

Research on the Differences between Chinese and Western Dinner Seating Culture from the Perspective of Face Theory: Based on *The Dream of Red Mansions* and *Downton Abbey*

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Abstract—Seating arrangements in a banquet are quite complicated because a multitude of factors need to be considered. One of the most paramount is “face”. However, individuals from different cultural backgrounds possess different understandings of face. This paper analyzes the differences between Chinese and Western seating etiquette by comparing Chinese and Western banquet seating arrangements, with *The Dream of Red Mansions* and *Downton Abbey* as the text research material. The paper also explores the underlying reasons from the perspective of positive face vs. negative face and collective face vs. individual face, combining Brown and Levinson’s Face Threatening Act (FTA) and Face Saving Theory (FST) in politeness principle. According to the analysis, the Chinese regard “respect for elders” and “distance between superiors and inferiors” as seating standards, adopting positive politeness strategy to maintain collective face, while the westerner emphasize “lady first” and “equality and mutual benefits”, adopting negative politeness strategy to maintain individual face. Understanding the differences between Chinese and Western etiquette is conducive to the exchange and integration of different nationalities and the elimination of barriers in cross-cultural communication.

Index Terms—Seating culture, face theory, politeness, cross-cultural communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dining etiquette, as an indispensable part of food culture, arises from dining and at the same time constrains dining activities. Due to the differences in terms of region, culture and the development of civilization, Chinese and Western dining etiquette also differs greatly and manifests different cultural characteristics [1].

The Dream of Red Mansions, one of the four classical works of ancient China, tells the prosperity and decline of four noble families, Jia, Shi, Wang and Xue, restoring scenes from the life of the noble families at that time and offering great scope for the study of table manners in ancient China. *Downton Abbey*, as a critically acclaimed British TV series, is a true re-creation of the costume and etiquette of upper class at the beginning of the 20th century under the reign of George V, providing audiences with a cultural feast full of British characteristics. It narrates a story of the aristocratic Grantham family, where Mary, the eldest of Mr Grantham’s three

daughters, selects her husband who will inherit the Grantham family fortune. Around this central episode, a multitude of aristocrats shuttle through Downton Abbey. All the manners, then, are there to embellish the story. Of all the manners, table manners are the best demonstration of the sophistication of aristocratic etiquette.

Seating culture plays a pivotal role in dining etiquette. The order of seating at a banquet is a prerequisite for the banquet to take place, as it relates to the status of the participants, the level of the banquet and the purpose of the gathering. Following the appropriate seating order can avoid needless embarrassment and misunderstanding. At the same time, it can confirm the self-image and strengthen the relationships. To some extent, obeying seating etiquette is to politely maintain the face of oneself and the other party.

With the continuous development of globalization, intercultural communication is becoming increasingly frequent. On diplomatic occasions, observing the seating order can demonstrate the splendour of China to other countries and build up the image of our country at the same time. It is rewarding to explore and compare the differences and causes of the concept of face under different cultural backgrounds, so as to reveal the factors that may trigger misunderstanding and conflict in the communicative behaviors. Chinese and Western table manners and food culture each possess their respective strengths. As world cultures are becoming more interconnected, cultural conflicts inevitably emerge. Through the comparison of table manners in *Downton Abbey* and *The Dream of Red Mansions*, the integration and complementarities of Chinese and Western cultures can be realized. With the acceleration of globalization, we should fully carry forward our excellent national culture and learn from the essence of western culture to improve the understanding and awareness of our own culture, handle the relationship between local culture and foreign culture, and promote the integration of culture.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There exist abundant studies focusing on seating culture and face theory from both abroad and home, providing solid references for this study. In this part, the previous studies and the research gap between the previous researchers and this thesis are reviewed.

A. Previous Studies on Dinner Seating Culture

Seating order is quite complicated in a banquet. If you need to arrange a host of tables, you should make clear which

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is the head table and who will be seated there, and ensure that your most honored guest is offered the head seat of the head table. Different seats represent different status and power. In the early days of ancient China, the seating order reflected the rigid hierarchy concept, whose impact extends to the modern times. Modern dining table sociality is the embodiment of social status as the main evaluation standard, symbolizing the level of social status, the size of social power and the strength of social influence with the order of seating.

