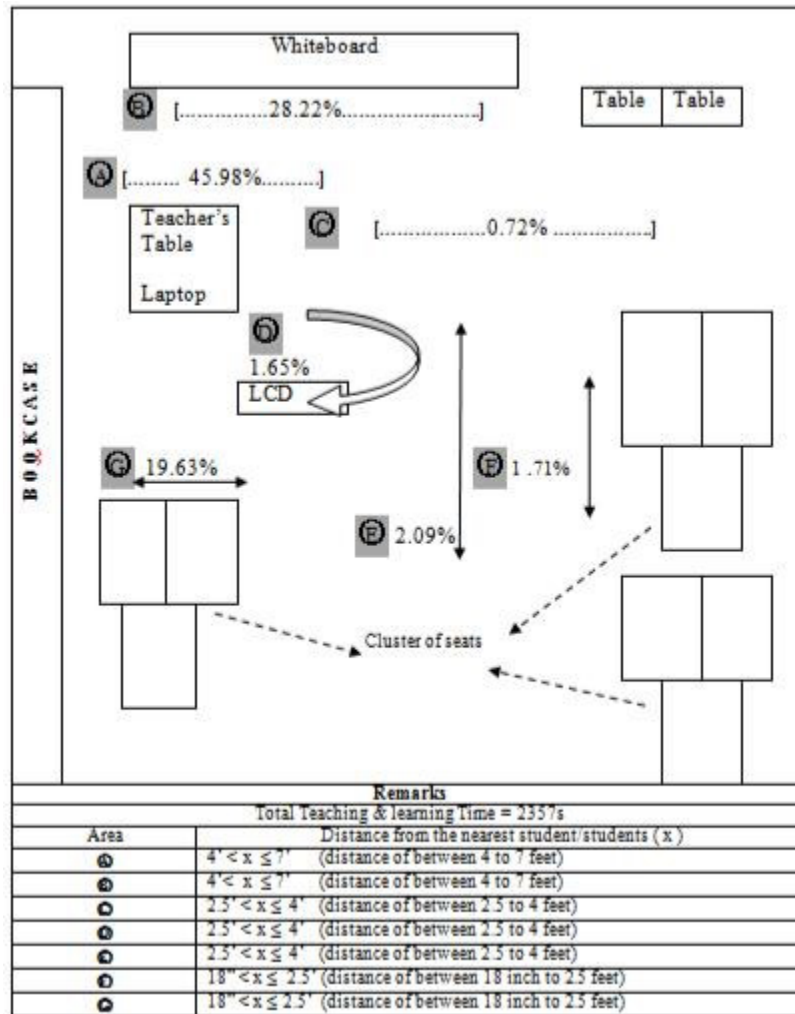


Notes: Teacher goes

Figure 3: Classroom Layout & Teacher's Movement in Class B

Figure 4 shows the classroom arrangement and teacher’s movement of Class C. The layout of Class C was different from the layout of the other three classes. Chairs and tables in Class C were grouped together where three sets of tables and chairs formed a group. Altogether there were three groups of chairs and tables, the number of students for this class was small. There were only five students on the day of the observation.

The data in Figure 4 showed that Teacher C moved around the class while teaching. She spent about 75% of her teaching time standing in front of the class. For the remaining class time, she approached the students to supervise their learning, and to give personal attention. Teacher C was the only teacher who spent more time (27% of her teaching time) on small group consultations (refer to Table 2) while conducting group activities. The proximity between Teacher C and her students was very close.



