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The Place of Language and Intercultural Abilities: The Experience of Global Business Professionals

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**The Place of Language and Intercultural Abilities: The Experience of Global
Business Professionals**

by

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Dedication

To Papá Vicente, my beloved late grandfather, who came from a generation of men that believed that “women who have too much education never marry well”. Although he was usually correct with his advise, he would be happy to know that the completion of my doctorate coincides with the celebration of 25 years of marriage, proving that a woman can be both well educated and well married

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I also want to thank the five members of my committee for their time, counsel and assistance with completing my doctoral program. I am grateful to the 74 participants in this study, which would not have been possible without their generous assistance and donation of their time. It is my hope that this research will allow their valuable life experiences and opinions to be shared with future global business professionals.

**The Place of Language and Intercultural Abilities: The Experience of Global
Business Professionals**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

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Abstract

Recent surveys of international business professionals indicate that foreign language abilities and cultural sensitivity are important competitive advantages in today's globalized economy. The current study interviewed 71 practicing global professionals currently working in cross border transactions in diverse fields. Biographic, demographic and second language data were collected, including information on experiences and opinions on the use and importance of foreign language and cultural awareness abilities in the professional world. Research questions include: (1) Who are the global professionals applying L2 abilities at work? (2) How do they apply these abilities? (3) What are the profiles of advanced and non-advanced proficiency users? (4) How important are linguistic abilities and how much of a competitive advantage do they represent? (5) What language strategies and communication strategies are used? (6) What are the most common beliefs on the role of foreign languages and culture awareness in business? (7) How well do intercultural communication models explain the culture views and experiences reported by working professionals? Results indicate that learners with self-reported advanced proficiency regularly apply the four language abilities (listening, reading, speaking and writing) at work, albeit in varying degrees, depending on the level of complexity of the task (phone, email, face-to-face meeting, etc.).

For the majority of informants, foreign language and culture abilities are considered important for professional effectiveness. For those who reported advanced foreign language abilities, they also exhibited a greater appreciation for increased exposure to foreign language learning, had received more foreign language instruction, and had more experience working and living abroad. Those advanced in foreign language abilities were also more likely to be non-native speakers of English, have earned a university degree while using an L2, had family or community connections to the target language, have emigrated, or have a spouse with a different L1. The study also ranks and identifies the informants' strategies used to deal with language and culture issues. Participants' anecdotes were analyzed in light of current cultural analysis models applied in International Business Communications. Suggestions are presented for curricula changes to improve foreign language proficiency in professional settings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Nelson Mandela has said, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."

... The United States is a long way from being the multi-lingual society that so many of our economic competitors are. My message to you today is that K-12 schools and higher education institutions must be part of the solution to our national language gap.

... Our country needs to create a future in which all Americans understand that by speaking more than one language, they are enabling our country to compete successfully and work collaboratively with partners across the globe.

(Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, Foreign Language Summit, 'Education and the language gap', December 8, 2010)

1.1 OVERVIEW

Effective intercultural communication abilities are considered crucial to the economic success of organizations, especially over the last two decades, following advances in technology which have resulted in the acceleration of economic globalization and the greater interconnectedness between peoples, countries and companies. The relative economic importance of trade between developed industrialized countries located in North America and Europe has declined while that of emerging markets located in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East has increased (see Figures 1 and 2).

The impetus for this research was the publication of a survey of business executives by the Economist magazine (EIU, 2010), which concluded that 73% considered cultural sensitivity to be the most important attribute in a successful international manager while 38% believed it was foreign language abilities. A subsequent survey also confirmed the importance of these abilities: 49% believed that misunderstandings in communication or messages lost in translation were barriers to important international business deals which cultural resulted in big losses for the organization (EIU, 2012). Both surveys conclude that a

proficiency in foreign languages and cultural sensitivity are perceived as important and necessary abilities for a successful international business career. Given current global economic and demographic trends, being able to communicate effectively with and within those markets is more crucial to the economic survival of US corporations than ever before.

As a second language teacher and former global business professional with an interest in culture this researcher seeks to shed light into the practical everyday professional applications of advanced linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge in the global work place. This researcher has a decade of international work experience having worked in the field of international banking with global responsibilities in multiple European and Latin American countries requiring the use of four languages in order to accomplish trans border transactions. From this experience, in part, came the impetus for this research.

This study analyses data collected from experienced practicing professionals to gain insight into the many ways advanced users apply their abilities, have acquired these abilities, and conceptualize the professional impact of these abilities. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide empirical evidence of the relative importance of having foreign language and cultural sensitivity training as part of the future professional tool kit. Curriculum design in business schools and language departments may benefit from additional hard data on the nature and impact of having advanced proficiency second language and cultural awareness. We know there are plenty of advanced foreign language users who have cultural sensitivity. Nevertheless, we want to have a better understanding of advanced language learners, namely, what their language learner profile is, how they got to that level, and more importantly, what their personal views are on the relationship between language learning and culture learning.

Both of the previously mentioned surveys sought to uncover the perceived practical importance of manager's abilities in foreign languages and cultural sensitivity. In the US alone, a survey was conducted relative to the opinions of US business school graduates on

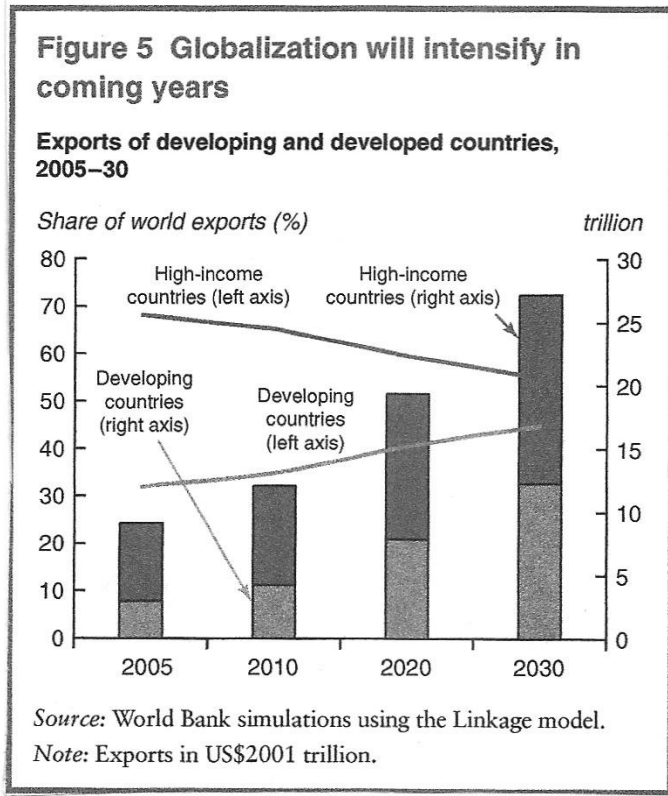
the perceived advantage of having foreign languages and culture abilities (Grosse, 2004). The current study seeks to gather data on the concrete applications, personal experiences, beliefs and opinions of practicing international professionals involved in cross border trade with respect to the role, impact and competitive advantage of having this dual skill set.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1 Economic trends

Over the next few decades the pace of global economic integration will quicken as illustrated by the following graph prepared by The World Bank. Global trade in goods and services is projected to increase threefold by 2030, and half of this growth is expected to come from developing countries.

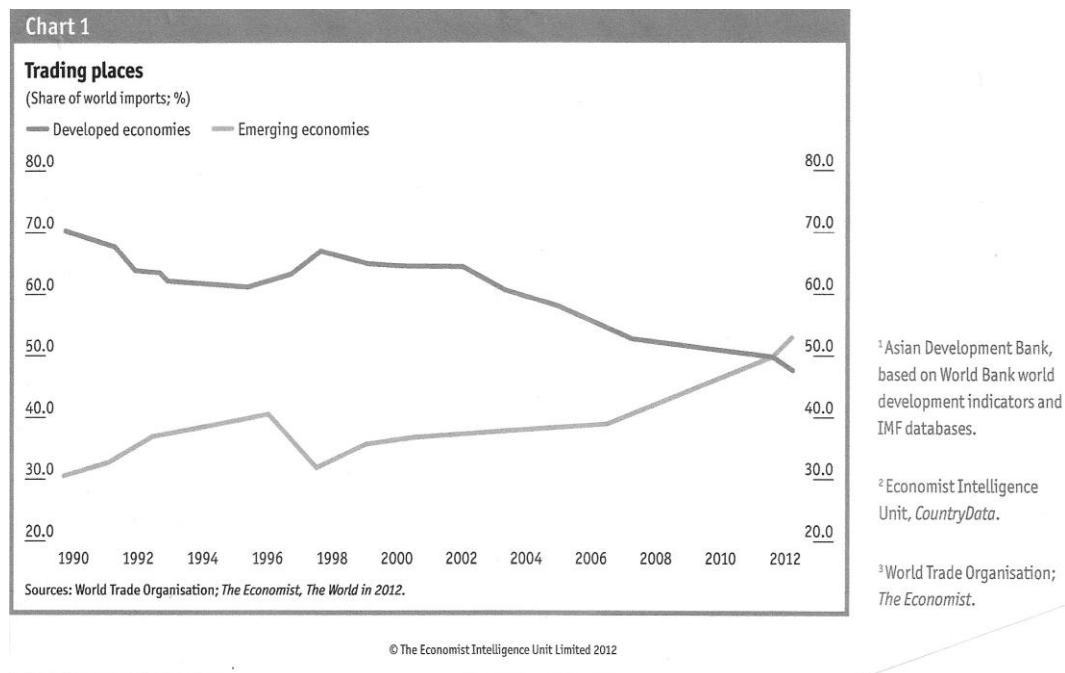
Figure 1.1 Comparison of exports between developed and developing countries



Source: The World Bank, 2007, p xi

As evidenced by the figure above, the economic facts are clear. An increasing amount of the World's trade will come from large emerging markets, including the BRICKS group of countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, Korea, South Africa), which will continue to fuel the trend of globalization. Consequently, trade between the US and Europe will have less and less economic impact while other markets, and communication with them will become ever more vital. The immediacy of this switch in economic trade priorities for US businesses is illustrated by the next graph.

Figure 1.2 Share of world imports



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2012, p5)

The above graph illustrates how in 2012 the two lines (% share of world imports coming from developed economies and % of world imports coming from emerging economies) have intersected. This means that from now on a larger share of the world's economic growth will come from developing countries; these are the new expanding markets for US goods and services, not the mature and shrinking markets of Europe.

When looking at differences between trading countries, the CAGE Distance Framework (Ghemawat, 2001) identifies four key categories that companies need to address in preparing a successful international strategy; they include culture distance, administration distance, geographic distance and economic distance. Culture distance is the first and most important category because it determines how people interact with each other. The culture variable includes: different languages, different ethnicities, lack of connective ethnic or social networks, different religions, lack of trust, different values, norms, and dispositions. For

example, the author of the economic model (Ghemawat, 2001) in his book entitled “Distance still Matters” estimates that nations that share a common language (like Canada, US and UK) tend, on average, to trade 42% more than nations that do not have a common language, this is without taking into consideration a common colonial past. The model is useful for global managers because it highlights the importance that distance can play on the chances for increased trade between countries, especially on cultural characteristics.

1.2.2 Preparedness of US businesses

A report by RAND, a federal government-funded think tank (Bikson & Law, 1995) investigated the state of preparedness of US corporations and colleges to meet the new workplace demands of globalization and whether corporations understood the human resource implications of globalization. It concluded that although US universities were producing graduates with strong domain knowledge, compared with international students, they were at a serious disadvantage in the global marketplace in terms of cross-cultural competence. Corporate participants, it seems, were skeptical about the ability of colleges to produce cross-cultural competence via their foreign language departments or even study abroad programs. Companies reported not trusting the language skill qualifications that prospective job applicants reported having. Another conclusion was that colleges needed to internationalize their curricula to meet the market’s new globalization demands. Two subsequent research studies that surveyed public and private organization, also by RAND (Bikson, Stasz & Law, 1994; Bikson, Treverton, Moini & Lindstrom, 2003) concluded that cross-cultural awareness was a new human resource competence needed because of globalization. However, they found that participants in the study ranked cross-cultural competence as No. 8th among ten factors contributing to successful work performance and

foreign language competency was listed as 9th among the ten most important factors contributing to successful work performance.

1.2.3 Business schools

Despite the growing demand for global managers with the requisite abilities in foreign language and culture abilities, several studies have revealed serious inadequacies.

Although UK MBAs may speak the language of international business, namely English, many of them have only a half or a quarter of the language competence of their continental European counterparts and lack the sensitivity to cross-cultural communication which develops with linguistic ability... Language ability is also a consideration for American business schools and educators, even though a survey of executives found that only 19 per cent of American respondents as opposed to 64 per cent of non-American respondents thought that language capability was important.