A thesis published in 2017 named “Learning to Eat Politely at the Chinese Homestay Dinner Table: Two Contrasting Case Studies” reveals that the hosts direct students’ attention to their inadequate etiquette at mealtimes through contextualized directives and accusations [2]. And another thesis named “Chinese Business Etiquette: Dinner Table Etiquette” generally analyses the most paramount facets in dinner table etiquette in China [3]. Zheng analyses the seating order in an unfriendly circumstance in ancient Chinese dinner table [4]. However, they only clarify the phenomena of the seating order in Chinese dinner table. The underlying reasons behind them have not been clearly analyzed.

B. Previous Studies on Face Theory

What is face? In Chinese dictionaries, “face” (mian zi) is usually interpreted as “respectability”. There are countless phrases related to face in Chinese: lose face, hide one’s face, save face, give enough face and so on. In addition, a wealth of monographs and theses focus on face studies. The concept of “face” originates from the Chinese anthropologist Hu Xianjin, who believes that “Face represents a kind of reputation that is widely valued in China. It is a reputation that is gained through success and boasting and is also accumulated through personal efforts or deliberate management.” [5]

The English translation of “mian zi” is “face”, which in the American Heritage Dictionary is defined as: “Value outstanding in the eyes of others; Prestige.” In English, we also say “lose face”. Superficially, two languages seem to have similar definitions of face, meaning respectability. But in fact, “face” in Chinese contains a series of meanings with honor as the core, which is a paramount factor in the structure of Chinese interpersonal relations. The Chinese have complex and deep connotations of “face” that cannot be fully covered by the Western “face”. Behind these two cultures are the values and codes of conduct produced by two different ways of thinking.

China’s face culture is extensive and profound, which can be traced back to the Confucian thought of ritual culture. In the 1940s, Hu Xianjin, first proposes that face has two sides: “脸”(lian) and “面”(mian). Face directly related to etiquette refers to the social positive value matched with one’s status, and face-work is a kind of ability to play a social role or status and practice its social positive value. Jia Yuxin believes that face-work is the cultural driving force for reproduction in Chinese society. The concept of Chinese face theory contains four characteristics: relational, social, hierarchical and moral [6]. Lu Xun once said, face is the spiritual program of the Chinese, and it can be seen that face dominates almost everything of the Chinese.

The first person to give “face” a definition is Hu Xianjin. Then Jin Yaoji classifies “face” into “social dimension” and

“moral dimension”. He argues that “social dimension” is reputation determined by one’s status on the social ladder, which is endowed by the society and can be retrieved by the society. The “face of morality” is the respect of the community for those who possess a moral reputation, which everyone can achieve. [7]

The expression “losing face” actually refers to the damage to one’s reputation, and the Chinese are particularly concerned with saving face in order to maintain their reputation. Since ancient times, the Chinese have attached great importance to “peace” as a way of maintaining harmonious communication between the two parties. If friends do not give face to each other, then the relationship between friends is facing a crisis. Therefore, both parties in communication will leave the best impressions of themselves to the other. Only if positive face of both sides is satisfied, the communication can be continued. Face is established in a certain social group. There is a certain bond among the members of the group, and the maintenance of this bond requires face to be maintained. “The emperor is the creed of the courtiers, the father is the creed of the son, and the husband is the creed of the wife.” The statement well illustrates the hierarchy behind the Chinese doctrine of face. Elders and powerful individuals will possess a more honourable face. Those who are virtuous will be respected and win back face for themselves and their families, while those who frown upon morality will lose face. In summary, the Chinese view of face contains the following four characteristics: relationship, sociality, hierarchy, and morality.

Hu Xianjin’s face concept was introduced into the west in the late 1950s. The American sociologist Goffman analyzed the concept of face from the perspective of sociology, and put forward a classical theory of face. He believed that face is the positive social value that we win effectively in the social intercourse and ego realization of personal value [8].

In 1987, British scholars Brown and Levinson put forward the classical Face Saving Theory in their article “Universality in Language Use: Politeness Phenomenon”. They believed that politeness and face are closely related to each other. There are two kinds of face: positive face and negative face. The positive face refers to the positive consistent self-image or personality (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants, while the negative face refers to the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction. The western concept of face values the individual image, individual rights and freedom. The Chinese focus more on satisfying the positive face of both parties and seldom involve the negative face, while westerners place priority on satisfying the positive face of both parties while maintaining the negative face.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is completed by following a systematic procedure and comprehensive research questions.