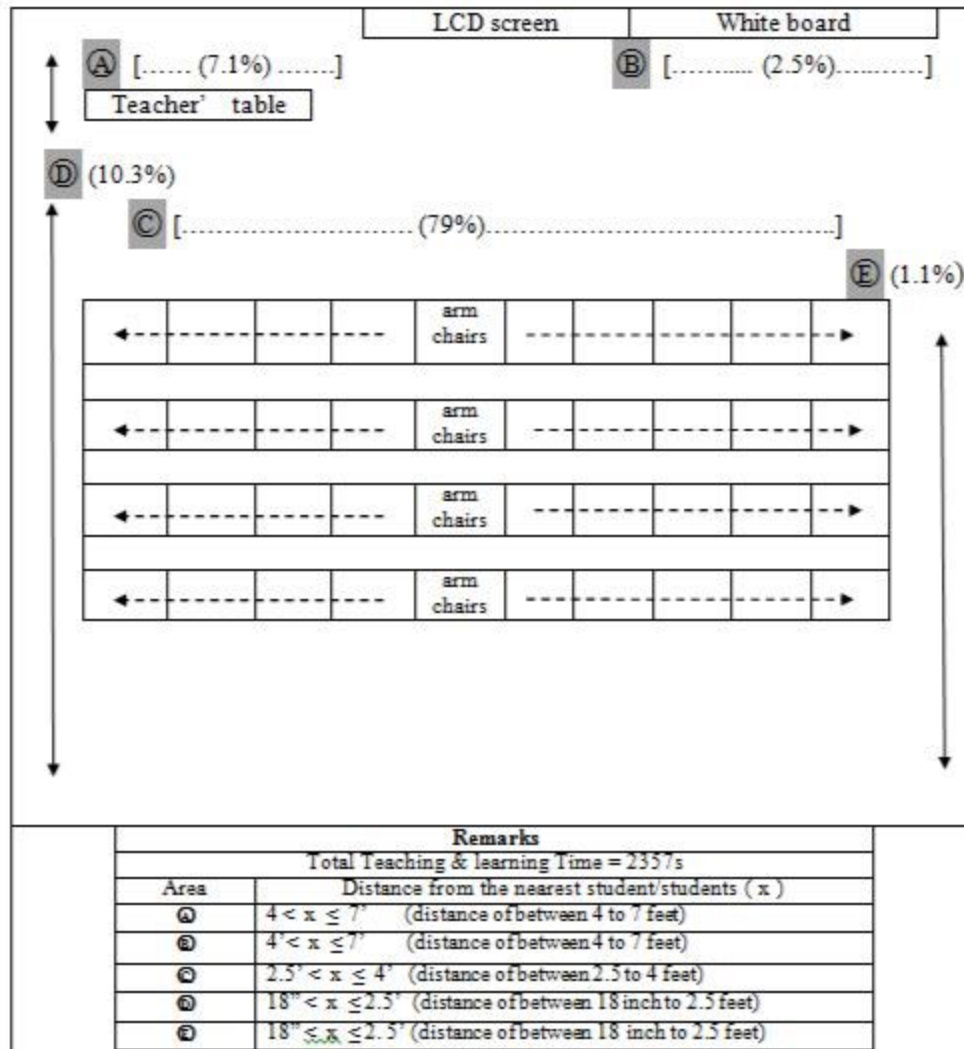
Notes: Teacher goes

Figure 4: Classroom Layout & Teacher’s Movement in Class C

As seen in Table 2, during the lessons, other than spending some time on lesson preparation and activities, Teacher D only conducted whole group instruction and did not give any personal attention to the students. The whole group instruction accounted for 1479 seconds, representing 99.13% of her total lesson time. Figure 5 shows the movement of Teacher D in the classroom. The data shows that Teacher D was mainly standing in front of the classroom while teaching. She spent 7.1% of her teaching time standing near her desk (Area A in Figure 5) and within this area, she prepared teaching materials and sometimes she stood there and taught. Another 2.5% of her teaching

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time was spent standing in front of the whiteboard (Area B) to teach. She also used the whiteboard to write some words and taught the students to read the words. For the rest of the class time (79% of the time), Teacher D stood near the students seated at the first row (Area C). For the remaining 11.4% of the class time, she moved back and forth along the passageway situated at both sides of the classroom, indicated as Areas D and E. This movement usually occurred when students were listening to the audio recording. It was observed that Teacher D was standing near to the students who sat at the front row of the class, roughly taking up 90% of the teaching time, while conducting the whole group instruction. She was physically far away from the students who sat at the back of the class.



Notes: Teacher goes

Figure 5: Classroom Layout & Teacher's Movement in Class D

The Proximity between Teacher and Students

Martinec's (2001) engagement system was used to analyse the use of space by the four teachers while teaching. According to Martinec (2001, p. 118), "Engagement in presenting action concerns social relations between interactants, which are realized by the distance and angle of their bodies". The positioning and movement of the teachers in class while teaching was categorized based on the scales listed in Table 1. Table 3 and Figure 6 show the teachers' proxemics in each class.