(Vileba & Edelshain, 1995, p92)

This study attests to the Anglo-centric nature of international business education as well as to the educational drawback that may result from relying on the comfort of being a native speaker of the *lingua franca* of international business. Another study (Walker, 2009) found that 71% of business schools had a mandatory foreign language requirement, 10% a cross-cultural communication component, and 36% a study abroad requirement. The remainder had no requirement, or only a suggestion. The most revealing data in this study was the fact that among the schools with a second language graduation requirement, 2.9% required an advanced II/400-level, 26.8% an advanced I/300-level, 37% required an intermediate/200 level proficiency, 4.3% elementary/100-level proficiency, and 29% had an unspecified proficiency requirement. Clearly, there is a lack of consistency across the board in both language and culture skill requirements in business schools, but more importantly,

there is a lack of understanding of the importance and the purpose of requiring advanced foreign language proficiency.

From the time of these studies, and others (Kwok & Arpan, J.S., 1994), US business schools have made efforts to internationalize their curricula and increase their foreign language and culture requirements. Recent studies (Grosse, 2004, Grosse, 2009) have found proof of improvements in the new millennium in the awareness of the competitive advantage of having foreign language and culture abilities, especially for graduates of certain prestigious business schools having more demanding foreign language requirements. As can be seen from these studies, there is a connection between academic requirements and the skill building which practicing professionals acknowledge having acquired and benefited from in their professional practice.

1.2.4 How global professionals apply foreign language abilities at work

Only one recent study has collected empirical data on the concrete uses of foreign language in business (Grosse, 2004). The study surveyed six specific tasks performed professionally in the second language, and also collected data on the linguistic proficiency of the participants. The current study seeks to build on some of the conclusions from that research by collecting data on the full range of activities and the depth of the four language abilities applied, both at work and for personal use. There is a knowledge gap, which we hope to fill by collecting more detailed empirical data on international managers possessing advanced proficiency in foreign languages, and cultural knowledge, who use these abilities in everyday business tasks.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The problem apparent in the above-cited studies is that we do not have sufficient data on these advanced L2 users' proficiency, demographics, formal instruction, and other factors affecting their second language use. In addition, with respect to culture knowledge abilities, we do not know about specific categories of experiences and beliefs about intercultural communication.

The purpose of this research is two-fold:

- a) Gain a better understanding of the way in which foreign language abilities are applied in a professional setting and who the advanced proficiency users are;
- b) Look at international business communication theories traditionally studied in business school courses to see if they provide a useful culture-learning tool when compared with the views on culture reported by experienced international professionals.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By having a better understanding of how advanced foreign language abilities are applied in the professional world, at a practical every day level, and who the advanced users are, we are better informed about the true benefits and costs of these abilities to businesses. If we do not understand the level of proficiency required to perform professionally in a second language or culture, or understand its true value to an organization, we will not be willing to invest the significant time and resources that are necessary to achieve the goal. Curriculum designers at US business schools together with corporate human resource departments may benefit from a better understanding of the nature and importance of language use at work so that future students and their business employers can invest the resources necessary to achieve advanced proficiency.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Regarding foreign language skill use at work the research questions include:

1. Who are the global professionals applying their L2 abilities in their work?
2. How do these professional apply their L2 abilities in their work?
3. What are the profiles of advanced proficiency language users?
4. What are the profiles of less proficient language users?
5. How important are linguistic abilities at work and how much of a professional competitive advantage to global professionals?
6. What language strategies are used?
7. What are their most common beliefs on L2 abilities in business?

Regarding culture knowledge or skill use at work research questions include:

1. Are culture abilities considered a professional competitive advantage?
2. What are the most common beliefs about the work relevance of culture abilities?
3. What are the most common views on the language-culture connection?
4. How do International Business Communication models assist us in explaining and describing the categories of culture learning reported by this group of professionals?

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

This is a qualitative study that seeks to understand in greater depth the personal applications and experiences of practicing and seasoned global professionals who use foreign language and culture abilities in their work; to shed light on their beliefs and opinions regarding the usefulness and impact of having foreign language and culture knowledge abilities in the working world. Although significant quantitative data was collected and analyzed for this study in order to come up with total counts and percentages, it is the personal views and opinions of participants that are considered most relevant, and presented in Appendix E. The personal interview and questionnaire are the instruments employed in this study of 71 participants. These were completed between October 2012 and January 2013, either in person, online via Skype, or in writing with participants submitting their responses by email. The sampling technique was a convenient sample, of mostly close acquaintances, colleagues, friends and relatives of the researcher who were willing to participate, by devoting the necessary 45 minutes to respond to 33 detailed personal

questions. Almost all interviews were audio recorded. The researcher wrote out the responses to the surveys during the recording process, and then analyzed the data.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.7.1 Applied Linguistics, Post-modernism, Deconstructivism & Post-Colonialism

In order to best conceptualize the range and complexity of linguistic and intercultural abilities that allow multilingual speakers to communicate their meaning, it is Kramsch's theoretical construct of *Symbolic Competence* (Kramsch, 2009) that is the most enlightening. This concept is not analogous to, or exclusive of *Communicative Competence* (Canale & Swain, 1980) and *Intercultural Communicative Competence* (Byram, 1979), both of which have by now been embraced by the field of Applied Linguistics. Moreover, the term *symbolic competence* is inclusive of both, yet more importantly, it reframes these two concepts within the philosophical paradigm of *Third Space* (Bhabha, 1994) or *Third Culture* (Kramsch, 1993). This symbolic capacity of the multilingual individual does not mean the ability to learn foreign language forms in order to express meanings that are universal, says Kramsch, rather, it is the ability to communicate meanings which are always individually *subjective*, evolving and more importantly, dependent on variables of both time and space. Another important theoretical perspective to this study, as well as to Kramsch's conceptual framework derives from Complexity/Chaos theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), which informs us of the clear parallels that exist between second language acquisition and the physical sciences. The study of language as a system, like the study of the organizing system in a flock of birds, have many aspects in common: they both study complex dynamic systems, which are by definition, nonlinear, chaotic and unpredictable, but also, open, sensitive to initial conditions, self-organizing, feedback sensitive and adaptive (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p147).

1.7.2 Intercultural Communications

This research will apply theories available from the field of Intercultural Communications (Boas, Hall, Gumperz, Tannen), and in particular, the subfield of International Business Communications (IBC), including such theorists as Hofstede, Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars and David Victor.

The above IBC theories will be applied in the current study in the analysis of data, not because the author approves of these reductive models of culture, but rather, because they represent current and widely applied theoretical models in the field of International Business Communication, they are, most likely, the most familiar to the target audience of this present study: current and future international business professionals. Among the most widely studied and applied cultural models applied by international business professionals are binary models of culture, such as Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory and Hampden-Turner Trompenaars Dimensions of Culture. In many instances, the study will look at demographic language data separately from culture data, despite the author's belief that language and culture are inseparable, as is the current generalized opinion in the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. The rationale behind this artificial separation is the belief that the professional business world, corporate human resource departments, and business schools around the world currently view foreign languages and intercultural communications as two separate capacities, and all indications are that they might continue to do so for some time in the future.

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE

The current study looks separately at the language data (Chapter 4) and culture data (Chapter 5). Such an artificial non-theoretical separation of the two, however, does not imply that the researcher holds the belief that language can ever be separated from its cultural meanings, or that such is the current SLA theoretical understanding of language. To the contrary, such separation simply reflects the mainstream view of the international business community with respect to foreign language education, as well as the conceptual paradigm applied by the aforementioned EIU studies, which are the impetus for the current study.

The ‘unit of analysis’ and what constitutes ‘data’ in the current study are derived from self-reports from by the participants, 100% collected by the sole researcher, and never corroborated for their veracity. These reports include ‘language data’, demographic information such as gender, age, L1, L2/L3/L5, job, location and rank, spouses L1, etc., as well as key self-reported information, such as L2 proficiency, years of international work experience and years of formal L2 instruction. On the other hand, under ‘culture data’, the study includes language learner beliefs and opinions about the importance and impact of cultural awareness in communication. The researcher acknowledges the practicality and artifice in the selection of such a research design.

This study assumes that all participants are highly qualified to answer the questions raised in the research instrument since they have all been chosen for their unique level of experience dealing with professional transactions across countries, cultures and languages. As mentioned, it is also assumed that all participants have been truthful and accurate in their responses, given their willingness to participate and offer their valuable time, without any remuneration. More importantly, given their close personal connection with the researcher, or with the individual who referred them for participation, we can assume that they have answered all the research questions to the best of their abilities.

As with all self-reported studies, this study has the typical limitations of self-reported data. Willingly, or inadvertently, participants might over-report, as well as under-report, the level of second language proficiency, or the number of years of formal foreign language instruction, international work experience or overseas living and travel. The researcher has no way of verifying the accuracy of the language and demographic data collected from participants. In addition, a participant's memory might have faded with respect to the personal details or the context of past events in the anecdotes shared during the course of the interview. All of these factors make it impossible to judge the veracity of all the data collected.

The biggest limitation to this research is the convenient sampling technique selected as a research design, over which the researcher, again, has no control. It is for this obvious reason that any conclusion from this research may apply only to this unique study sample population of global managers, and not to the entire population of professionals working on cross border transactions around the globe. Another limitation of this study was that the open-response nature of certain items in the instrument made data analysis difficult, which diluted the strength of certain findings. In particular, item 8 section 3 of the instrument, asked about the personal advantage of having language and culture abilities (combined). Had this question been asked in two parts, i.e. language vs. culture instead, the results might have allowed comparison with previous studies. The scope of this study is 71 adults, ages 21-85 years, male and female, with a minimum of three years of work experience, working in mid-high to senior level positions, currently working in the US or abroad in professional roles involving international transactions and travel, and includes US and foreign-owned organizations types and sizes, professional, fields, organization types as well as sizes, active in many professional fields (See Appendix D).

1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Bilingualism/multilingualism

The using two or more languages.

Culture

Culture is a nebulous term with uncertain boundaries and not easy to define. Among many definitions of culture that exist, the current study will use the one by British Anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1871). Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Globalization

Globalization is a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities (Al-Rodhan, R.F. Nayef and Gérard Stoudmann, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2006).

Cultural Sensitivity

The terms culture, cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and cultural competence are used loosely and interchangeably in this study, although they may certainly carry different meanings to different people. The preferred term applied in this research is Cultural Sensitivity since it is the one used by the EIU survey, the impetus for the current study. The following two terms are more complex and refer to quite specific constructs containing several categories of knowledge.

Cultural relativism

This principle, first articulated in 1887 by Anthropologist Franz Boas, informs us that culture, or civilization, is not an absolute concept, but rather, it is very much relative, and thus our ideas and beliefs are true only as far as our own culture applies.

Communicative Competence (CC)

CC, a term coined by Hymes (1966), refers to "communicative form and function in integral relation to each other", and is widely used in SLA and linguistics to refer to the theoretical concept developed by Canale & Swain (1980).

Intercultural Competence

Also known as Cross Cultural Competence (3Cs), Intercultural Competence is defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures. The United States Army Research Institute defines Intercultural Competence as "a set of cognitive, behavioral, and affective/motivational components that enable individuals to adapt effectively in intercultural environments".

Cultural Quotient (CQ)

CQ is a relatively new term (Earley & Ang, 2003), used by business and government to refer to the measurement of 'cultural intelligence', namely, the ability to recognize and understand the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of a group of people as well as to use that knowledge in achieving specific goals.

Hybridity

The integration of cultural bodies, signs, and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. (Bhabha, 1994)

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

The ICC construct, as defined by Byram (1997), includes five categories of knowledge, namely, mental knowledge of the culture, abilities for interpreting and relating, abilities for discovery and interaction, attitudes and critical cultural awareness.

Linguistic Relativity

Also known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, posits that the structure of the language itself influences the worldview of its speakers, i.e. the language affects the cognition of the speaker.

Language Learner Strategies

Foreign or second language (L2) learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques second language learners use, very often consciously, to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2 (Oxford, 1990b).

Communication Strategies

Communication strategies are strategies that second language learners use to overcome problems in order to convey their intended meaning (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997), and may include paraphrasing, substitution, coining new words, switching to the first language, and asking for clarification (Ellis, 2008). With the exception of switching languages, the same strategies are employed by native speakers as well.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the impetus for the present study, the background to the problem, significance of the study, research questions, study design, theoretical framework and definitions. The next chapter will outline the methodology applied in this research.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

Surveys published in the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) of practicing business professionals tell us that foreign language proficiency and cultural sensitivity are abilities that are highly valued and sought after by international managers responsible for cross border transactions (EIU, 2010, EIU, 2012). The present study seeks to shed light into: a) how this dual skill set is applied and acquired by advanced proficient users, b) what beliefs this population has regarding this skill set, c) Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and International Business Communications (IBC) theories that address and inform the building process of the above-mentioned abilities.