A. Research Questions

In this thesis, efforts are made to interpret, classify and explain the differences between Chinese and Westerners

seating culture from the perspective of face theory. Specifically, the following questions tend to be explored:

(1) What are the differences between Chinese and Western seating culture? How are these differences reflected in *The Dream of Red Mansions* and *Downton Abbey*?

(2) Why is seating culture different in China and West from the perspective of face theory?

B. Research Methodology

Politeness is the symbol of civilization of human being, and also one of the crucial principles guiding one's social activities. Politeness is also a means or strategy in nonverbal communication which is used to save face. As a technical term, face represents the public self-image of a person. Yule argues that politeness, in an interaction, can be defined as the means employed to demonstrate awareness of another person's face [9]. Politeness can be regarded as a linguistic phenomenon since politeness exists in all languages. It can be regarded as a social phenomenon because politeness usually refers to social norms, taking the "guest of honor" as an example. Politeness can also be regarded as a cultural phenomenon considering the fact that it is interpreted differently depending on a specific culture. Then a question arises whether there are politeness principles or maxims to control one's speech and behaviors.

Erving Goffman has made great contributions to the study of face from the conception of self. According to him, self is something inseparable from social life. It is through our attachment to self that we are attached to society. Goffman's statement reveals the weight and role of self in social interactions and that self, as a communicative identity, is inseparable from communication behaviors, that is, from face [10].

Many researchers have done studies on the strategies of politeness. In this thesis, politeness principle put forward by Leech and face theory proposed by Brown & Levinson are used as theoretical basis of study of seating culture.

1) Leech's politeness principle

Leech [11] wants to relate politeness to illocutionary acts in terms of how the speaker makes the linguistic choices when performing these illocutionary acts. He has marked the difference between relative politeness and absolute politeness, and also between positive politeness and negative politeness. The relative politeness refers to politeness depending on a specific situation. Absolute politeness means the degree of politeness intrinsically related with specific illocutionary act of speaker. As an example, the sentence "Would you mind....." itself is polite. The positive politeness is to maximize the politeness of polite illocutions, while negative politeness is to minimize the impoliteness of impolite illocutions.

Leech proposed politeness principle which is composed of six interpersonal maxims. The politeness principle can be stated as the following: Other things being equal minimize the expression of beliefs which are unfavorable to the hearer and at the same time (but less crucial) maximize the expression of beliefs which are favorable to the hearer.

2) Brown and Levinson's face theory

Brown and Levinson [12] state that "we treat the facets of face as basic desires, which everybody knows every other

member desires, and which in general it is in the interests of every member to partially satisfy." "If a speaker says something that represents a threat to another individual's expectations regarding self-image, it is described as a face threatening act (FTA)" An FTA has the potential to damage the hearer's positive face. Alternatively, "the speaker can say something to lessen the possible threat. This is called a face saving act". Aiming at saving face, Goffman, Brown and Levinson adopt certain strategies to weaken FTAs.

Brown and Levinson define "face" as "the personal image in public that every member of society desires to earn for himself". This image can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others. They believe that every communication participant has two kinds of face: the positive face and the negative face. Positive face is the hope of getting approval, affection, appreciation and respect from others. Negative face means that one does not want others to impose on him or her, and his or her behavior is free from interference and obstruction from others, so that he or she has the freedom to choose his or her own actions. They believe that in the process of conversation, both sides of the face will be attacked, that is, both the speaker and the listener are faced with the threat of positive face and negative face. Therefore, the vast majority of speech acts are Face Threatening Act (FTA), and the function of polite conversation is to protect face and reduce the degree of FTA.

In order to be polite, we must do something to save our or others face, which is called Face Saving Theory (FST). Brown and Levinson offer five kinds of redressive strategies: 1) bald on record without redressive actions; 2) positive politeness; 3) negative politeness; 4) off record; 5) don't do the FTA.

