

# A Pragmatic Contrastive Analysis of English and Chinese Greetings in Business Intercultural Communication

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## Abstract

Greetings, as a very common language communication phenomenon, widely exist in every aspect of daily life, and there is no lack of it in business activities. With the development of cross-cultural communication between China and Britain, greetings play a more and more important role in it, which can quickly shorten the distance between speakers, help to appreciate the cultural heritage and promote the formation of long-term relations. Based on pragmatic principles of Chinese and Western greetings and the cultural dimension theory, the cultural connotation of Chinese and English business greetings will be analyzed, so as to better reduce the pragmatic failure of greetings in the process of cultural communication.

## Keywords

Intercultural communication; Business greetings; Pragmatic principle.

## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, intercultural communication refers to the different cultural backgrounds of communication between individuals, that is, people from different cultural backgrounds of the interaction between what happened. In order to avoid misunderstanding from different cultural background, it is necessary to understand different cultures in the context on greetings. Greetings, a kind of polite language, come into being with the increasingly complex social environment, and gradually become a means of people's daily communication. While for business greetings, it has its unique characteristics. Compared with other language forms, although its language is relatively simple, it plays an important role in bridging the relationship between people. However, due to the cultural and linguistic differences between the East and the West, lack of sufficient pragmatic knowledge in people's communication, it is easy for people to make some mistakes in the use of greetings, which leads to the failure of cross-cultural communication. With the increasingly close business contacts between China and English, the cross-cultural study of business greetings has been further promoted. In recent years, many scholars at home and abroad have begun to pay attention to and study the use of business greetings. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the similarities and differences between English and Chinese business greetings, so that people can have better cross-cultural communication and cooperation.

## 2. Literature Review

Through a large number of practical investigations, Malinowski found that people's communication is not just to obtain relevant information, but to establish a special connection with others and society (Yan Wenjing, 2016). People of Chinese and English have different language communication habits and ways because of their different cultural backgrounds. In intercultural communication activities, when different communicators use language to communicate, differences in language, cultural background and way of thinking will lead to

some practical communication problems. Greeting, as a very common form of communication in people's daily life, is a common opening information exchange in daily communication. As for greetings themselves, due to the differences in culture and time some pragmatic errors may occur in greetings, leading to a series of communicative problems. Some previous scholars have conducted research on the differences and functions of greetings in Chinese and Western cultures.

In China, according to Chen Tuan(2005), the pragmatic failure of everyday greetings is mainly caused by people's ignorance of local social customs and cultural differences in communication. Compared with greetings of Chinese, people in English express greetings to others in a more direct way than Chinese (Zou Yan, 2011). Business greetings are indispensable and play an important role in business activities. The huge cultural differences shown in it will also have a direct impact on cultural exchanges (Chen Kun, 2018). In the context of Chinese and Western cultures, there are many differences in greetings. And different values often lead to conflicts between the two parties (Xiao Xiong, 2010). First, according to Chen Tuan (2005), the practical failure of daily greetings is mainly due to people's ignorance of local social customs and cultural differences in communication. Compared with Chinese greetings, English speakers express greetings to others more directly than Chinese (Zou Yan, 2011). Second, Chinese culture advocates modesty and reasonableness, while Western culture promotes frankness (Zhang Rui, 2006). In addition, Qian Kun (2016) emphasized that English and Chinese are not completely equivalent in terms of kinship. The kinship terms in English are less specific and complex than Chinese and they are more general and vague. At the same time, the greetings in business English also have its own uniqueness. Therefore, greetings play an important role in business activities. The huge cultural differences in business greetings will also directly affect cultural exchanges (Chen Kun, 2018).

At abroad, Martin (2000) thinks greetings not only rely on the ability of language expression, but also need to contact the context, because it is related to culture. According to Sum Mei (2017), the politeness in English and Chinese greetings is a reflection of textualization, and an accurate understanding of greetings is a kind of etiquette and a manifestation of respect for each other's cultural customs. It can not only enhance mutual understanding, but also avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and conflicts. Furthermore, greetings as a social element, can shorten social distance, maintain the social function of interpersonal relationships, and reflect life and culture of human beings (Glushkova, 2018). Similarly, business greetings will also lay a solid foundation for the orderly development of business activities.