2.1 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

We know that the participants in a typical cross border transaction, be it for a good or a service, will communicate, either orally or in writing, in the process of selling, negotiation and delivering the product. Therefore, we can assume that any, or all, of the four language abilities will be applied, both receptive and productive (listening, reading, speaking and writing). SLA theories inform us of the many processes that take place when learners acquire each of the four language skills in a second language (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Given the differences between these four skills, as well as among the participants, SLA theories will provide a theoretical guide for our understanding of the demographic and self-reported language data collected in this study.

2.1.1 Listening abilities

Listening is a critically important skill in SLA (Douglas, 2007, Flowerdew, John & Lindsay Miller, 2005). Some authors claim that

“Through the normal course of a day, listening is used nearly twice as much as speaking and four to five times as much as reading and writing” (Rivers, 1981). A study of 500 Corporations conducted by Fortune Magazine concluded that, “listening was perceived to be crucial for communication at work with regards to entry-level employment, job success, general career competence, managerial competency, and effectiveness of relationships between supervisors and subordinates” (Wolvin and Coakley, 1991). Nevertheless, it appears that listening, as an L2 skill remains a poorly understood process in SLA, despite the recognition of the crucial role it plays in communication (Morley, 1991).

(“CAELA: ESL Resources: Digests,” n.d.)

Although listening is traditionally considered to be a receptive skill requiring only passive participation on the part of listeners, others disagree (Bozorgian, 2012). Experts now believe it is a skill that requires active participation from those involved in communication, and thus will require specific instruction of language learners (Rost & Michael, 2002, Rivers, 1981).

2.1.2 Reading abilities

Reading in a second language, especially if one is to master this skill at a professional level, is a highly complex process, requiring significant amounts of language input (Krashen, 1985), as well as much time and practice on the part of a language learner.

Learning to read in a second language (L2) is a process that is equally complex and cognitively demanding as is learning to read in the native language (L1). They both require the integration of both lower-level and upper-level cognitive language processing abilities (Grabe, 2009). Lower-level processes encompass word recognition (lexical access via phonological and morphological processing), syntactic parsing (applying grammatical information) and semantic and syntactic encoding. The latter abilities are processed simultaneously by the *executive control* located in working memory. With the help of longterm

memory and other higher-level processes that include attention, goal-setting, strategy use, and metacognitive awareness, we can arrive at reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009, p50).

The process of learning to read in a second language, especially in adulthood, may be different process from learning to read a native language in childhood. We now know, however, L2 reading builds on L1 reading (Bernhardt, 2010). By applying the theory of compensatory processing, Bernhardt, explains how prior knowledge and current knowledge, working together, make possible L2 reading comprehension, especially in advanced level texts. The reader's level of literacy in the L1 and grammatical knowledge in the L2 work together to enhance advanced L2 reading comprehension (Bernhardt, 2010).

Reading in L2, as in L1, is used for many purposes in our daily lives, in personal, professional or academic settings, depending on goals and motivations of the reader, and context (Grabe, 2005, p7). Some of the purposes of reading are to search for information, for quick understanding, to learn, to integrate information, to evaluate and critique, or for general information (Grabe, Table 1.1, p8). Grabe and others have explained how when we read for different purposes, different levels of cognitive demands are placed on the reader's cognitive resources, depending on the processes that are required to reach a “standard of coherence” (Grabe, 2005, (Linderholm & van den Broek, 2002). We know that individuals read for multiple purposes, not just academic and professional.

It is important to recognize that many people around the world have learned to read in more than one language. Large populations of people have learned to read in second or third languages for a variety of reasons, including interactions within and across heterogeneous multilingual countries, large scale immigration movements, global transportation, advanced educational opportunities, and the spread of languages of wider communication. (Grabe, 2009, p 4)

2.1.3 Speaking abilities

When we refer to of someone's speaking ability in an L2, we call it 'communicative competence' (Canale & Swain, 1980). Advanced L2 users possess Superior productive speaking abilities, which means they are able to

... communicate in the language with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings" (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1999), while a learner at the *Distinguished* level "begins to approach the level of an educated native speaker" (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002). Speakers at these levels also possess the academic discourse abilities that would be expected of any educated person in the target culture, such as the ability to hypothesize and persuade...

("CAL: Digests: Attaining High Levels of Proficiency: Challenges for Foreign Language Education in the United States," n.d.)

2.1.4 Writing abilities

Writing in a L2 presents additional challenges for a language learner. In order to produce good writing, certain building blocks are necessary, namely, knowledge of linguistic, socio-cultural, genre, register and cultural expectations (Hayland, 2003). In general, proficient L2 learners do not have to depend heavily on L1 knowledge to drive their writing process, because they have a sufficient level of L2 automaticity and knowledge to think and plan in the L2 (Jones & Tetroe, 1987). Experts tell us that learning to write in an L2 differs in important ways from learning to write in L1, and both implicit and explicit knowledge play an important role (Williams, 2005). We also know that writers with lower L2 proficiency rely more heavily on their L1 during the writing process, in order to sustain the process and prevent a complete breakdown in language (Arndt, 1987; Cumming, 1989; Raimes, 1985; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989). When we look at what successful language learners do (Griffith, 2008), we find, among many strategies for success, that proficient L2 writers read, attend to

grammar, actively generate their own interest to write, as well as create opportunities to write (Griffiths, p248).

Regarding the development of the four abilities, certain key SLA theories inform us:

- 1) having ‘passive’ linguistic knowledge (Competence) is not the same as having ‘active’ knowledge (Performance), which are two different things (Chomsky, 1965). This refers to the fundamental distinction between an individual’s knowledge of the rules of the language and the knowledge to actually use the language in specific situations;
- 2) Language learning happens at two different levels: system learning (i.e. grammar rules) and individual item learning (words);
- 3) language acquisition requires substantial input (Krashen, 1985) and takes lots of intake (what is internalized by the learner) (Corder, 1967);
- 4) Language acquisition requires attention (Tomlin & Vila, 1994) and noticing (awareness through attention) (Schmidt 1990);
- 5) “negotiation of meaning” and interaction (facilitates acquisition (Long, 1981, 1985, Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987, Mackey, 1999, Mackey, 2002);
- 6) interactional feedback facilitates SLA (Ellis, 1984, Birdsong, 1989);
- 7) practice, or Comprehensible ‘pushed output’ contributes to skill development (Swain, 1985, Mackey, 2002).

The above principles of language learning assist us in understanding the complex and cognitively demanding process in acquiring competency in the four language abilities.

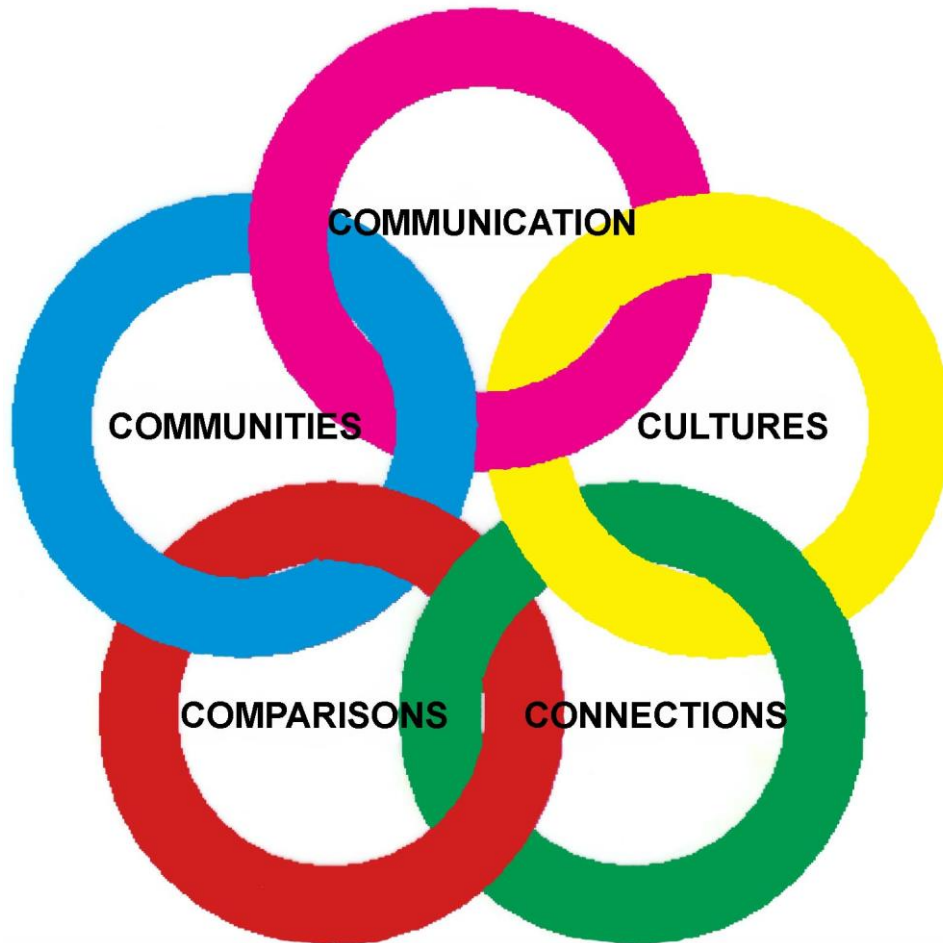
SLA also informs us that there is a special type of anxiety called L2 learning anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). For some individuals this L2 learning anxiety is connected to reading (Saito & Garza, 1999, Horwitz, 2001, p112). Affective factors complicate the study of second language achievement. It is difficult to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of particular instruction methods, amount of input, or individual learners’ differences without isolating affective factors such as learning anxiety or motivation.

2.2 APPLIED LINGUISTICS

2.2.1 Communicative Competence (CC)

The concept of CC (Swain, 1985) includes knowledge of grammar (syntax, phonology and morphology), as well as the sociolinguistic ‘appropriateness’ of the language utterance (Hymes, 1972). In 1996, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) introduced its Proficiency Guidelines, which covered the concept of ‘the Five Cs’ in foreign language education in 1996 (Communication, Culture, Comparisons, Connections and Communities) with the goal of expanding the role, scope and depth of culture in language instruction. The Communication standard includes the ability to interpret messages (oral and written), which reveal cultural understanding in real life situations. Culture has been called the fifth skill in SLA, although culture is intricately wrapped up and inseparable from the other four language abilities of listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Figure 2.1 ACTFL's Five Cs of Foreign Language Education, Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (1999)



2.2.2 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Swain's Communicative Competence laid the foundation for Byram's concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which is defined as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of

cultural settings” (Byram, 1997). This competence includes a complex mix of linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, attitudes and abilities at many levels. It represents the most specific of terms used to refer to cultural competence, including language proficiency, regional expertise and cross-cultural competence. It also encompasses the broadest range of abilities required for communicating effectively and appropriately with people of different cultures.

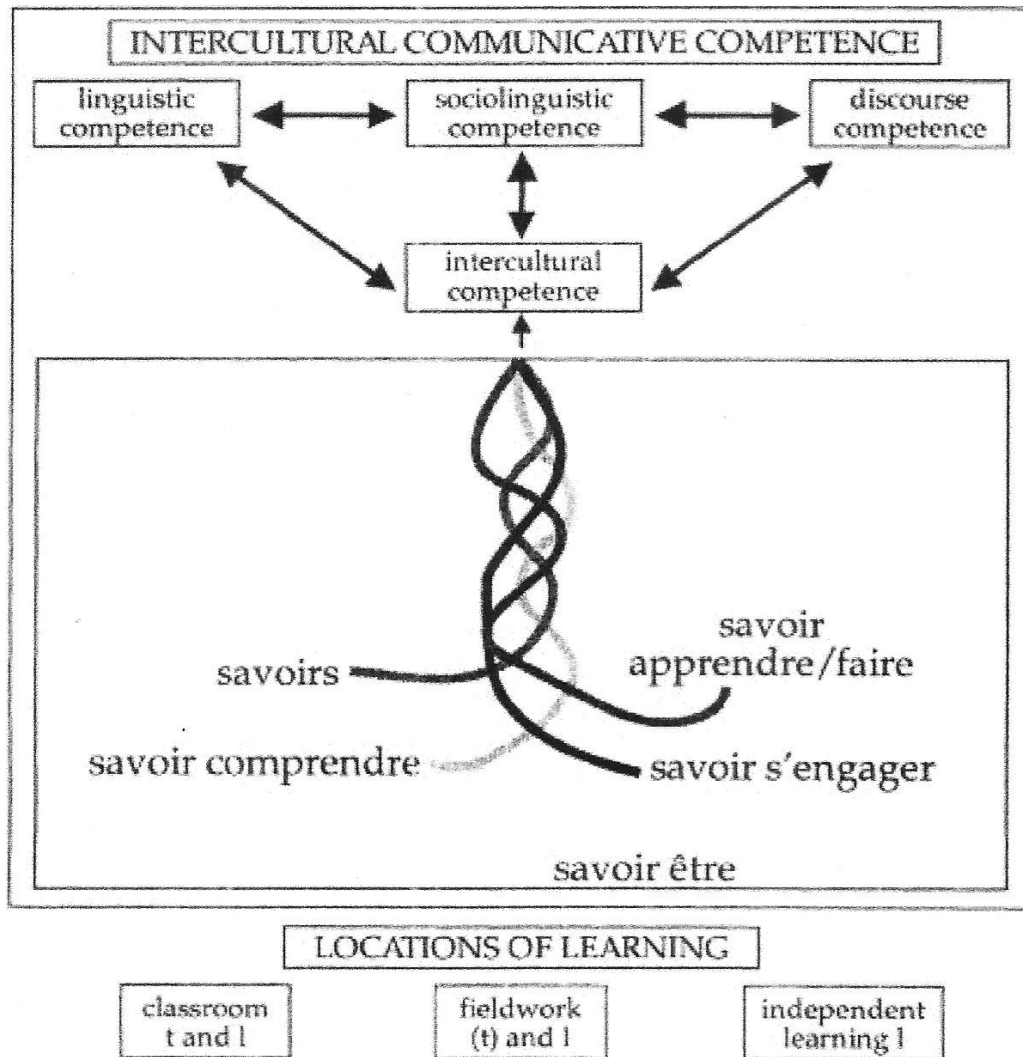
Figure 2.2 Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