The first strategy is achieved by expressing one's intentions directly. The most shared sentence pattern of this kind is "Do X". We leverage this tactic only in emergency situations, or when the speaker is of higher social status than the listener. Secondly, positive politeness is achieved by giving the listener a positive face. Among them, the quintessential strategies include hedging, jargon, seeking consistency and so on. Thirdly, negative politeness is based on avoidance. By acknowledging and respecting the others negative face requirement, the speaker can satisfy the listener's negative face requirement. Brown and Levinson offer quiet a few positive politeness strategies, i.e. the traditional indirect politeness, begging for forgiveness, apologizing, reducing imposition, diversifying responsibility, and so on. Fourthly, off record, according to Brown and Levinson, is the most indirect remedy strategy. We can leverage this strategy by implication, ambiguity, exaggeration, understatement, irony, contradiction, etc. Finally, the most polite strategy is "don't do the FTA". That is, the speaker will not leverage an FTA in order to avoid the possibility of offending others. But as a result, the listener may not be able to understand the speaker's intention, which may lead to communication failure.

IV. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN DINNER SEATING CULTURE

The Dream of Red Mansions and *Downton Abbey*, as two era masterpieces, are both indicative of the social landscape

of the time from the life of the nobility, and reflect the changes of the nation through the prosperity and decline of the great families, sharing a common feature: strong family concept. In a sense, *Downton Abbey* can be seen as the British version of *The Dream of Red Mansions*. In addition, both works share similar narrative perspectives and techniques, such as the extensive descriptions of an ocean of banquets. Whether in China or abroad, where there is a banquet, there will be seating arrangements.

A. Dinner Seating Culture in the Dream of Red Mansions

A host of banquets are vividly portrayed in *The Dream of Red Mansions*. The banquets attended by the royal family and aristocrats are arranged in strict order according to their social ranks. In large family banquets, the elderly sit in the respectable seats, and others take seats according to their ages. When receiving guests of different identities, the principle of "guest first" is sometimes not followed necessarily. By comparing the seats of banquets of different levels in Jia Mansion, it can be found that individuals in this rich and well-educated family obey the seating culture more or less, which reflects the course from prosperity to decline of Jia Mansion from the side.

On Jia Mu's birthday party, the seat etiquette first follows the national ceremony and then follows the family ceremony. The status of Kings, marquis, lords and servants are successively reduced, and their seats are also successively reduced. Individuals with high ranks take respectable seat. Accordingly, North Princess and South Princess, as representatives of the royal family, seat at the top of the table. With the principle of sitting on the left as the honor at that time, the imperial mandate takes the left seat, which is higher than the seat of Jia Mu. Although she is the one to be blessed and celebrated, she had to be on the right side of the table because of her low status. The banquet is strictly hierarchical. Princesses and other royal representatives sitting at the top and delicate dishes are inevitably served to them first, followed by Jia Mu and others, which reflects the sacrosanct power of the emperor in the feudal society. Under the great national ceremony, Jia Mansion respectfully practices the senior banquet etiquette under the feudal patriarchal system with respect for the elders and the authorities. Throughout the banquet, Jia family strictly obey the disciplines, interpreting the Qing Dynasty feudal patriarchal society hierarchy, demonstrating a peaceful atmosphere of etiquette, and highlighting the prosperity of noble families.

In the family gathering, the seniors sit at the seat of honor and others take seats following the age order. Jia Mu is not only the oldest, but also the symbol of the highest power of Jia Mansion, so when no guests of higher level are in the dinner, she must sit on the most noble position. Through the seating order during the dinner when Lin Daiyu first enters Jia Mansion, it is obvious that Jia Mu is not only the representative of the highest power of the family, but also the ruler of all norms, systems and etiquette, to ensure the coordinated and orderly operation of Jia Mansion. In addition, no matter how intimate the relationship between master and servant is, the concept of superiority and hierarchy cannot be ignored.

B. Dinner Seating Culture in Downton Abbey

In the west, the formal banquet table is mostly rectangular,

with two ends as the upper seat, respectively for the host and hostess. And the seating order is set according to certain principles. The top principle is lady first. In *Downton Abbey*, most of the dinner seating order is set by the hostess, Lady Grantham. Before taking a seat, the man should help the woman on the right pull out the chair and wait for the woman to settle down before taking a seat himself. During a banquet, men tend to take care of the women sitting next to them. Secondly, guest first. The more paramount the guest is, the closer he sits to the host. Unlike Chinese concept of superiority and hierarchy, in western table seating, the chief guest is not the elderly or the one with the highest rank but the main guest, even if the main guest is sometimes the young. Thirdly, sitting on the right is superior. In the TV play, most seats are arranged horizontally. Mr. Grantham sits in the middle of the side towards the front door so that he can view the whole hall. Guests sit on both sides, and the closer they are to the host, the more paramount they are. Accordingly, the chief female guest usually sits on the right of Mr. Grantham. Lady Grantham sits in the middle of the other side so that she can take care of guests and control the process of serving food.