Table 3: Teacher’s Proxemics in Class

Categories of Engagement	Teacher A Duration (%)	Teacher B Duration (%)	Teacher C Duration (%)	Teacher D Duration (%)
Close Intimate (CI)	0	0	0	0
Far Intimate (FI)	0	0	0	0
Close Personal (CP)	0	99s (4.20%)	29s (1.60%)	0
Far Personal (FP)	1346s (67.2%)	130s (5.52%)	487s (26.85%)	1186s (79.49%)
Close Social (CS)	164s (8.18%)	925s (39.24%)	92s (5.07%)	168s (11.26%)
Far Social (FS)	40s (2.00%)	891s (37.80%)	335s (18.47%)	0
Public/ Disengagement (P)	453s (22.62%)	312s (13.24%)	871s (48.01%)	138s (9.25%)
Total Time (%)	2003s (100%)	2357s (100%)	1814s (100%)	1492s (100%)

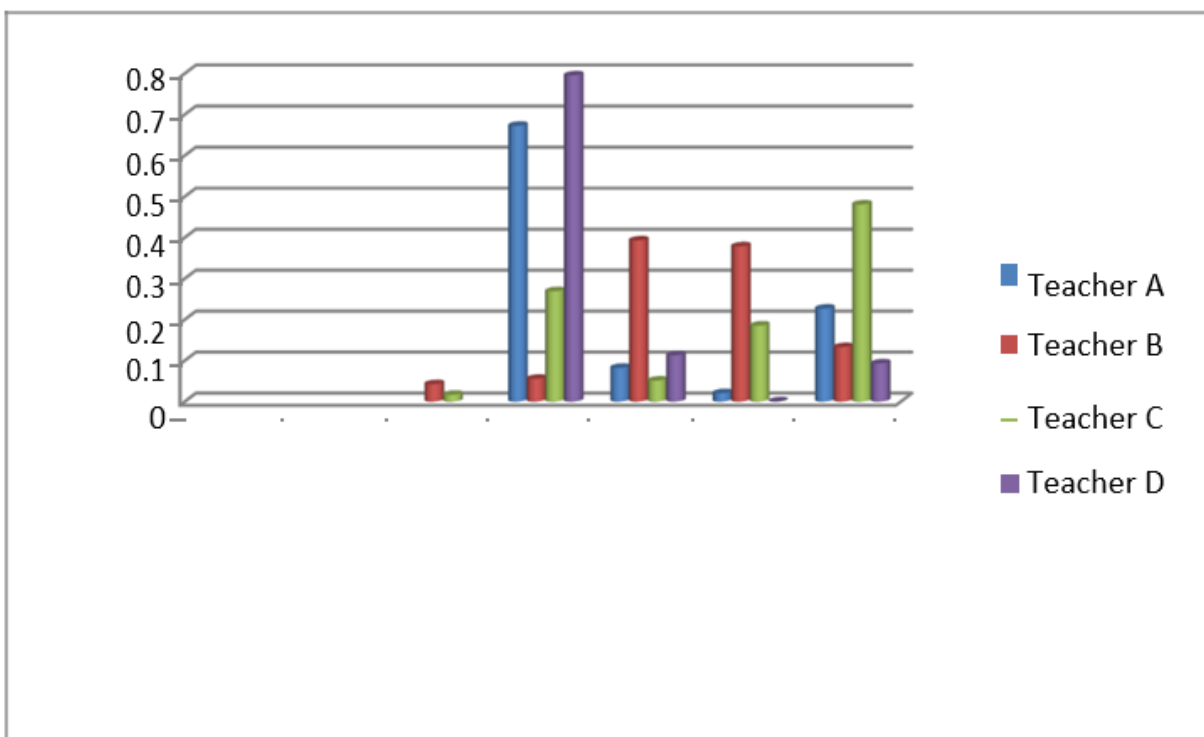


Figure 6: Teacher’s Proxemics in Class

The proxemics were measured by the degree of engagement between teacher and students in the classroom, namely, close intimate, far intimate, close personal, far personal, close social, far social and public. They are indicated in the first column in Table 3. The data showed that the engagement for Teacher A in Class A comprised 67.2% of Far Personal (FP), 8.18% of Close Social (CS), 2.00% of Far Social (FS), and 22.62% of Public or Disengagement (P). There was no evidence of Intimate (CI & FI) and Close Personal (CP) engagements (see also Figure 6). The

findings show that the proximity between Teacher A and her students in this class was very close, which was not more than 4 feet from where the first row of students were seated (refer to Area A & B in Figure 2). However, as revealed in Figure 2, almost 99% of the teaching time of Teacher A was mainly standing and moving in Areas A and B. Thus, it did not promote any sense of physical closeness between the teacher and students who sat at the side and at the back of the classroom for almost the entire duration of the lesson.