<p><i>Savoirs</i> / Knowledge</p>	<p>Knowledge about a specific culture and how social groups and identities function and interact. Includes knowledge of oneself, knowledge of social processes and their products, knowledge of how other people see themselves as well as other people, knowledge of stereotypes of one's own culture and other cultures</p>
<p><i>Savoir comprendre</i> / abilities of interpreting and relating.</p>	<p>Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, explain and relate it to docs or events from one's own culture, relate oral and written texts to each other and interpret each in light of the other- involves the skill of mediation</p>
<p><i>Savoir apprendre / faire</i> /abilities of discovery and interaction.</p>	<p>Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture or cultural practices, operate with knowledge, attitudes and abilities in real-time communication and interaction</p>
<p><i>Savoir être</i> / Attitudes</p>	<p>Attitudes, values (one holds because of belonging to social group or society), attitudes of the intercultural speaker and mediator. The foundation of ICC is curiosity, openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own, willingness to relativise one's own values, beliefs, behaviors, willingness not to assume one's own beliefs, etc. are the only possible or correct ones, ability to 'decentre' – ability to see how one's own values, beliefs, behaviors might look from the perspective of an outsider who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviors.</p>
<p><i>Savoir s'engager</i> / critical cultural awareness</p>	<p>Ability to evaluate critically on basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products of one's own culture or other cultures and countries; aiming for a critical evaluation of another culture – development of all the other 4 levels/competences necessary, including a critical perspective on one's own culture.</p>

Source: Adapted from Muller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth (2007), Byram (1997)

Figure 2.2 illustrates the five levels of competencies encompassed in the development of ICC: 1) *'savoir'* (declarative knowledge of self and others), includes knowledge of social groups and their products and practices, in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction; 2) (abilities and know-how) *'savoir faire/apprendre'* (ability to learn through the abilities of discovery and interaction) and includes the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and its cultural practices; 3) *'savoir comprendre'* (abilities in interpreting and relating), including the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own; 4) *'savoir être'* (intercultural attitudes) is an existential competence which includes curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own; 5) *'savoir s'engager'* (critical cultural awareness and political education) includes the ability to critically evaluate the many perspectives, practices and products from one's own and other cultures and countries and the ability to operate with knowledge, attitudes and abilities under the real-time constraints of everyday communication and interaction (Byram, 1997).

Figure 2.3 Byram's ICC Model



Source: Byram, M. (1997, p 261).

Since 2001, the concept of ICC has been incorporated into the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), which represents the standards for teaching and assessing foreign language proficiency in EU countries, based on the belief that grammar and lexical knowledge alone do not lead to communicative competence (Lázár, 2007).

2.2.3 Symbolic Competence

As a result of recent work on the part of multilingual applied linguists such as Kramersch we are better able today to understand the complexity of the abilities the multilingual user develops by applying his/her unique subjectivity and “meaning-making” capacities. The experiences of learning to listen, read, speak and write in a second, third and more languages are unique and mark every individual in a different special manner. By defining the ‘multilingual subject’ as a “symbolic entity that is constituted and maintained through symbolic systems such as language” and subjectivity as “our conscious or unconscious sense of self as mediated through symbolic forms” (Kramersch, 2009, p18) we are better able to see the complexity and heterogeneity of the SLA process.

Gone are the homogenous, monolingual, monocultural students of yesteryear. Today’s era of globalization, migration, and the Internet calls for an “ecologically oriented pedagogy that approaches language learning and language use not just as an instrumental activity for getting things done but as a subjective experience, linked to a speaker’s position in space and history, and to his or her struggle for the control of social power and cultural memory.

(Kramersch, 2009, p190)

The major influences on the genesis of Kramersch’s *Symbolic Competence* are 20th Century postmodernist philosophers and literary critics such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva, in addition to deconstructivist philosopher Jacques Derrida and post-colonialist thinkers such as Homi Bhabha and Anju Appadurai. The main theoretical underpinnings of Kramersch’s *symbolic competence* derive from the following key philosophical concepts.

From Bakhtin comes the concept of *heteroglossia* defined as “another’s speech in another’s language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way” (Bakhtin, 1981). Therefore, says Bakhtin, there is not a single variety of a language but rather a diversity of ‘voice’ through the co-existence of multiple varieties, i.e. social dialects, jargons,

generations, fashions, etc., all these populated with a variety of different intentions as well as accents. Since there exists, therefore, no neutral words, every word has its own 'history of usage'. It is 'the speech act' that compels the speaker to place his unique 'signature' on every utterance. In literary criticism, Bakhtin's *dialogic* nature of texts, which is in contrast with the 'monologic', informs us that every text is in continuous 'dialogue' with other previous as well as future texts. With respect to the *dialogic* nature of language, we know that every utterance is in response, or in dialogue with, another past as well as future utterance. Language, like text as well as thought, therefore, is always 'dialogic' because it is 'relational' and never fixed. Rather, language is in a continuous process of redefinition by every individual who uses it.

Also from Bakhtin originated the concept of *subjectivity*, which is the foundation of Kramersch's *Symbolic Competence* theory. It is through the use of language that the individual expresses his own need to imbed his/her own meaning into every utterance, what Bakhtin calls *reaccentuation*, meaning the 'resignification' of other people's words' (1981). Therefore, every word in every language is somebody else's until such time as the speaker uses it and hence adds his/her own unique accent, intention and meaning to it (Kramersch, 2009).

Kramersch's idea of the 'iterability' of language forms derives from philosopher Derrida, founder of deconstructivism, which informs us that language carries with it the essential capacity to be *performed*, used, and therefore, distorted by every individual who uses it (Derrida, 1976). Consequently, the meaning of words is never fixed, but instead, it is constantly changing. More importantly, Derrida also informs us that there exists a gap (of time and space) between the *form* of the language and its *meaning*. It is this gap which language users *inflect*, or inject with meaning, thus making language forms their own. (Derrida, J., 1978. Cogito and the History of Madness. From *Writing and Difference*. Trans. A. Bass. London & New York: Routledge. p. 75.)

To better understand Kramersch's *symbolic competence* with respect to the capacities of the bilingual/multilingual speaker, we need to understand a few concepts coined by philosopher and psychoanalysis-influenced Kristeva. This author believes that it is through the intersection of anthropology and psychology that we are better able to understand the links between the social order and the individual, or rather, the *subject*. The first concept is defined as the *thetic space* where the boundary between the semiotic and the symbolic is found. This is where the foreign language speaker is able to stake out his own subjective position, which at the same time conforms to and opposes the dominant symbolic order. Kristeva also believes that the *subject*, or individual, is always evolving and in a process of development due to the fact that it is engaged in continuously 'interrogating and problematizing' which leads to the creation of the *self*.

In literary criticism, poststructuralist Kristeva coined the term *intertextuality* which refers to the shaping of a text's meaning by another text and its meaning, either by allusion, quotation, translation, plagiarism, parody or calche. Meaning is not transferred directly from the writer to the reader but indirectly, it is 'filtered' through 'codes' or symbols which both the writer and the reader have absorbed via having been in contact with other texts. It is as a result of *intertextuality* or the transposition of one or many texts over one another that novelty comes forth. In the same way, language, like texts, must also be viewed through the lens of history, as well as individual social, political, ethnic, religious and psychological experiences.

Desire in language learning is a key philosophical concept Kramersch borrows from Kristeva (*Desire in Language*, Kristeva, 1980), and refers to the identification with *the Other* which brings about motivation, engagement, and investment in language learning. This *desire* is essential to understanding the *symbolic competence* of the multilingual speaker. "Desire in language is the basic drive to self-fulfillment. It touches the core of who we are ... exploring

various possibilities of the self in real or imagined encounters with others” (Kramersch, 2009 p14-15). This process is analogous to Kristeva’s psychoanalysis of the process of language development in the child when he/she discovers his/her own voice, different from the mother’s, in that *symbolic space* where the child becomes a ‘speaking subject’ by developing an identity which is apart from his/her mother’s. Therefore, Kristeva and Kramersch inform us that during discourse, the *symbolic* makes it possible for the *subject* to make linguistic and stylistic choices as it self-reflects, identifies with others, or replicates the multiple voices of others. Furthermore, an important caveat coming from poststructuralist ideology informs us of the dangers of placing collective identity above individual identity as well as the belief that language itself can be the actual source of oppression for disenfranchised groups and individuals unable to express their own voice.

According to Kramersch, *symbolic competence* does not replace (intercultural) communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980, Byram, 1979) but instead, it should be understood within the framework of *Third Place* (Kramersch, 1993, Bhabha, 1994), “as a more dynamic, flexible and locally contingent competence” (Kramersch, 2009). The proposed paradigm shift, which is different from the one implied in the well established concepts in Applied Linguistics, namely, *Communicative Competence* and *Intercultural Communicative Competence* is the world view which is not based in the fossilized dualities of L1/L2, C1/C2, NS/NNS, Us/Them, Self/Other. By contrast, it is through the Symbolic Capacity of the multilingual speaker that the self or subject is always changing, continuously redefining its own identity, over both time and space. Therefore, says Kramersch, foreign language learning is not about learning foreign forms to express meanings which are universal, rather, these forms are the means by which individual meanings, differences, and even conflict, can be negotiated, especially in today’s multicultural globalized world.

From post-colonial studies we have Bhabha who has conceptualized *Third Space* as those new and ‘supplementary’ spaces or movements within the realm of ‘culture’ that open up outside of established binary boundaries which, although created as a result of the tension between the paired opposites, negate the existence of clear boundaries or progression between simple dualities (*The Location of Culture*, 1994). As a means of understanding and explaining the experiences and meanings of post-colonial societies, Bhabha has coined terms such as *hybridity*, *mimicry*, *difference*, and *ambivalence*, all of which assist us in seeing with a different light, not only at post-colonial societies, but especially at today’s globalized world; through a lens that is no longer limited by dual models and reductive polarities. For Bhabha spaces are never binary and never total or directly caused, although they have generated from the play of power that has preceded them; therefore, they become ‘Third Spaces of Enunciation’. In addition, the subject’s need to act its meaning will inevitably reproduce, change and renew the ‘code’, which as a result, becomes "neither the one nor the other, but something else besides" (*The Location of Culture*, 1994), what Bhabha calls *reconjugating*, *recontextualizing*, in a constant “state of translation”, always outside the limits of binary opposites.

The term *hybridity*, has been defined in the works of both Said (Said, 1993) and Bhabha (Bhabha, 1994). ‘All cultures are involved in one another’, wrote Said of our present situation, ‘none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous’ (Burke, 2009, p51). Hybridity and Third Space, or Third Place or supplementary space, are, therefore, useful concepts which assist us in looking at the complexity of the process of identity creation in multilingual subject who forever lives in that space of conflict where negotiation and translation of meanings occurs. Cultures need to be understood as complex places with

multiple intersections, histories and subjective positions, but above all, always in transition, says Bhabha. Identity, therefore, is both negotiated as well as performed within the context of continuous transition. Above all, these intersections open up new *places* of negotiation all of which refer to the symbolic, as well as the social. According to Burke (Burke, 2009, p102), in today's globalized world, 'no culture is an island', and more importantly, there exist multiple varieties of situations, responses and outcomes resulting from the interaction of humans, both in the past and in the present.