### **3. Business Greetings in Intercultural Communication**

#### **3.1. About Intercultural Communication**

Intercultural communication refers to the communication between people with different cultural backgrounds. Because this kind of communication is mainly carried out through language, it is also called intercultural language communication.

##### **3.1.1. The Purpose of Intercultural Communication**

The purpose of intercultural communication is to study the difference of value orientation and thinking mode formed by different cultural background, the difference of role relationship and behavior standard caused by social structure, and the difference of cultural symbols and communication mode accumulated by different national customs. Due to the existence of cultural differences, people from different cultural backgrounds always understand another culture according to their own cultural background, which leads to inaccurate understanding of the information of the other side, and then make wrong judgments and decisions. The study of intercultural communication can develop cultural empathy and eliminate cultural centralism, so as to produce emotional resonance between different cultures.

### 3.1.2. Cultural Conflicts Caused by Cultural Differences

In a sense, the existence and development of culture is a kind of diversity development. Cultural difference is not only the internal basis for cultural conflict, but also the internal basis for cultural adjustment.

### 3.1.3. Strategies to Solve the Failure of Intercultural Communication

In intercultural communication, a lack of understanding of the social and cultural traditions of the target language country is likely to lead to communication failure. Therefore, we must carefully analyze the reasons, such as whether it is caused by differences in thinking patterns or pragmatic errors. We need to be culturally sensitive while taking timely remedial measures. To learn and use a foreign language, one must simultaneously study the culture in which the foreign language exists.

The characteristics of intercultural communication are as follows: first, there are pragmatic differences and communicative barriers between different cultures, which lead to the differences between intercultural communication and ordinary communication; second, the differences in communicative principles and values make intercultural communication unique. Thirdly, different cultures can influence each other through communication. It can be seen from the above characteristics that how to find, recognize and treat the differences between different cultures is the fundamental feature of intercultural communication.

### 3.1.4. Cultural Latitude Theory of Intercultural Communication

Hofstadter's cultural dimension theory is one of the most influential theories of intercultural communication. It is the product of practical research and also a framework for measuring cultural differences between different countries. Hofstadter believes that culture is a kind of psychological process shared by people in an environment, which can distinguish different groups. Through research, he summed up the differences between different cultures into six basic dimensions of cultural value.

The first is the dimension of Power Distance which refers to the acceptance of unequal distribution of power in society or organization by people with low status in a certain society. Different countries have different understandings of power, so there is a lot of variation in this dimension. English countries value individual competence more than power. However, Asian countries pay more attention to the binding force of power. The second is the dimension of uncertainty avoidance which refers to whether the society is threatened by uncertain events and unconventional environments. Highly avoidant cultures place greater emphasis on factors such as authority, status, qualifications, age, etc. A culture of low avoidance is one that tolerates deviant behavior and opinions with few specific rules and regulations. The third is the dimension of individualism and collectivism. In an individualistic society, the relationship between people is relatively loose; while societies with collectivist tendencies pay more attention to inter-ethnic relations and care about the extended family. The fourth is the dimensions of masculinity and femininity depend largely on whether a given society represents masculine qualities, such as more competition and arbitrariness, or feminine qualities, such as modesty and concern for others. The higher the MDI(masculinity dimension) value, the more obvious the masculinity tendency, which proves that the society is more masculine. On the contrary, it shows that the femininity of this society is prominent. The fifth is the long-term and short-term dimensions, which refers to the degree to which the needs of cultural members are met. The sixth is the dimension of self-indulgence and restraint which refers to the degree that allows people's basic needs and desire to enjoy life pleasure.

## 3.2. Cultural Connotation of Business Greetings

Business greetings do not exist in isolation, but have their own language, which is an important branch of traditional greetings and a carrier of culture. The initial formation and development

of culture is deeply influenced by the natural environment in ethnic areas. After that, with the continuous development of productivity and the change of living environment, the social atmosphere gave birth to different cultural forms. From this point of view, different languages may be completely different in cultural form and concrete expression. To compare the cultural connotations behind Chinese and English business greetings, we must start from the inner parts of Chinese and English cultures.