In addition, traditionally, the hostess would arrange guests on a male-female basis. Married couples are separated on the table because it is generally assumed that they have spent enough time together. Couples who are engaged are seated next to each other so that they can talk to each other in the presence of a guardian. In order not to leave anyone out, they should talk to the man next to them. After that, the hostess will give a little cough, at which point they will turn to the other man. This is known as "turning the table".

V. REASONS FOR DIFFERENCES IN SEATING CULTURE FROM FACE THEORY

Table seating reflects the culture and customs of different countries, as well as one's social status and background. Different countries and nationalities have different cultures, which are influenced by natural environment, religious belief, scientific and economic development, political system and regional customs. These factors are also the main reasons for the differences between Chinese and western seating arrangements.

A. Positive Face VS. Negative Face

1) Positive face reflected in Chinese seating culture

Positive face is related to the interests of others. It is often seen in situations such as "giving others a face" Individuals should abide by and support the interaction principles of others. It is mainly reflected in showing concern to the other side and agreeing with the other side, reaching consensus with the other side, or praising the other side's point of view.

In Chinese dinner, different seats represent different status and power. In the early days of ancient China, the seating order reflected the rigid hierarchy concept, whose impact extends to the modern times. As an example, in the banquet of Hongmen, which was full of killing opportunities, there was a paragraph describing the catering order: "King Xiang and Xiang Bo sat facing east, and Ya Fu sat facing south. Pei gong was sitting on the north side and Zhang Liang was on the west side." It can be seen that Xiang Yu and Xiang Bo sat

facing the east, while Fan Zeng, his father, took the second seat facing the south, and Liu Bang, the protagonist of his banquet, took the third seat facing the north. So Xiang Yu arranged the seat this way on purpose. We know that Xiang Yu was superficial, arrogant and powerful, and did not pour attention to Liu Bang, so he must have sat in a favorable position. It can be seen that the honorable seat of the banquet at that time was facing east. Modern dining table sociality is the embodiment of social status as the main evaluation standard, symbolizing the level of social status, the size of social power and the strength of social influence with the order of seating. More importantly, the seating culture is also a perfect reflection of face Views. All the rules of seating culture is indicative of their respect and desire to save the positive face of both sides.

2) *Negative face reflected in western seating culture*

Negative face, on the other hand, points to the individuality of the interlocutor, which emphasizes the rights of the individual and shows respect for the other person's independent needs while maintaining his or her own independence in communication, and this negative face is not entirely group-bound.

In the description of the birthday banquets, wedding banquets, family banquets, reception banquets and festival banquets of *The Dream of Red Mansions*, the whole family sit around splashing ink, reciting poetry and talking to each other. Chinese people focus on holistic thinking and values group interests. Everyone likes sitting around and sharing a round table at any banquet. Hosts arrange guests together, narrowing the distance as far as possible. Collectivism is extremely emphasized on dining tables. Unlike Chinese family, western family value individual thinking and emphasize independence. They prefer separate dining system, where each person takes what he or she needs, and they don't have to stay in one place and can move about freely. Western banquets focus on the friendship between guests, with the core lying in communication. In *Downton Abbey*, the dining tables are long ones, providing enough room for the nearly 100 types of cutlery needed for separate meals. Under the influence of this family concept, children and parents can discuss problems and exchange opinions equally. Western table seating dates back to medieval court etiquette. At that time, the seating order reflected individual's class and status and the positions they held at the court. The history of western countries is a history of migration, large population flowing, the integration of different nations and the gradual spread of kinship. Gradually, the interpersonal contractual relations emerged under the long-term private conditions. Westerners pour more attention to themselves and won't let their interests be harmed, which is vividly reflected in modern western capitalist society. Westerners' face emphasizes self-satisfaction. Satisfaction is the protection of face only when one's privacy, rights and wishes are respected and preserved. Their behavior is a perfect interpretation of negative face, as well as a pursuit of freedom.