Socio-cultural anthropologist Anjun Appadurai studies modernity and especially the issues of globalization and the problems of poverty in developing countries. He has theorized that the human capacity for imagining the future, to *aspire* or desire is a *cultural fact*. In this manner, humans are cultural future-makers. Culture, says Appadurai, is not something fixed and living in the past, as traditional Anthropology has conceptualized. Therefore, Appadurai's capacity to *aspire* is analogous to Kramsch's *symbolic capacity*, which the multilingual subject uses to express his 'voice', his identity or subjectivity (Kramsch), whatever that may mean at any one point in time. It is this unique capacity of the multilingual subject, which allows for 'individual agency' across cultures in a globalized world where many values, not just languages, intersect and a multiplicity of meanings are continuously negotiated. The importance of the human capacity to exercise voice, to imagine and to aspire is an important part of culture. It does not simply mean empowerment, participation or grass-roots. The image, the imagined, the imaginary, says Appadurai, are all terms that point to something new and critical in global cultural processes: it is imagination as a social practice. Therefore, he says, the imagination has become central to all forms of agency and has become a social fact, as well as a key component of the new global order.

This study considers Kramsch, Bhabha, Kristeva, Derrida and Bakhtin's post-modernist philosophical thinking about language, not only the individual's place in creating meaning, but especially, the *sine qua non* nature of language and culture. Nevertheless, this study will also take into account the models used in the field of international business communications, not only to prepare future global professionals, but especially, to assist current practitioners in making sense of cultural differences in order to improve their professional effectiveness.

2.2.4 The multiple competences of bilinguals/multilinguals

The construct '*multi-competence*' describes 'the compound state of a mind with two grammars' (Cook, 1992). According to V. Cook, these L2 users differ from monolinguals in L1 knowledge, they differ from monolinguals in L2 knowledge, they have a different *metalinguistic awareness* from monolinguals, and they also have different cognitive processes. These not-so-subtle differences tell us that individuals with multi-competence are not equivalent to two monolinguals. On the contrary, they represent a unique combination of their own. Furthermore, Cook, as well as other scholars, have now concluded that: the L1 and L2 share the same mental lexicon; L2 users can easily *codeswitch* between the languages; L2 processing cannot be turned off from the L1; both languages are stored in one same area of the brain; L2 proficiency is related to L1 proficiency. All of this tells us that the L1 and L2 systems have merged, to some extent, although we do not currently have a clear understanding of how, or where in the brain.

Consequently, the researcher is in agreement with Cook's and other theorists' belief that...

Any theory about acquisition of languages by ordinary human beings has to account for the fact that many of them acquire two languages simultaneously from the beginning, and that many others acquire one or more other language consecutively at a later date.

(V. Cook, 2002, as quoted in Ortega, 2013, p16)

It is for this reason that SLA research needs to broaden the categories of learners it studies since the dichotomies currently used (L1 vs. L2; Native vs. Non-native Speaker, Naturalistic vs. Instructed) appear insufficient for the study of bilinguals/multilinguals in today's linguistically complex globalized world where bilingual/multilinguals outnumber monolinguals. More importantly for SLA is the fact that most multilingual speakers fall somewhere between minimal and maximal definitions (Cook, 1992).

Through the 1960's bilingualism was perceived as an educational and social disadvantage for children over their monolingual classmates, especially with respect to language cognition. Since the 1970s such a view has been completely overturned following studies of brain functioning by psychologist Bialystok (1985, 1987, 1997, 2001, 2005), which have revealed differences in the *metalinguistic skills* of monolinguals and bilinguals, especially with respect to advantages in the control of linguistic processes as a result of having to manage, simultaneously, two competing language systems. Studies have revealed advantages in the written language function of bilingual children (Bialystok, 1997). More recently, brain imaging studies have revealed that some of these executive control functioning advantages of bilinguals appear to persist into adulthood and might even be responsible for diminishing the effects of old age (Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I. M., Klein, R., & Viswanathan, M., 2004).

With respect to bilinguals/multilingual users and their competencies, in particular, in the way these differ from those of monolinguals, whether it is linguistic competence, metalinguistic competence, cognitive competence, communicative competence, intercultural communicative competence, symbolic competence, or simply multi-competence, there exists

no consensus in the field of SLA, at present, as to which of these are part and parcel of competency of the multilingual.

2.3 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

2.3.1 Cultural relativity

By studying the indigenous languages of native peoples of North America anthropologist Franz Boas showed us how intricately language and culture are linked. He was the first to articulate the principle of ‘Cultural Relativity’, widely held today, namely, that all human cultural concepts are of relative, not absolute, value and are applicable only to one specific group of people (Boas, 1962). As the previously referenced EIU surveys indicate (EIU, 2010, EIU 2012), this concept alone is, perhaps, the most important key realization international business professionals have, when they encounter cultural differences in communicating across cultures when involved in cross border transactions.

2.3.2 Linguistic relativity

Today the majority of applied linguists, especially Kramsch, acknowledge the existence of a connection between the language of a group and human cognition and behavior. Linguistic relativism, commonly known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis although first conceptualized by anthropologist Franz Boas, posits that the former impacts the latter and therefore, linguistic differences across languages alone may very often explain differences in the worldview and thus behavior of its speakers.

Understanding relativism as innate to the quality of human language also assists us in comprehending the nature of the subjectivity of the multilingual speaker and his unique *symbolic competence*. Thus, each utterance in each language, be it the L1, L2 and so on, carries its own unique meaning, which in turn, is experienced and processed through the

subjectivity of the multilingual user. For example, uttering the words ‘revolution’ or ‘culture’ in English might evoke quite different meanings in a multilingual speaker than saying ‘*révolution*’ or ‘*culture*’ in the French language. Therefore, ‘form’ of the language itself, may very well impact cognition itself, or the way the users of a certain language view the world.

2.3.3 Context and Proxemics

Anthropologist E. T. Hall was the originator of the ‘Cultural Context’ typology referred to as ‘High vs. Low’ (Hall, 1981). The construct explains why certain cultures are more explicit and literal, or low context, in their communications, i.e. the USA, while others leave most things unsaid and require few but carefully chosen words, i.e. Asian countries, because there is High contextual context in the verbal communication.

Proxemics (Hall, 1966), is a field of study that analyzes the conventions of a particular culture with respect to personal space and posture, including acceptable markers on body distance, touch, eye contact, voice loudness, etc. Another key concept in cross-cultural communication introduced by Hall is the concept of Monochromic vs. Polychromic time orientation (Hall, 1973) to refer to differences in cultural conceptions of time. A culture where polychromic time predominates is one where individuals are comfortable with attending to multiple events at the same time, i.e. Latin America. A culture with a Monochronic time orientation, traditionally feels more comfortable taking care of events one at a time, i.e. Germany. This concept is analogous in Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars Model of “Sequential vs. Synchronous” typology.

2.4 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS (IBC)

Most business schools in the U.S., as well as around the world, have course requirements in IBC, which studies cross-cultural communication, cultural awareness or

cultural sensitivity, also known as Intercultural Communication or Intercultural Competence. The latter terms are used interchangeably by many in much of the business literature, as well as in the professional working world, although there are important differences in meaning, as well as in the competency abilities the different terms encompass. For purposes of consistency this study has chosen to use the term Cultural Sensitivity, especially in the research instrument, given that it is the term used in the report by the EIU, which motivated this study. (A list of definitions is found in the Appendix.)

2.4.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions model

Geert Hofstede defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 2010). While working at IBM in the 1960s, he conducted one of the largest private surveys, consisting of 117,000 employees in over 70 countries, and designed a cultural dimensions model based on differences in cultural values across countries (Hofstede, 2001). Although the data is now considered dated, the model remains the most widely referenced culture theory applied to the world of business today. Hofstede looks, exclusively, at five cultural dimensions in the culture of every individual country, namely: 1) Power Distance Index (extent to which power is distributed unequally across members of social organizations); 2) Individualism vs. Collectivism Index (extent to which “individuals are integrated into groups”); 3) Uncertainty Avoidance Index (extent to which “society has a tolerance for uncertainty or ambiguity”); 4) Masculinity vs. Femininity Index (extent to which the “society values the traditional emotional male roles, such as materialism, competitiveness and assertiveness, rather than the more feminine roles of quality of life and relationships”); 5) Long Term vs. Short Term Time Orientation (extent to which “importance is attached to rewards into the future, as opposed to the past or present”).

2.4.2 Hampden Turner & Trompenaars' Cultural Dilemmas model

Although less widely referenced than Hofstede's model, this model by Charles Hampden-Turner and Fons Trompenaars (Hampden-Turner, 2000) considers six cultural variables in every culture, not necessarily one individual country: 1) Universalism-Particularism (whether correct behavior always applies and can be clearly defined and vs. personal relationships being most important); 2) Individualism-Communitarianism (whether people function as a group or as individuals); 3) Specificity-Diffuseness (whether the culture expects the roles/duties of the personal/private life of individuals be kept separate and apart from those of their clearly defined public/working lives); 4) Achieved-Ascribed (whether status is earned on the basis of personal merit or is automatically assigned/inherited by membership in a particular social group or organization); 5) Inner Direction vs. Outer Direction (whether we conceive of organizations as obeying the will of its operators or as one that more organically responds to its environment); 6) Sequential vs. Synchronous (conception in which time events – future, past and present – are viewed as being either separate or interrelated).

2.4.3 David Victor's LESCANT acronym

David Victor (Victor, 1992) devised a comprehensive and practical way to catalogue and analyze differences across cultures, or countries into account with an acronym which includes the seven key factors that impact international business communications (LESCANT), namely: 1) Language, 2) Environment (all its physical characteristics), 3) Social Organization, 4) Context (whether ideas are communicated directly or indirectly), 5) Authority 6) Non-verbal communication (cultural symbols, proxemics and paralinguistic communication such as gestures), 7) Time orientation. The acronym Victor created was

LESCANT, referring to each of the seven factors he considers important. By covering all of these aspects that impact communication we are able to pinpoint differences across cultures and assist the business professional in understanding and communicating effectively in a foreign environment.

2.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the vital role that effective business communication plays in today's highly competitive and global economic business world, it is crucial, especially for US companies, that we understand better the specific uses of foreign language and cultural abilities in cross border communications. There are no studies, especially not recent ones, which provide examples of the full range of concrete business applications of linguistic proficiency in foreign languages. Although there are studies and surveys that have looked at the usefulness of foreign languages, only one US study addresses, partially, certain concrete uses in business activities. We know that many professionals, students of business and corporate human resource managers appear to have a tacit acceptance, mostly not data-driven, of the importance of foreign languages in beefing-up a professional résumé. Nevertheless, they have no idea of the specific ways, instances, tasks or operations in which such abilities are used. More importantly, it is for this reason that they have no idea of the level of L2 proficiency required to accomplish such tasks effectively in a second language, and therefore, they do not have a practical understanding of the implication that having different levels of linguistic proficiency or cultural competence has on the work effectiveness of an international managers, on his/her ability to accomplish daily tasks in a foreign environment, when necessary.

The first issue addressed in this research is L2 abilities, used currently by international professionals. The issue is approached through the following five research questions.

- (1) How are foreign language abilities applied at work by this group of global professionals?
- (2) What common factors exist among advanced proficient L2 users? Do they differ from common factors among less proficient users?
- (3) How important are linguistic abilities to job effectiveness and are they considered a professional competitive advantage?
- (4) What strategies (language learning or communication) are implemented to compensate for a lack of foreign language or intercultural abilities?
- (5) What common beliefs exist regarding foreign language use in business?

The second main issue being addressed by the research involves views on cultural awareness in professional communications. Research is also needed in understanding the experiences of international professionals with advanced linguistic proficiency in the local languages so that we are better able to gauge the impact that L2 proficiency has on the cultural effectiveness of business communication. The research questions driving the study of cultural awareness are the following:

- (1) What common beliefs and opinions exist regarding the importance and role of cultural awareness abilities in business?
- (2) What communication strategies are implemented to compensate for a lack in intercultural abilities?
- (3) How do International Business Communication models assist us in explaining and describing the categories of culture learning reported by this group of professionals?