### **3.2.1. Different Modes of Production Displayed in Different Business Greetings**

Traditional Chinese people attach great importance to the cultivation of relationships. Chinese society is like a complex network of interpersonal relationships. Everyone is like a node in the network of relationships, in which people connect with each other and help each other. In the eyes of Chinese people, having a strong interpersonal network can bring great convenience to daily life and work. Just as an old saying goes, "At home one relies on one's parents and outside on one's friends", which shows the importance of friends. In addition, the Chinese seem to have a strong network that helps with business dealings. Through business greetings, people can gradually change from strangers to familiar friends, shorten the distance between them and promote the development of subsequent business activities. Therefore, in business activities, Chinese people are accustomed to express their concern for each other through simple greetings to get closer to each other, and then have more formal conversation in the follow-up.

Compared with the people in the western English speaking countries, they don't value networking as much as the Chinese; on the contrary, they care more about their personal thoughts and feelings, and pay attention to efficiency and results in everything they do. In business activities, they will generally formally and directly state their purposes and ideas, focusing on the development of business activities and business interest negotiations. Therefore, their greeting is not usually shown too much concern.

### **3.2.2. Different National Thinking Expressed in Different Business Greetings**

Personal factors such as growing environment, educational background and cultural connotation will affect the formation of people's way of thinking, while the way of thinking itself is an organic system composed of many elements, and changing any one of these factors is likely to have a great impact on the whole organic system. For a nation, the way of thinking of a nation is gradually formed in the continuous development, which contains the achievements of the nation in the struggle for survival and the living state of the nation.

For Chinese, because of the Chinese society of agricultural production mode for a long time before, most people's living standards are greatly influenced by the natural environment, so in the eyes of Chinese people will spontaneously formed a kind of fear of nature, in harmony with nature, emotional gradually pay attention to affective and integrity, intuitive thinking habit. Objectively, the Chinese language is ideologically unified, and its language structure is simple and flexible, with strong subjectivity and more verbal expressions. In business communication activities, Chinese people pay attention to the establishment of bilateral relationship and emotional connection. Business greetings are the basis for Chinese people to establish intimate relationship before business activities.

For English, their way of thinking is more intuitive and logical, and they will not put their own development on external things. English people pay attention to individuality and analysis in their habit of thinking, so English language is generally dominated by form and language combination is diversified and strict. In order to realize their production concept and achieve their ultimate goal, they will generally show obvious logical abstract thinking. In business communication activities, English people pay more attention to the gain and loss of the practical interests of both parties, and business greetings are generally not purposeful.

## 4. Similarities of function between Chinese and English Business Greetings

Greetings have different expressions in different cultures, and they will also be migrated to business activities, with the purpose of achieving corresponding goals through dialogue. The function of business greetings is interpersonal, that is, to coordinate the establishment of interpersonal relations in business activities, and to enhance and consolidate the relationship between social members. Greeting is a kind of two-way language behavior, which is the first step of social communication and plays an unusual role in social communication. Chen summed up the two main functions of greetings in business activities. The first one is its communicative function, that is, greetings make people confirm the social relations they have already established and promote business activities. Second, greetings have the function of "opening the business topic".

### 4.1. To Reduce Social Distance

In order to reduce social distance, the Chinese and the English will adopt some of the same methods to carry out dialogues to achieve the corresponding goals, the methods are as follows:

#### 4.1.1. Introduce Yourself Actively

For Chinese people, they are accustomed to handing out business cards before introducing themselves, and they also pay attention to the timing of the exchange of business cards. They should pass the business cards as soon as they meet. This will help the other party understand their title, position and representative company. And the moment of self-introduction become more and more direct and the content of the introduction should be comprehensive and brief. The self-introduction should contain four elements: unit, department, position, and name. For the British, they may first introduce themselves after giving a face-to-face greeting and say some caring word. The format of the dialogue is as follows:

A: Let me introduce myself. I'm William White, Sales Management of FAW Engine (Dalian) Co., Ltd.

B: Glad to meet you, Mr. White. I'm Terry Thomason. How are you?

A: I'm Fine.