The findings on the proximity between Teacher B and her students during instructional activities are as follows: Close Personal (4.20%), Far Personal (5.52%), Close Social (39.24%), Far Social (37.80%), and Public (13.24%) (refer to Table 3). There was no evidence of Intimate engagement between Teacher B and the students. To conclude, the proximity between Teacher B and her students was reasonably close, as she engaged with her students for about 87% of her teaching time.

For Teacher C, the Close Personal engagement accounted for 1.60%, Far Personal for 26.85%, Close Social for 5.07%, Far Social for 18.47%, and Public for 48.01%. In other words, 28% of Teacher C's teaching time was spent on personal engagement, 24% on social engagement, and 48% on public or disengagement. Although Areas A and B in Figure 4 were not far from the first group of students, the video recording data revealed that at several times, Teacher C faced sideways while teaching rather than facing the students directly. This can be seen as evidence of reduced proximity between students and Teacher C. As compared to the analysis in Figure 4, the proximity between Teacher C and her students in this analysis was not as close as the findings in Section 5.2, which were obtained mainly based on one dimension, namely the body distance only. Although Teacher C liked to look sideways during teaching which reduced the sense of intimacy, she was very close to students during the group activities when she moved around to monitor the students' participation. The details of other standing positions of Teacher C in class can be seen in Figure 4.

The proxemics findings on Teacher D as presented in Table 3 show that Far Personal engagement was evident in 79.49% of the teaching time, 11.26% for Close Social and 9.25% for Public engagement. The high score of 79.49% for Far Personal engagement was due to the fact that Teacher D's teaching time was concentrated at Area C, which was very near to the first row of students (refer to Figure 5 & 6). Therefore, a sense of intimacy between teacher and students could only be enjoyed by the students in the first row. For the other students in the class, the sense of intimacy was not much different to that of public engagement especially if the teacher did not have any eye contact with the students.

To conclude, the findings indicate that teacher's use of space or proxemics in class influenced the physical and psychological closeness between teacher and students. The proximity between teacher and students was also shaped by the type of instructional activity conducted in class. As evident in this study, the proximity between the teachers and their students was less intimate in whole group instruction as compared to small group instruction or consultation (see Table 4).

Table 4: Teacher’s Instructional Activities and Use of Space in Class C

Engagement Instruction Activities	CI Duration (%)	FI Duration (%)	CP Duration (%)	FP Duration (%)	CS Duration (%)	FS Duration (%)	P Duration (%)	TOTAL Duration (%)
Whole class instruction				35s (1.93%)	38s (2.09%)	299s (16.48%)	763s (42.06%)	1135s (62.57%)
Individual/ small group consultation			29s (1.60%)	420s (23.15%)	41s (2.26%)			490s (27.01%)
Classroom supervision				32s (1.77%)	7s (0.39%)	31s (1.71%)		70s (3.86%)
Lesson preparation					6s (0.33%)	5s (0.28%)	108s (5.95%)	119s (6.56%)

The Impact of Instructional Proxemics on Teacher-student Interpersonal Relationships and Classroom Teaching and Learning.

The following section reports on how teacher’s instructional proxemics can have an impact on the teacher-student interpersonal relationships and classroom teaching and learning.

The Impact of Proxemics on Teacher-student Interpersonal Relationships

As mentioned in the Introduction section, teacher immediacy refers to teachers’ behaviours that could reduce the physical and psychological distance in the interaction between the teacher and students. The proximity or interpersonal distance between the teacher and students in classroom interaction will influence teacher-student relationships. When the teacher moves around the classroom to approach students while teaching, it is considered as an immediacy behaviour. The teacher who sits or stands behind the desk or at the podium and rarely approaches students or allows them to approach her or him is perceived by students as unfriendly, unreceptive, unapproachable, and non-immediate. This does not help improve student-teacher relationships (Richmond, 2002, p. 74).

The findings in this study show that the proximity between teacher and students was less intimate in whole group instruction as compared to small group instruction or consultation. While giving personal consultation, the proximity between Teacher C and her students was in the personal zone. The student-interview data also showed that many students enjoyed having close interaction with their teachers. According to Andersen and Andersen (2005, p.114), “closer distances can be both an indication and a cause of closer interpersonal relationships”. Therefore, teachers should vary their instructional activities and move around the class while teaching to ensure that they have close social relations with their students. The pictures in Figure 7 show the teacher facilitating students in completing the group learning activities. The close physical distance between teacher and students, and the gentle ways of Teacher C, helped to create a sense of intimacy between the teacher and her students.