2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the background literature on the theories and conceptual constructs in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) that best assist in the understanding of the development of second language proficiency in the four language abilities: reading, listening, speaking and writing. It also outlined certain theoretical concepts from anthropology and a few models from International Business Communication (IBC) currently used to understand the cultural differences encountered in international business communications. The more recent concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) from sociolinguistics is presented which encompasses both linguistic and cultural awareness competencies. This chapter also outlined the research questions that are addressed in this study. The following chapter discusses the methodology applied in data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this research is to describe the specific way in which individual abilities in foreign language and culture awareness are applied and understood by proficient advanced users in the course of professional cross border communication. The research instrument chosen was the individual interview and questionnaire because it is the most effective means of gathering personal data on individual personal experiences, beliefs and opinions. Introspection is a powerful research tool “to explore reasoning, thought and truth” (Brown & Rodgers, 2008, p74). Applying the methods from Anthropology, in particular ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 2000), this study collects from participants a description that explains a human behavior and its context so that the behavior becomes meaningful to the outsider. The description of personal meanings attached to various cultural behaviors, are the means to improving our understanding of observed behaviors on the part of practicing global professionals. This chapter details the research, the participants, the data collection, and the data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Given that this study is exploratory in nature, the research instrument chosen as the ideal design for this study was a qualitative research design, with a questionnaire (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In-depth one-on-one interviews are an ideal instrument for going deeper into issues and nuances, individual perceptions and opinions surrounding this dual skill set and its importance and impact on the career of a global professional. In order to ascertain the practical use, in a current international setting, of abilities in foreign languages and culture, the data for this study were collected via in-depth interview (Faerch and Kasper, 1987). In cultural anthropology, an *emic* approach seeks to interpret phenomena based on the

meanings an individual, or his community, assigns to an action or event (Kottak, 2006, Mackey & Gass, 2005).). Through the collection of anecdotal evidence from experienced professionals, currently practicing in an international setting, we may improve our understanding of the range of experiences and beliefs surrounding foreign language and culture knowledge abilities. The objective of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of different life experiences and perspectives in order to uncover the underlying motivations that might influence decision-making and opinions. Individual interviews, therefore, may assist us in unearthing relevant factors and contribute to existing research on the practical applications of foreign language and cultural abilities in the ‘real world’ of business today, without the need for manipulating the environment.

3.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire is among the most commonly used research methods for gathering data on attitudes, opinions and experiences in the SLA field (Mackey, 2005). This study used the written questionnaire, in conjunction with the personal interview, given that not all 71 participants were interviewed face-to face, or via Skype audio, and 9 of them completed the questionnaire in writing individually and submitted it by email. The questionnaire (Appendix 1A) consisted of 33 items, including 22 closed-response and 11 open-response items, divided into three sections: a) Biographical-Demographic Data, b) L2 use, proficiency self-assessment and L2 learning experience and C) language and culture beliefs. This main goal of this study is to gain insight through participant introspection, with regard to their L2 experience, both their L2 learning and applying it in their professional lives.

3.2.1 Pilot study

The pilot study, which consisted of five audio, or face-to-face interviews with the completion of the first draft of the questionnaire (Appendix 1B) revealed the need to further refine and add three additional items to the biographical data section (Section A2), namely: a) country of birth, b) nationality and c) job title/rank. Based on the results of the pilot study, it seemed relevant to the study to collect this additional information. The collection of information on participants' country of birth would distinguish this from their nationality since many US business professionals, in particular the participants in this study, though US citizens, are nonetheless, foreign-born and therefore native speakers of languages other than English. The information about employment rank provides us with an indication of the potential level of organizational impact the knowledge of foreign languages may have through the increased individual decision-making power and effectiveness of a manager, who could have been placed at a higher level within an organization. The pilot study revealed that the open-ended questions (Section C, Beliefs on language and culture) were effective in encouraging participants to uncover, explore and express in greater depth issues and ideas surrounding their understanding, perceptions and personal opinions on the effect and importance of culture in general, and cultural abilities in particular, including their own professional competence in this area of expertise.

3.3 SAMPLE SELECTION METHODS

This is not a randomized study in that the participants were not selected randomly, but rather, based on their availability and their willingness to participate in the study. Although this method is less than optimal, it solved the challenge of finding 71 busy and time-pressed professionals who were willing to volunteer up to 45 minutes of their time to assist a stranger for purposes of academic research. The principal researcher, therefore,

made use of her own contacts, personal, professional, academic and familial, as well as friends-of-friends, friends-of-colleagues and colleagues-of-relatives to arrive at a usable study sample of 71 participants. The majority of the participants in the final sample are, consequently, personal friends, relatives, colleagues, or acquaintances of the primary researcher, thus making the sample accidental, or one of convenience. Nevertheless, the proximity and familiarity of the researcher with most of the subjects of the study generated willingness on the part of the participants to open up and express their personal views and opinions, in a safe environment, in order to assist in the research. This climate facilitated the sharing of personal, and sometime sensitive information, much of which arises from personal experiences, opinions and emotions surrounding exchanges with people from a different country, who speak a different language, and very often, have a different value system and world view from their own.

Although data was collected from 74 participants, data from three (3) participants were excluded from the data analysis and results due to a lack of fit with study's criteria for 'cross-border' transactions. This left a total usable data sample of 71 participants. The three participants excluded from the data were an English-speaking, and Australian-born nurse working in a hospital in Saudi Arabia, an English-Spanish bilingual speaker, and US born immigrant labor union organizer working in the US, and a native speaker of Quechua, an agricultural worker and citizen of Ecuador. Their work did not involve dealing with cross-border transaction of any good or service.

3.3.1 Cross-border trade

The sample population includes, exclusively, active international professional managers, male or female, engaged in *cross-border trade or cross-border transactions* between any two countries, not necessarily between the US and another country. These transactions were

defined to include any kind of exchange of goods or services, of any type or size, involving organizations of any type or size, private or public, for profit or non-profit, business or government, national, international or multilateral.

3.4 VALIDITY OF SAMPLE

Despite the limitations of the convenience sampling technique chosen for this study, the results are not lacking in external validity (Brown & Rodgers, 2009, p. 44). Although conclusions may apply mostly to the characteristics found in the current study's sample, conclusions may also apply to the majority of global business professionals.

With respect to internal validity, the researcher analyzed and reported all the data collected from participants, including data that were found to be puzzling or disconcerting (Mackey, 2005, p109). No effort was made on the part of the researcher to cover or ignore data that did not fit any pre-conceived notion around the skill set being studied.

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENT

The instrument was proven both reliable and valid, producing results that were relevant, sensitive, although not necessarily efficient due to the large number of open-response items that prompted long complex responses that were challenging to code.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The procedures for data collection were as follows: participants were contacted by email to request their participation (see Appendix B1: Study Participation Request Email/English Version and Appendix B2: Study Participation Request Email/English Version), which included an attached copy of the research instrument. In this way,

participants knew ahead of time exactly what questions would be asked during the interview so that there were no surprise questions. Once participants responded affirmatively about their willingness to participate, a commonly agreed on date and time was scheduled for the interview, either over Skype, or in person. Skype interviews occurred at different times of the day, depending on the world time zones of participants.

Individual interviews with each of 74 participants were completed between October 2012 and January 2013. Of these, there were six (6) face-to-face interviews, fifty-five (55) interviews via Skype Audio. The other ten (10) participants completed the questionnaire on their own, in writing, and submitted their responses to the principal researcher by email. During the Skype interviews the principal researcher completed a paper copy of the questionnaire in writing while the entire interview was being recorded using the Garage Band sound-recording application. The length of time of each interview ranged between 30-45 minutes, depending on the length and depth of individual responses, especially to the questionnaire's open-ended questions (Appendix A). Audio recordings of interviews were transcribed by the researcher, taking into account the exact wording of only certain key responses to particular open-ended questions.

The researcher conducted the interviews in the privacy of her home, or on campus. Participants were reminded that the conversation would be recorded, with their permission. The audio recording was initiated once verbal authorization from the participant was received. No participant objected to being recorded. During all interviews, including face-to-face interviews, a paper copy of the interview was hand-written by the researcher. Ten (10) participants were interviewed in person, another ten (10) elected to complete the questionnaire individually in writing and return it by email to the researcher (mostly due to world time zone and scheduling constraints). The majority of participants, fifty-one (51), were interviewed via Skype (audio only), and recorded.

All participants were contacted and interviewed personally by the primary researcher, who also took notes during oral interviews, recorded the interview, transcribed all the audio recordings, collected and analyzed all responses, including those in questionnaires completed in writing by participants. All hand written questionnaire responses were later reviewed and compared against the audio recording to check for accuracy. Key relevant sections of the audio recording that included responses to open-ended questions were transcribed word-for-word by the primary researcher (Appendix E).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

A table containing all raw data collected for all sections of the questionnaire was prepared and presented in Appendix B. There were a total of 33 questions asked, 15 in Section A (Biographical/Demographic Data), 9 in Section B (Language use, self-assessment, perceptions and beliefs), and 9 in Section C (Language and culture applications, beliefs and experiences). All responses to open-ended questions regarding the importance of foreign language and culture were transcribed and are included in Appendix DE. Using the free-coding method, all comments from participants were grouped for the purpose of identifying categories and major themes in order to create the various tables on opinions on language and culture learning. Tables were created from the raw data in Appendices C and D, namely Tables 4.1-Table 4.17. Participants' comments expressing similar opinions on the professional use of language and culture abilities were tallied to arrive at the total number of participants (and percentages) to create Table 5.1. Other subject areas were coded and analyzed in a similar fashion to create Table 4.18 Language learner Strategies and Table 5.2 Communication Strategies.

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the methods used to conduct this study, including the design, criteria applied for the selection of participants, research instruments, type of data collected and methods of analysis employed. The next two chapters will provide a detailed analysis of the data collected from participants, namely the professional use, personal experiences and beliefs with respect to the importance of foreign language and culture awareness abilities in cross border business communications.

Chapter 4: Analysis of self-reported demographic and biographic data

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the demographic and biographic data collected from the participants with respect to their second language (L2) use, proficiency level, mother tongue (L1), nationality, demographic factors such as L1 of the spouse, formal language education, years of living abroad and international work experience, as well as experiences and beliefs surrounding professional use of L2. Subsections of this chapter cover the following main topics: (1) Demographic data of participants, (2) How L2 abilities are being applied in their work, (3) Learner profiles of advanced proficiency users, (4) Learner profiles of less proficient users (5) professional competitive advantage of foreign language abilities (6) strategies employed by learners (7) beliefs on the use of L2 skill in business.

SLA scholars might disagree with the author's decision to consider demographic data, self-reported proficiency and language input as the 'unit of analysis' for data collection and analysis in the current study. Nonetheless, as mentioned before, the author defends her position to apply to such demographic data the established SLA theories to better understand the participants' self-reported L2 use and experiences. Furthermore, it is SLA theory itself that informs the research questions as well as the study's understanding of the analysis of data results. Moreover, it puts into context the current research's findings by connecting SLA theory with second language practice in the business professional community, namely, by taking into account what SLA theories tell us about the acquisition and development of each of the four language skills we are better able to make sense of the data stemming from self-reported language demographics, beliefs and L2 use on the part of practicing global business professionals. After all, they represent the target audience of language learners in the current study.

4.1 PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC AND BIOGRAPHIC DATA

In order to answer the research questions we need to look at the demographic and biographical data collected from participants. Research question No. 1 asks: Who are these global professionals that apply their L2 abilities in their work? The instrument collected information on gender, age, international work experience, L1, L2, country of birth, job location, nationality, job rank, education level, professional field and type of organization.

4.1.1 Gender

The data collected from the final sample of 71 participants in this study included 47 males (66% of sample) and 24 females (34% of sample), all practicing international business professionals. Because of the gender ratio the sample is heavily weighted towards the opinions of males. Nevertheless, it may be viewed as representative of today's international business world, where there are generally more men than women professionally represented, although with significant variations across countries and industries, especially for professional careers spanning longer consecutive periods of time. Had the sample been more equally balanced between males and females, it is conceivable that the results and conclusions of this study might be different, perhaps providing stronger evidence of the role and impact of language and cultural abilities in business. Meta analysis studies from as far back as 1988 (Hyde & Linn, 1988) have shown, however, that gender differences in verbal ability are so statistically insignificant that we can safely state, contrary to established wisdom, that women, by nature, are no better at language than men, all other factors aside. Gender differences have been explained in connection with other factors that are dependent on cultural and social gender roles of women in society (Oxford et al, 1988), but the latter debate will not be addressed in the current study. In the field of SLA, gender difference is no longer studied as an independent individual difference (Dörnyei, 2005, p172). As can be

seen, a 50/50 male-to-female sample ratio would not have been more representative of the L2 users in today's international working world where males are, generally, represented in higher numbers. The lack of gender parity in the sample, therefore, does not constitute a threat to the external validity of this study. Many previous SLA studies have produced mixed results for the influence of gender on L2 acquisition.

Table 4.1 Gender of participants

Gender	Total	Sample %
Male	47	66
Female	24	34
Total	71	100

4.1.2 Age

The ages of the participants ranged between 20 and 80 years, with the average age at 48.5 years, the median age at 49 years and the mode at 56 years. Both age and gender have traditionally been considered to play a significant role in language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2005, p8), and both variables are among the most studied individual differences influencing Second Language Acquisition. For this reason, data for both variables was collected.

According to Dörnyei, the problem with looking at the demographic variables of age and gender is that “they affect every aspect of the SLA process, including virtually all the other ID variable” (Dörnyei, 2005, p8). For this reason, the current view in the field of SLA is to ignore them since research data is inconclusive, and these two factors are impossible to separate from other individual variables. In this study, nonetheless, data were collected on these two factors so as to shed light on other demographic data, as well as to put into context beliefs on language use and intercultural competence in the professional world.