From the way British often introduce themselves, it can be seen that they shorten their social distance by expressing concern to open a conversation. According to the dimension of power distance in the cultural dimension theory, it can be seen that the British introduce themselves on the premise of caring greetings, and do not value the identity of the other party.

A:您好，很高兴遇见您，请问您贵姓？

B: 免贵姓王。

From the way Chinese often introduce themselves, it can be seen that they shorten their social distance by directly understanding the basic information of others. According to the dimension of power distance in the cultural dimension theory, the Chinese are accustomed to directly introducing themselves to achieve mutual understanding of information. Purpose, it can be seen that they pay attention to the status of rights.

All in all, before the start of any business event, Chinese and English people are accustomed to introducing themselves through greetings. Not only will this quickly let the other party know who you are and what company you are representing, but it will also help you make a strong impression and further your business. Therefore, the ultimate goal of business greetings in China and the United Kingdom is to shorten social distance and promote the development of business activities by proactively introducing themselves.

### 4.1.2. Short Greetings

Before formal business events, both Chinese and English are accustomed to starting the theme of the event with a short greeting. For Chinese people, they are accustomed to greeting other people's feelings, such as how well you were yesterday? How do you feel today? Tend to focus on personal emotional appeals. The format of the dialogue is as follows:

A: 您昨天休息得还好吗? 今天感觉怎么样?

B: 挺好的, 谢谢关心。

As can be seen from the above, Chinese people are accustomed to asking about their health, work status and other topics before starting a formal conversation, focusing on starting from the perspective of caring about the personal feelings of others. Furthermore, from the perspective of the uncertainty avoidance of the cultural dimension theory, it can be seen that China's business greetings are of a low degree of avoidance, with few rules and regulations, and people can ask more personal topics.

While the English are accustomed to talking about weather conditions first to reduce social distance. For them, weather conditions have different symbolic meanings. The format of the dialogue is as follows:

A: The weather is good, isn't it?

B: Oh, it's warm today!

When they talk about weather conditions, they may not really be about the weather itself, but a representation of unspoken rules to help them overcome their natural conservative and shyness and find common topics. And other forms of weather topics, they are not soliciting weather data from the other party: these words are just a kind of the "carrier", just as primates can comb each other's hair, we humans also need this kind of intimacy carrier. Of course, it is not about combing the hair, but establishing a certain connection with each other and reducing the psychological distance. So this is a manifestation of the high degree of avoidance of British greetings.

As can be seen from the above example, although the theme of the short greeting may be different due to different cultural adaptations of different ethnic groups, the purpose of the short greeting is to enhance the understanding between the interlocutors and shorten the social distance between the interlocutors. At the same time, the greetings between China and the United Kingdom can not only effectively shorten the social distance between the two, but also promote the smooth progress of business activities. Before formal business events, both China and Britain are used to start the theme of the event with a short greeting. This form can not only effectively shorten the social distance between the two parties, but also promote the smooth progress of business activities.

### 4.1.3. Responding to Greetings

Due to cultural adaptability, different ethnic groups have different ways of responding to greetings. For Chinese people, because of the rudimentary Chinese cultural heritage, people usually respond to others' greetings in a humble way. In addition, according to the difference between individualism and collectivism in the cultural dimension theory, it can be seen that the Chinese have a tendency to collectivism. In their view, the gains and losses of collective interests are higher than individual interests, so they will consider collective interests when responding to greetings. They are not personal, so they respond to greetings in a humble manner.

In the Britain, people are used to responding to other people's greetings in a confident and accepting way. In addition, according to the difference between individualism and collectivism in the cultural dimension theory, British people tend to be individualistic. They tend to care about themselves and their small family, so they will consider personal interests when responding to greetings, so they will express yourself.

However, the ultimate goal of the greetings in China and the Britain is to shorten social distance and promote the development of business activities by responding to greetings. Generally speaking, before the formal business activities, if you can make a proper response to the greetings of others, it's undoubtedly a performance of high EQ. Appropriate response can not only leave a good impression on the other party, but also shorten the distance between the two parties, so as to promote the development of business activities. There are also similarities in the way Chinese and English respond to greetings. For example, when replying others' greetings, the first thing to do is to quickly judge the intention of the speaker and give the greeting a targeted response, so that the greeting feels that you can understand him or her and feel relaxed and pleasant to talk with you. The second is to consider the identity of the background of the other side, take the appropriate way to respond.