B. Collective Face VS. Individual Face

1) *Collective face reflected in Chinese seating culture*

Collective face refers to the face shared by all members of the collective to which an individual belongs. As an example, in daily life, the Chinese frequently say "fighting for

collective honor", and this "honor" is actually the face of the collective. This kind of collectivism, which binds collective honor and individual honor together, is highly respected by the Chinese, and in this context, the gain or loss of collective face forms an important part of the Chinese perception of face, and "fighting for collective face" provides them with the psychological motivation to strive for success.

In China, face is regarded as a kind of respect, value or social status gained from social groups, and the Chinese emphasize the use of positive face strategies in communication. Since ancient times, China has attached great importance to etiquette. Etiquette reflects the status of members of society. In feudal China, women had a low status and were not allowed to sit at the table in certain large family meals. However, in the west, laws protect the equality of the country and society. Everyone is equal before the law. Men and women possess equal social status. Chinese society is based on the family, and advocates filial piety and gratitude to parents. Therefore, parents possess the absolute core position in Chinese families, and seniors or individuals with high family status are the most paramount. It can be well proved from the dinner seating arrangement in *The Dream of Red Mansions*. The Chinese attach great importance to the values of collectivism, and usually degrade themselves to improve the face of others in the group. On the basis of social group consciousness, the establishment of face emphasizes that individuals rely on social recognition of their status and reputation and needs. In this sense, the face of the Chinese is more of a collective face. Behind the emphasis on the value of interpersonal relationship, it is inclined to follow the value orientation of the masses.

2) *Individual face reflected in western seating culture*

Individual face, with its emphasis on the freedom of individual action and the fulfillment of personal desires, is in essence an individual-centered social value. Rooted in this view of face is an individualistic cultural concept. Western culture emphasizes independent personality and individuality, and the values it promotes are centered on individual achievement and honor.

In *Downton Abbey*, both the hosts and the servants eat only from their own plates, while the communal dishes are divided up by the servants and delivered to the hosts' plates. The individualism tendency of British food culture is vividly reflected, while Chinese people are accustomed to put food in the middle and sit around a round table, which also displays the collectivism of Chinese food culture. In the West, face is regarded as the public self-image or the self-image identified by others. It is emphasized that face is the image established by a person in the mind of others. In the process of communication, individuals tend to adopt negative face strategies. Due to the maritime geographical location, combined with the influence of Greek culture and different religious beliefs, the West gradually formed an export-oriented economic culture, emphasizing democracy, equality, individualism, etc., forming a self-centered, emphasizing independent personality and personality, and advocating individual achievements and honor values. In a word, western values are self-centered, emphasizing independent personality and individuality, and advocating individual achievement and honor.

VI. CONCLUSION

Influenced by different cultural backgrounds, lifestyles and values, the disparity between Chinese and western people in seating culture is noticeable. The differences in seating is also indicative of the differences in “face” between the two sides. The Chinese tend to maintain positive face and collective face, while westerners, tend to maintain negative face and individual face. In cross-cultural communication, understanding the differences between Chinese and westerners’ concept of “face” is conducive to the establishment of a favorable relationship between the two sides and the promotion of cross-cultural communication.

In spite of many differences between Chinese and western concepts of face, intercultural communication will go on smoothly as long as individuals try to empathize with each other and treat each others’ ideas or behaviors with respect and dignity. Empathy refers to the ability to recognize or understand the thoughts and feelings of others. The goal of this method is to reach an agreement with the other party to protect their positive face. Then, how to leverage the method of empathy in cross-cultural communication? First of all, we should be aware of the differences in face culture. Secondly, we should tolerate the face principle of the other side and adopt an inclusive attitude towards the face culture of other countries. Last but not least, we need to find the best way to reduce these differences.

With the development of the times, modern individuals advocate simplicity and nature. Some complex table seating arrangements fade over time, and on certain occasions new ones emerge. With the advancement of global integration, individuals usually follow the international convention of table seating in cross-cultural communication in order to avoid embarrassment and misunderstanding. We should have a clear perspective of the differences between Chinese and western table seating, and master the internationally accepted table seating manners, so as to reasonably arrange guests in the banquet and make the banquet atmosphere more pleasant. Besides, guests can also enjoy better mutual communication, thus ultimately achieving the purpose of communication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Jiangshan You conducted the research, analyzed the data and wrote this paper; Hongmei Ruan, professor at the School of Foreign Studies, Northwestern Polytechnical University and supervisor of Jiangshan You, has contributed a lot to writing and improving this paper; all authors had approved the final version.

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