Table 4.2 Age and international work experience

	Average (mean)	SD
Age	47.5	13.3
International work experience (yrs)	15.9	10.7

Current Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory informs us that gender and age, viewed in isolation, are no longer studied as factors influencing SLA, not because they are no longer considered important, but rather, because they impact every other individual language learning variable (Dörnyei, Z. (2005).

4.1.3 International work experience

Participants' years of international work experience in their own fields ranged between 2 and 42 years. The average number of years of experience in the international arena for the 71 participants was 16 years. Item 4 of the questionnaire asked participants to provide "the number of years you have worked in an international business setting". The criteria for participation in the study was set, arbitrarily, at 2 years minimum, under the assumption that for the majority of individuals, this time period may represent sufficient time to provide a business person with sufficient experience to begin to ascertain the relevance and impact of possessing foreign language and cultural abilities as they relate to increased effectiveness in an international professional setting. Nevertheless, many participants had more years of work experience in general, but fewer in an international setting, as requested in the questionnaire. Therefore, there are several older and more

experienced professionals than the number of international years of work experience implies (see complete raw data in Appendix B). The average age of participants in the current study was 47yrs, with a standard deviation of 10 yrs. The average number years of international work experience was 16, with a standard deviation of 10.7 yrs. The typical informant in the current study is a 47 yr old male with 16 yrs of international work experience.

4.1.4 First language (L1)

Participants were asked to identify their mother tongue (L1), as well as their second language (L2). Many could not easily separate their L1 from L2, either because they considered themselves bilingual, or in some instances multilingual with fluency in more than two languages. For the purposes of this study, the data collected did separate these individuals from those who clearly knew which was their L1 and L2. Unfortunately, given current SLA theory, we do not currently have the necessary theoretical agreement in the field to set clear parameters of acquisition (LA) in terms of its both the *timing* (sequential/successive) and the *number of languages* (Ortega, 2013, p8).

The participants in the current study reported speaking 20 of the most widely spoken languages in the world today. Table 4.3 outlines the L1 of participants in this study, beginning with the languages with the greatest representation.

Table 4.3 Participants' L1

L1	Number of participants	Sample %
Spanish	28	39
English	22	31
German	2	3
Dutch	2	3
Greek	2	3
Arabic	2	3
Mandarin Chinese	2	3
French	2	3
Russian	1	1.4
Portuguese	1	1.4
Danish	1	1.4
Afrikaans	1	1.4
Korean	1	1.4
Japanese	1	1.4
Thai	1	1.4
Tagalog	1	1.4
Marathi	1	1.4
Total	71	100%

4.1.5 Foreign/second language (L2)

English was the most commonly spoken L2 among the current study's participants with 48 participants (68%), which is not surprising given that English is considered the *lingua franca* of business. Table 4.4 below lists the L2 with the largest number of representatives in

the sample, namely, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese and Italian. There are other second languages represented in this sample but in much smaller percentages than the six listed here.

Table 4.4 Participants' foreign languages

Language	English	French	Spanish	German	Portuguese	Italian	Other
Participants	48	35	18	14	5	7	26
Sample %	68 %	49%	25%	20%	13%	10%	37%

4.1.6 Country of birth

All regions of the world, and at least 27 countries, were represented by informants in the current study. The largest block of participants were born in the Americas (including countries in North, Central and South American but not the US), followed by the US, Europe, Asia, Middle East & Africa.

Table 4.5 Country of birth of participants

Region/Country	Americas	USA	Europe	Asia	Middle East/ Africa	Total
Participants	27	18	13	9	3	71
Sample %	38	25	18	13	4	100

It is important to note that as many as 27 participants (38% of sample) was born and raised in Latin America, a region of the world, *par excellence* according to Burke (2009), with the most cultural hybridity.

4.1.7 Job location

Although the majority of participants reported having traveled extensively around the globe as part of their job responsibilities, the countries where the participants' jobs were based included the United States, the Americas, Europe, Asia, Middle East and Africa. Most participants reported being in continuous communication (by phone or email) with co-workers, customers or clients located in other countries and continents. The current work location of participants represents 26 countries other than the US, namely: Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Spain, UK, Netherlands, Germany, France, Austria, Russia, Ukraine, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, China, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Lao, Indonesia, South Africa and Burkina Faso.

Table 4.6 Job location

Area	USA	Americas	Europe	Asia	Middle East/Africa	Total
Participants	34	14	10	9	4	71
Sample %	48	20	14	13	5	100

4.1.8 Nationality

Participants in the current study have many national origins as well as nationalities, including at least 27 different countries, eight from the Americas (the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Nicaragua), seven from Europe (Germany, France, Spain, Greece, Netherlands, Austria and the Ukraine), eight from Asia Pacific (India, China, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Australia, Thailand and Taiwan), and three countries from the Middle East and Africa (Egypt, Jordan and South Africa).

4.1.9 Job rank

The job rank of participants within their organizations, for the great majority, was middle to upper management. Only two participants out of the 71 informants, the youngest with shortest international work experience, held entry-level positions.

4.1.10 Education and professional field

The study sample includes 69 participants with university degrees (25 in science and engineering), 44 with postgraduate degrees (11 of which were PhDs). Participants came from a wide range of economic sectors such as oil & gas services, manufacturing, import-export, conservation, foreign affairs, law, economic development, e-commerce, technology, insurance, etc., to name a few. There was, however a large cluster of participants in this convenience sample representing one field: the Oil & Gas Exploration Services sector, where 10 participants are employed, 8 of which worked for the same company. This cluster of participants does not constitute a threat to the validity of this sample or the experimental design of this study, rather it adds to the external validity of the results adding a large block from highly trained technical executives with wide global experience working for a Texas-based multinational corporation.

A wide variety of economic sectors were represented by the organizations where the participants worked (see Appendix D), namely, management consulting, environmental consulting, economic development, law, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, oil & gas, etc., which included public, private, government, NGOs, multilateral agencies, and sole proprietorships. However, not surprisingly, the academic fields of study most represented by the study's participants are business, engineering, economics and law.

4.1.11 Organizational type and size

The ownership of the companies or organizations was quite varied, including small consulting companies with 1-2 staff members, large US multinationals in the oil and gas-services field with 58,000 employees world-wide, expat professionals working around the world with small private legal and environmental consulting firms, US government agencies such as The American Red Cross and The Department of State, as well as multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations.

The rationale for collecting data from private, public, national, multinational and multilateral companies and organizations, not simply from individuals working with for-profit businesses, was as follows: today's business school graduates (undergraduate and graduate) are recruited for their management abilities by all sectors of the economy, including law, foreign service, environmental consulting, etc. There no longer exists a clear-cut separation between the private and public sectors, or profit and non-profit businesses, when it comes to the abilities international professionals should possess in order to be successful in the globalized world economy of today. It is for this reason that graduates of business schools are sought after, in both private and public sectors, for-profit and non-profit organizations, and in many fields such as engineering, law and development, among others. One assumption made in this study is that in today's professional globalized work

environment the relevance and applicability of foreign language and cultural abilities are of equal interest, relevance and impact to all sectors of the economy, as well as to organizations of all types and sizes.

The size of the organizations represented in the current study ranges from 1 to 250,000 employees. Job categories performed by participants includes areas of expertise as varied as sales and marketing, management, human resources, public relations, law, engineering, technical assistance and training, environmental consulting, economic development consulting, to name a few. Appendix D includes a complete list of the type of work, job rank, industry, company size, and field of study for everyone one of the participants.

4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE OF THE PLACE OF WORK AND REPORTED L2 FLUENCY

The following table (Table 4.7) separates the 71 participants on the basis of the local language of the country where they perform their professional work, in order to see the relationship between reported fluency, linguistic location of life and work, as well as the language of university education. The demographic data tells us that 48% of participants reported fluency in L2, were educated at universities in the L2 and are currently living and working in a country where the local language is the same as their L2. (Complete raw data is found in Appendices C and D)

Table 4.7 Foreign born, foreign educated, or living and working in L1 vs. L2

Fluency	Fluent	Fluent	Fluent	Fluent	Not_fluent
Foreign-born	Foreign_born	Foreign_born	Foreign_born	Foreign_born	Foreign_born
Language of Univ.education	Univ_educat. L2	Univ_educat. L1	Univ_educat. L1	Univ_educat. L2	Univ_educat. L1
Living & working in country of L1 vs. L2	Living & working in country L2	Living & working in country L2	Living & working in country L1	Living & working in country L1	Living & working in country L1
Participants	34	7	11	10	12
% of sample	48	10	16	7	7

The data results indicate that the largest share of participants reporting advanced linguistic proficiency are foreign born, received their university education in an L2 and are currently living in a country where the local language is their L2.

4.3 HOW L2 ABILITIES ARE APPLIED BY GLOBAL PROFESSIONALS

Research Question No. 1 asked: **How do global professionals apply foreign language abilities in their work?**

To answer this question Item 3 of the research instrument (Appendix 1A) asked: “Regarding your work, please elaborate on the specific context, situations and tasks in which you currently rely on the use of foreign language abilities”. SLA theory informs us that receptive language abilities (listening and reading) are easier to acquire than productive language abilities (speaking and writing). The following table (Table 4.7) outlines how the

participants reported using the four language abilities in tasks related to their professional work. The information to create these tables was compiled from participants' responses to Items 3 and 4 in section B of the questionnaire, in particular. However, the complete picture of the full range of L2 abilities applied at work, and elsewhere, was both collected and extrapolated from the details provided by participants on all questionnaire items, especially open-response items, during the full 30-45 min. interview.

The professional-related tasks in Table 4.8 were categorized by the difficulty of the task, level 1 being the easiest and level 8 being the most complicated. The lower level tasks require receptive language abilities like listening and reading and upper level tasks require productive language abilities like speaking and writing.

Table 4.8 Professional application of receptive and productive language abilities by level of difficulty as % of participants

Difficulty Scale of skill		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Receptive	Listening Tasks	Short phone communications	Audio/video teleconferences	Radio/TV	Video/Film	Face-to-face meetings in-house (purpose admin., mgmt., training)	Face-to-face meetings customers/suppliers/partners (purpose negotiation, follow-up)	Tradeshows, conventions, conferences	Overseas Travel (local info., instructions, directions)
	%	87%	82%	79%	79%	52%	55%	54%	93%
Receptive	Reading Tasks	Short text communications (emails, texts, letters)	Reports, contracts, invoices	Marketing brochures, business proposals, professional presentations	Internet search	Newspapers magazines	Professional/academic texts	Technical Manuals	Overseas Travel (local info., instructions)
	%	93%	76%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	94%
Productive	Speaking Tasks	Short phone communications Audio/video teleconferences	Face-to-face in-house meetings (admin., mgmt, training purpose)	Face-to-face meetings (negotiation, follow-up purpose) with customers, partners	Trade shows, conventions, professional conferences	Profess. networking	Overseas Travel (local information, instructions, directions)		
	%	86%	76%	78%	78%	76%	85%		
Productive	Writing Tasks	Short text communications (emails, texts, letters)	In-house docs, reports, customer contracts, invoices	Public docs (marketing brochures, business proposals, profes. presentations, technical manuals)					
	%	85	78	62					

4.3.1 Receptive language listening abilities

As the previous table indicates, receptive language listening tasks include the following 8 levels of increasing difficulty:

- Listening to short audio phone communications
- Listening to audio and video teleconferences
- Listening to radio/TV
- Listening to video/film
- Listening face-to-face during in-house meetings for administration, managing/training purposes
- Listening to clients, suppliers or partners to sell, negotiate or follow-up
- Listening at professional conferences, conventions or trade shows
- Listening to local information, directions and instructions during overseas travel

Data results on Table 4.8 indicate that 87% of the sample (66 participants) applied the easiest level of listening abilities while only 55% (37 participants) applied the more difficult listening abilities in their work.

4.3.2 Receptive language reading abilities

Data analysis in Table 4.8 revealed that 54 participants (78% of sample) applied the full range of receptive language reading abilities in their professional work, while 61 participants (87% of sample) applied their L2 abilities in only the easier level tasks. Receptive language reading tasks at 8 levels of increasingly difficulty include:

- Reading short text correspondence (emails, texts and letters)

- Reading reports, contracts or invoices
- Reading presentations, marketing brochures, business proposals, etc., for in-house or customer use, or at professional conferences/conventions
- Reading information from the Internet
- Reading newspapers and magazines
- Reading professional/academic texts
- Reading technical manuals
- Reading local information, instructions, directions, road signs, etc. during overseas travel.

With respect to receptive language reading abilities, 78% read technical/professional text. In addition, there is reading for personal purposes, which includes reading for pleasure or self-improvement, among others. It is not surprising to find that in our sample not all 71 participants had acquired sufficient proficiency in L2 reading to be able to apply Productive Language Reading abilities in work-related activities described by levels 1-8.