#### **4.1.4. Setting up an Appropriate Conversation Atmosphere**

The fourth method is about setting up an appropriate conversation atmosphere. Chinese pay special attention to feedback and emotional communication. Through mutual greetings, strangers will get to know each other, unfamiliar people will become familiar, the cold atmosphere will become active, and the two sides will have in-depth conversations to build bridges to achieve the purpose of smooth communication. For example: In September 1984, the 22nd round of talks between China and English on the Hong Kong issue began at the Diaoyu Island State Guest House. The Chinese representative Zhou Nan and the English representative Evans met and chatted a few words. Zhou Nan said: "It's already autumn. I remember that Mr. Ambassador came in spring. Then there have been three seasons: spring, summer, autumn-autumn is the harvest season!" This is the history of China and English. It can be said that this was a critical moment when an agreement was reached in the fall of 1984, which happened to be a major negotiation. In the case, Zhou Nan's few words cleverly used hints and puns, and used the characteristics of the communicative period, that is, the characteristics of autumn and its symbolic meaning-maturity and harvest, to represent our sincere attitude and earnestness. His hopes and firm decisions were implicitly expressed, creating a good atmosphere and conditions for smooth negotiations in the future. While the English pay more attention to the efficiency of conversation. In their opinion, appropriate greetings are helpful to the development of cooperation. Therefore, before starting a formal business dialogue, both Chinese and British often use greetings to create an appropriate dialogue atmosphere. To establish an appropriate atmosphere, we need to grasp the following points: 1. Appropriate greetings as an opening remark; 2. Make a communication plan in advance; 3. Use a sincere attitude to communicate; 4. Make eye contact to show respect. Because people have different psychological construction and emotions in different occasions, different conversation content often needs to set up different conversation scenarios.

## **4.2. To Show Respect**

Regardless of whether it is a Chinese or a British, one of the main reasons for using greetings in business activities is to show respect. For the Chinese, respect for others is mainly reflected in the address and title of others, and they are accustomed to using "ning" instead of "ni". In addition, the subject of Chinese people's consideration of issues is centered on the other party and attaches great importance to considering the other's emotions to show respect. The format of the dialogue is as follows:

A: 您想买什么书? 您想借什么书?

B: 你有什么推荐吗?

From the perspective of cultural dimension theory, the Chinese tend to emphasize collective interests, indicating that the subject of the time is dominated by the other party.

While for the British, respect for others is more embodied in an attitude of equality. In addition, The British tend to show respect from their own point of view. The format of the dialogue is as follows:

A: Can I help you? What can I do for you?

B: I want to buy some books.

From the perspective of cultural dimension theory, the subject of British people's consideration of problems often takes themselves as the starting point to achieve the purpose of helping others and showing respect

In fact, the two show respect in many aspects in common, such as by addressing the other party, or by expressing personal understanding of the other party, or by asking some usual questions. In short, greetings play an important role in showing respect for both China and English.

### **4.3. To Extend Business Communication**

The greeting strategy in business communication can reflect the obvious business communication habits. Chinese businessmen attach great importance to attracting new customers and maintaining customer relationships. Many companies will hire dedicated customer service personnel to conduct one-to-one directional communication with customers to directly understand customer needs and provide targeted services. British businessmen are particularly concerned about the customer's own experience, focusing on meeting customer needs. All in all, the greeting strategy in business communication can reflect obvious business communication habits. Most Chinese and English businessmen think the first greeting is very important. Through the first greeting, they can attract the target customer group more effectively and expand their business. For example, in the sales business, Chinese and English merchants will adopt different topics to attract different target groups, so as to extend business communication.