Figure 7: The Co-deployment of Teacher Talk and Proxemics in Facilitation

The Impact of Proxemics on Classroom Teaching and Learning

Findings on classroom layout, the teacher's classroom movements and student seating arrangement have been discussed at length in previous sections. The present section will discuss the impact of the use of space on classroom teaching and learning.

The Realisation of Teacher's Power through the Use of Space and Its Impact on Teaching and Learning

Teachers not only control the right to speak, but also the right of movement in classrooms. Cazden (1988, p. 54) asserts that "teachers have the right to speak at any time and to any person; they can fill any silence or interrupt any speaker; they can speak to a student anywhere in the room and in any volume or tone of voice." This observation also applies to classroom movement. The analysis indicated that teachers enjoy the right to move around the room, or stop moving at any time. They decide when to approach students and when to stay away, and they have the right to order students to move to specific locations, including the teacher's desk. Cultural practice tells students that the teacher's desk is the teacher's territory, and students do not invade this space. In contrast to the teacher's control over the use of space, students do not enjoy the right to move and approach anybody freely. During the duration of a lesson, students must be seated at a place determined by the teacher and no movement is allowed. Students are also prohibited from approaching other students without the teacher's permission. The teacher's complete authority over the use of space in the classroom helps to ensure classroom discipline, and this form of classroom management enables the teacher to accomplish the teaching objectives.

The Impact of Student's Seating Arrangement on Student Learning

The interview data revealed that the teachers decided on their students' seating arrangements based on their achievement and behaviour. A less able student was paired with a more able one based on their results in the subject (Class B), while a talkative student was paired with a less talkative one (Class A). Teacher C made low-achieving students sit in front and high-achieving students sit at the back of the class. They felt that these seating arrangements helped to create a more harmonious and conducive environment for teaching and learning. This action taken by the teachers show that the teachers were concerned about the students' learning. The teachers felt that these arrangements would allow more able students to facilitate the less able students' mastery of a particular skill or help in their learning of the language. In addition, the talkative and less attentive students would be influenced by the more attentive peers to pay attention in class. Teacher C revealed that by making the weaker students sit near to her made it easier for her to help them learn. The student-interview data confirmed that these seating arrangements were effective, and enhanced learning. Students' seating arrangements showed that the four teachers cared for their students. Such actions are also considered as immediacy behaviours (Andersen, 1979).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed at investigating the ways CSL teachers use the physical classroom space, their movements and positioning in class to convey interpersonal and pedagogical messages, and examined how such messages impact classroom teaching and learning. The research findings indicate that the patterns of teachers' instructional proxemics in teaching are shaped by the existing classroom layout, students' seating arrangement, and the instructional activity of the day. The teachers in the present study were seen standing close to the students when giving guidance and facilitating the students when conducting group activities. Their actions indicate that the teachers cared about their students. Their actions also help foster solidarity between the students and their teachers, especially when the students see that their teacher is making the effort to help them. On the other hand, if the teacher confines herself to a fixed area near her table or computer, and rarely approaches her students, the teacher may be considered as "less immediate", and less approachable.

The present study found that the use of space (proxemics) was also affected by the classroom layout and the teaching activity of the day. For instance, one of the CSL lessons in this study (Class A) was conducted in the school library, where the arrangement of chairs, tables and cabinets was relatively fixed. As a result, the fixed layout limited the teacher's movements. There were also instances where a teacher relied heavily on the computer to deliver the teaching content that she spent more time standing next to the computer than moving close to the students. This suggests that teacher movement was also influenced by the instructional activities conducted. Group activities would provide the opportunity for the teacher to move around to guide or assist the students to accomplish the given tasks. This was observed in Class C. During the group activity, the teacher moved close to the students who were doing the activities. Therefore, the movements of the teachers in this study are dependent on the class layout, computer usage and class activity. This observation is consistent with Lim's (2011) study on the use of space in the classrooms of two teachers. Teachers, therefore, should be aware of the impact of proxemics in establishing interpersonal relations with their students. The findings also show that the sense of closeness between teacher and students enhance students' learning.

The study of proxemics in the Malaysian context is still lacking, specifically in the classroom setting. The present study only looked at the interplay of distance and body orientation to negotiate interpersonal and pedagogical meanings. Further studies can look at other behaviours that are associated with proxemics such as postural identifiers (lean forward, lean backwards, sitting, standing, open, close) and "input from the senses of touch, vision, audition, olfaction, and temperature (e.g., "perceiving heat from another's body" (Harrigan, 2005, p. 143)).

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