### **4.4. To Do Product Promotion**

Chinese businessmen pay more attention to the needs of customers when they promote products. In their view, only by producing and promoting products that meet customer needs from the perspective of customers can it be easier to gain customers' favor. Therefore, through greetings, there are It helps Chinese businessmen to narrow the distance with their customers, so as to truly understand their needs. In addition, when doing product promotion, Chinese businessmen generally divide consumers of different ages into different customer groups and adopt different marketing methods for different customer groups. For example, for groups of children and the elderly, marketers need to take a more patient and positive attitude to communicate with them, and show their friendly attitude through initial greetings to win customers' favor. While When British businessmen promote their products, they are more likely to start from the products themselves to attract consumers. For them, business greetings are also an excellent means of bringing each other closer. All in all, when Chinese and English businessmen talk with different types of customers, they generally use different attitudes and ways to promote the promotion of their products. In general, sales staff will adopt different sales strategies for different customer groups when promoting products. For example, the target customer group is divided into young children, young people and old people. When selling to different customer groups, the attitude of sales staff is particularly important. Therefore, the use of effective business greetings can not only increase the customer's trust and attention, but also can get the opportunity to further the conversation. Business greetings play a vital role in product promotion.



## 5. Differences between Chinese and English Business Greetings

### 5.1. Address Greetings

There is a gap in vocabulary use between Chinese and British business greetings. In traditional Chinese culture, there is a strong sense of "official status" and the concept of hierarchy. Although they have gone through thousands of years of historical changes, they are still rooted in the thinking of the Chinese people, and even become a kind of "collective unconsciousness." Moreover, the Chinese have admired etiquette since ancient times, and are very particular about the use of greetings. The rich and special vocabulary in Chinese business greetings largely comes from these two points. In today's business activities, Chinese people usually use the appellation of "superior or equivalent surname + position, occupation or title" to highlight the status of the other party and express their respect and politeness, such as: Chairman Zhang, Director Zhao, Manager Chen, Boss Wang, etc. Self-moderating appellations are also very common in Chinese business greetings, such as: "Zai Xia", "Bi Ren", "Bi Gong Si" and so on, mainly show the Chinese people's tradition of showing respect to others by degrading their status. Language is the carrier of culture, and address is a necessary part of language. There are many different appellations under different cultural backgrounds in China and Britain. Even the same address may have different pragmatic rules and its unique cultural meanings. An appropriate address is conducive to promoting the development of business activities and interpersonal communication. Moreover, Chinese usually try to show intimacy and respect to the other party with Xiao before his family name. It doesn't mean that the person is small or short, but it means that the opposite one is younger than, as well as it shows a kind relationship of intimacy.

In Britain, "all men are created equal" is a long-standing social consensus. English appellations are therefore more equal. Most of the self-moderating appellations in Chinese greetings have no counterparts in English. Except for "King", "President", "General", "Pope", "Professor", "Doctor" and other positions or title suffix names dedicated to royal family, military and political circles, religious circles, and intellectual circles, English-speaking countries people only use words such as "Mr.", "Ms.", "Mrs." and "Miss.". In order to express the politeness and formality of business language, English sentences often use adjectives and adverbs such as "grateful", "warmly", "sincerely" and "should", "could", "may" and other modal verbs for semantic compensation. This is also one of the vocabulary features of English business greetings. In British culture, it is generally acceptable to use Mr., Miss, etc., when addressing each other, whether between nobles and the ordinary, between men and women, or between the old and the young. Because people are familiar with each other, the occasion is different, so the address is different. In general, they can be referred to by professional titles in formal situations, such as Dr. Frederick; It is acceptable to call people by their first names in informal situations or among acquaintances.

### 5.2. Rambling Greetings

Sometimes, business activities are not as purposeful as negotiations, but rather easy-going and open. China and Britain also differ in their rambling greetings. The British habitually talk about changes in the weather, and many business conversations are based on talking about today's weather conditions. For example, a person from a certain party suddenly encountered heavy rain on the way to participate in the event, which caused special situations such as traffic jams, or talking about whether the weather today is really good, which means the smooth progress of the event and so on. When they talk about weather conditions, they may not really be about the weather itself, but a representation of unspoken rules to help them overcome their natural conservative and shyness and find common topics. This kind of rambling greeting shifts the

topic to the real-time weather, inadvertently narrowing the distance between the speakers, and creating a relaxing environment.

The Chinese may start to rambling Greetings in a similar way, such as: Where did I seem to meet you? You look familiar to me. Through such words, the distance between the talkers can be effectively shortened. Moreover, the Chinese emphasize that "People regard food as their heaven", and they regard enough food as important, and they habitually talk about the food in their conversations. Therefore, many business greetings start from talking about the food. Starting with the most important daily meal issue for Chinese people to start business greetings, it helps to narrow the distance between the two parties and promote the development of mutual relations. Relationship is one of the most important factors for conducting business activities in China. Through rambling greetings, both parties can open up the theme of the event, and even turn the talk into the theme.

### 5.3. Farewell Greetings

Farewell greetings happen usually when the business exchange activities between the two parties reach the key completion.

For Chinese, they are more traditional and pay great attention to etiquette during business activities. In the traditional Chinese concept, seeing off and welcoming guests are equally important. Before the end of the business event, they will know the exact time of the partner's departure in advance, and arrange a farewell person to accompany the guests to the airport, terminal or train station and other places. In addition, they can express to their partners that they look forward to the next cooperation by preparing souvenirs. Moreover, Chinese businessmen usually express gratitude directly to each other and say some blessings when they say goodbye to each other in order to look forward to the next cooperation.

The choice of words and the determination of content when the British say goodbye has different meanings. There are obvious differences in the composition of the farewell language, which may be judged based on the length of separation, or it may be judged based on the closeness of the two. For the British, "goodbye" and "bye-bye" are the most rarely used farewell words, because in the eyes of the British, "goodbye" is a word that appears on very formal occasions, and "bye" -bye" is suitable for friends. When they say farewell greetings, British businessmen usually take the form of saying some blessings directly and goodbye to express their expectation for the next cooperation.

### 5.4. Inquiring Greetings

Due to the different geographical locations, natural climates, historical traditions, values, religious beliefs, and business cultures between countries, Chinese and British business greetings have each acquired a unique cultural context. Therefore, understanding the cultural background is also conducive to understanding the inquiries. For Chinese people, they are accustomed to showing respect for others through self-humility when they are praised by others. This expression habit stems from the humble etiquette in the Chinese cultural tradition. When faced with their compliments, the Chinese often express their humility in a roundabout way, such as: You passed the award.

However, when faced with compliments from others, the English response is different from the traditional Chinese response of humility. They often choose to accept compliments from others and respond, "I think so too." The reason for this type of greeting is because in the perception of the English, rejecting compliments from others means denying the cognitive ability of others which is an impolite behavior. In their view, the compliment of others is a kind of recognition of themselves, and accepting the compliment is also a kind of affirmation of them.

## 6. Conclusion

Due to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, business English greetings have many similarities and differences under the background of Chinese and Western cultures. For similarities, First, reduce social distance. Regardless of the cultural background or the country, business English greetings can shorten the distance between people and promote the development of business activities more quickly. Second, Greetings play an important role in showing respect for both China and English. Whether it is a Chinese or English, one of the main reasons for using greetings in business activities is to show respect for each other. Third, expand business exchanges. Through the use of greetings in business English, you can communicate with target customers more quickly and promote business cooperation. Fourth, do product promotion. Using of effective business greetings can not only increase the customer's trust and attention, but also can get the opportunity to further the conversation. The differences are as follows: First of all, the titles are different. For example, Chinese people always give their surname before their given name, and they will add titles to each other according to different people with different greetings. Second, there is a gap in vocabulary usage between Chinese and English business greetings. Third, Due to the differences between the languages and the special requirements of business greetings, Chinese and English business greetings also have certain differences in the syntactic structure. In addition, there are some differences, such as Farewell Greetings, Rambling Greetings and so on.

To sum up, in our daily life, we need to invest more energy and time to cultivate the application of cross-cultural communication skills and practical communication skills. It is necessary that Chinese schools can offer some cross-cultural business courses, such as English and American literature courses, negotiation etiquette, language and non-verbal use, etc., in order to enhance students' understanding of English culture, improve their communication skills, and promote student training communication skills. Of course, English schools can also teach some Chinese greetings in Confucius Institutes and other similar institutes, so that students or some business people can use the greetings more correctly. This will help Chinese and English international business participants to use business greetings correctly and proficiently. Harmonious interpersonal and business relations create and maintain a friendly communication atmosphere, thereby promoting the smooth progress of business activities.

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