4.3.3 Productive language speaking abilities

Productive linguistic abilities, speaking and writing, especially when performed at an advanced proficiency level separate the more proficient L2 users in this study from the less proficient. Participation in short, simple conversations (telephone, teleconference) require lower linguistic proficiency in the foreign language than participation in negotiation meetings (in-house or with clients), participation in professional networking, speaking at conferences or negotiating and requesting directions and instructions from locals during foreign travel.

Data analysis in Table 4.8 shows that 51 participants (86%) applied the full range of productive language speaking abilities (defined as levels 1-6) in their professional work, while

76% applied these abilities only partially, not at all six levels of difficulty. Professional activities requiring productive language speaking includes the following tasks of increasing level of difficulty:

- Speaking during short audio/video communications (phone calls and teleconferences)
- Speaking face-to-face during in-house meetings for administration, managing or training purposes
- Speaking with people outside the company (customers, suppliers or partners) for purposes of negotiation or follow-up
- Speaking at professional conferences, conventions or trade shows
- Speaking for professional networking purposes
- Speaking with locals to ask for information, instructions or directions during overseas travel

86% applied the highest most difficult level of productive language speaking abilities (speaking at professional conferences and professional networking), while 76% reported using the lower easiest task level (handling short phone communications).

4.3.4 Productive language writing abilities

Data analysis in Table 4.8 indicates that 44 participants (62% of sample) reported applying at work the full range of writing tasks defined by difficulty levels 1-3. The most difficult level of all abilities (both receptive and productive language) is writing in an L2. Productive language writing tasks at 3 increasing levels of difficulty include:

- Writing short correspondence (emails, texts, letters)
- Writing in-house reports, or brief client invoices or contracts

- Writing for a public audience, i.e. marketing brochures, business proposals, technical manuals, presentations, etc. at professional conferences, conventions or trade shows.

It is not surprising that data analysis of results revealed that level 3 abilities, such as preparing professional or academic documents for presentation to a public audience, is being applied by the smallest share of participants (62%). We know that learning to write competently in one's L1 is indeed a challenging skill to acquire, one that requires significant effort, motivation and practice. Writing competently, especially for professional purposes and for a public audience is so complex a skill to master that for this reason, many individuals never fully master it in the course of their lives. SLA theory informs us that learning to write in an L2 is a greater challenge still. Results of the current study indicate that 85% of participants reported applying abilities in easier/lower level 1 writing tasks, such as writing short email communications. It is therefore not surprising that only 44 informants (62% of sample) reported applying the most difficult writing tasks in an L2. (One can assume that if participants possessed such an advanced skill-set, they would readily apply it in their professional work). The above data exemplifies why writing short emails require a degree of proficiency very different from the one required in order to write, competently, professional presentations or company reports in L2. Even when a lack of basic L2 linguistic proficiency can be bypassed today through the use of Google Translate and other internet-based auto-translate software, there remains an obvious and significant communication risk in relying on such translations that are never error-proof. Several participants reported relying on this quick and easily available translation resource, but did not mention the effectiveness of this method. The writing of business proposals or professional presentations to present at conferences does require the highest degree of proficiency in L2 writing. A

subsequent section will discuss how the application of these more complex productive language abilities are associated with more years of formal L2 language instruction.

The minority of participants in this sample were those who did not apply any L2 abilities, either partially or in the full range of activities (only 2 individuals). As expected, participants who reported having L2 proficiency levels between 0 and less than 3 reported either not using these abilities, or using them in a much more narrow range of business tasks. Given the ample opportunity to use language abilities in a globalized business world, a safe assumption can be made that these individuals did not report applying these L2 abilities professionally because they lacked them. A next section will look into who these less proficient L2 users are, and compare their profiles against those of more advanced proficiency users.

As expected, participants possessing higher self-assessed linguistic proficiency levels, reported using these abilities in tasks requiring both receptive and productive L2 abilities: not only reading emails and texts, but also speaking on the phone or teleconference, and in person, negotiating with clients in the foreign language, speaking at conferences and preparing written presentations, not only short emails, but complex professional reports. Participants reporting lower linguistic proficiency in foreign language revealed using it only for emails or phone calls, not in the negotiation of deals, or the writing of reports or presentations. The higher the self-reported foreign language proficiency, the more areas of professional communication performed using all four language skills. Data results inform us that 44 (62% of sample) have the ability to apply the full range of complex professional tasks requiring listening, reading, speaking and writing abilities.

The above data results are consistent with what SLA tells us about the difference between receptive vs. productive language abilities and their varying levels of difficulty. Practice in this essential receptive language skill, combined with significant amounts of L2

input, of many genres, is required in order to acquire a high level of proficiency in listening abilities.

Additional data analysis includes responses to Item 4 of the instrument: “Regarding your personal activities outside of work, please elaborate on the specific context, situations and tasks in which you currently rely on the use of foreign language abilities”. Additional uses of L2 abilities reported by this sample group of global professionals revealed that 76% of them socialized outside of work for professional purposes; 75% used L2 abilities to socialize with friends and family; and 73% applied any or all four language abilities for personal purposes (leisure, education or personal improvement), depending on the individual’s interests and goals, i.e. school, internet, travel, theatre, books & magazines, TV, cinema, music, radio, etc.

Many participants, all with self-reported advanced proficiency, mentioned listening to radio and TV (podcasts, etc.), reading newspapers and books (in print and online), watching movies and playing games or doing crossword puzzles, regularly, in an L2.

4.4 LEARNER PROFILE OF PROFICIENT USERS

Research question No. 3 asked: **What are the learning profiles of advanced proficiency users?**

In order to answer this question informants were told to self-report their L2 proficiency and provide information about formal language instruction and years of international work experience, as well as additional demographic data on family and community connection to the target language and spouse’s L1.

Participants in the current study were asked to self-rate their L2 proficiency on a 1-5 scale (1= Elementary, 2= Intermediate, 3= Advanced, 4= Near Native, 5= Native). Since

the participants do not have knowledge of the definitions for the L2 levels found in the Proficiency Guidelines developed by American Council on the Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2012), we can only assume a rough estimate of their actual linguistic proficiency. Proficiency levels mentioned in the analysis are not equivalent to ACTFL's proficiency levels.

Data analysis revealed that 59 participants (83%) in this study reported having proficiency level of 3, 4 and 5 (Advanced, Near-Native and Native), in at least one foreign language. The rest (12 participants, or 17%) reported having proficiency below level 3 (1=Elementary and 2=Intermediate).

Of the 59 participants (83%) who reported having a proficiency level 3, or greater, in at least one foreign language (L2) 32 reported having a minimum level 3 proficiency in at least two foreign languages while 11 reported having a minimum level 3 in at least three foreign languages. At higher self-assessed proficiency levels, 28 participants reported having a level 4 in at least one foreign language, while 18 reported having a minimum level 5 in at least one foreign language. Among all the participants, only three reported not having any proficiency in any L2; 15 reported having some proficiency in only one L2; 17 reported having some proficiency in two foreign languages, and 24 reported having some proficiency level in three foreign languages; 13 have some proficiency in a four foreign languages, four in five foreign languages and only one in a sixth foreign language. The breakdown of the highest proficiency in any L2 self-reported by individual informants, as a percentage of the sample is found in the following table.

Table 4.9 Self-reported L2 proficiency level

Self-reported proficiency	1 Elementary	2 Intermediate	3 Advanced	4 Near Native	5 Native
Participants	6	6	18	25	16
(% sample)	9%	9%	25%	34%	23%

A total of 59 global professionals (83% of the sample) reported at least Advanced proficiency (level 3, or above). The remaining 12 participants (17% of sample) reported having only Elementary to Intermediate proficiency.

4.4.1 Formal instruction

Data analysis indicates that, on average, advanced proficiency users received close to ten years of additional formal language instruction, which is 3.5 times the amount received by the less proficient in this sample. Also revealing is the concentration of instruction in the early years of schooling (middle school). We know that the earlier and more intensive the instruction the greater the impact on proficiency. The above data support this.

Table 4.10 Formal L2 instruction (avg. number of yrs.)

Self-reported proficiency	K-5	Middle School	High School	College	Post	Total
Advanced	2.7 yrs	3.8 yrs	3.5 yrs	2.4 yrs	1 yr	13.4 yrs
Non-advanced	.33 yr	1 yr	1.75 yrs	.5 yr	.04 yr	3.7 yrs

Data collected for 4 advanced proficiency participants that are included in the above aggregated numbers could be called “outliers” in this data set. Although these individuals are

not exceptional in their countries of origin, they do come from multilingual countries, where the majority speak more than one language, and the educated, as a result of formal L2 instruction, typically, master the four abilities in two, or three, languages during K-12. Individually, these participants received total combined years of individual L2 instruction ranging between 25-48 years; they received on-going schooling in 2 or 3 languages concurrently throughout their school years, as well as during college. The latter learners with advanced proficiency acquired English as a foreign language, either as children attending school overseas, at home in the L2, in college in the US, working in the US, or in a combination of the above.

On average, less proficient L2 users reported receiving 1/3 of a year of L2 instruction during K-5, 1 year in middle school, almost 2 years in high school, 1/2 in college and none after. By comparison, on average, advanced L2 users received 2.7 years of language instruction during K-5, 3.8 years in middle school, 3.5 years during high school, 2.4 years during college and 1 after that. The total average number of years of L2 instruction for advanced proficiency users was 13.4 years. By comparison, less advanced users reported receiving a total of 3.7 years of instruction; the difference is roughly 10 years.

In fact, as outlined in the following table (Table 4.9), although 100% of less proficient users reported traveling abroad for work purposes, only 42% enrolled in L2 courses during college, 33% attended a language school/institute, 50% received private tutoring in L2 and 25% used commercial L2 learning materials. In addition, the average number of years of international work experience is at least 6 years less for this group. Only 42% resided abroad, even if briefly, for purposes of work, study or volunteering, compared with 78% for the advanced proficiency group.

4.4.2 International work experience, living or working overseas

Summary demographic data of the participants revealed other relevant linguistic factors important to our understanding of their L2 proficiency. The amount of international work experience is almost ten years greater for advanced proficiency learners. Although all participants reported traveling abroad, the 78 with advanced proficiency (46%) have resided overseas, 88 (52%) participated in studied/volunteered abroad during college. All these rates of participation are substantially lower for less proficient users.

Table 4.11 International work experience, living or working abroad

Self-reported proficiency levels (1-5) Non advanced 0-2, Advanced 3-5	Advanced (59 participants)		Non-advanced (12 participants)	
	Total Count	(%)	Total count	(%)
International work experience (Avg. number of yrs.)	16.5 yrs		10.8 yrs	
Participation in study/volunteering abroad during college	88 (52%)		50 (6%)	
Residence abroad	78 (46%)		5 (42%)	
Travel abroad	59 (100%)		12 (100%)	

There is a relationship between this additional exposure to foreign languages in this sample, even if we cannot deduce causation. We know that “pushed output” assists SLA (Swain, 1985). Having to use an L2 and produce language output because of the social or

geographic situation of a speaker produce L2 output, one can argue that living, interacting or working in the target language is reinforcing the proficiency of advanced users.

4.4.3 Family and community connection to the target language

Demographic data collected from the participants explains additional relevant linguistic factors influencing proficiency in an L2. Among the advanced users, 46 participants (78%) reported spending time with L2-speaking friends and family and 38 participants (65%) have and maintain a family or community connection to the target language. There were 27 advanced proficiency participants (46%) who grew up in homes where a different language was spoken. As the following table explains, all three factors had lower percentages among the less advanced users.

Table 4.12 Family and community connections to the target language

Self-reported proficiency	Advanced Participants (%)	Non-advanced Participants (%)
Different language (s) were spoken at home while growing up	27 (65%)	0 (0%)
Have/maintain family/community connection to L2	38 (65%)	2 (17%)
Spend time staying in touch with friends & family using L2	46 (78%)	5 (42%)

It is evident from the above data, as well as from previous information, that exposure to the target language is key. Producing language output by applying L2 abilities at work, socializing in the target language at work and maintaining personal relationships

through family and friends provides additional important language exposure which assists in developing and maintaining L2 fluency. Clearly, those with lower proficiency have not benefitting from this key language input.

SLA theory informs us that in order to build proficiency, there needs to be significant amounts of comprehensible language input (Krashen's Input Hypothesis, 1985), as well as a significant amount of 'pushed output' (Swain, 1980), namely, having to apply productive language abilities in meaningful ways. Analysis of data results tells us that less proficient users are very different from the proficient users in this sample. Of the 12 non-advanced participants in this study, who represent 17% of the total sample, the following can be concluded: only 3 participants (25%) maintained contact with friends & family in an L2; no one attended school in L2; no one attended a language institute; 1 (8%) spent time abroad working or volunteering; 4 (33%) worked with a tutor; 2 (17%) used commercial language materials, such as Rosetta Stone; 4 (33%) uses the Web to learn the target language.

The above results are in sharp contrast with those of advanced proficiency users, representing 83% of this total sample, who continue to not only receive significant L2 input, but also produce L2 output (see Table 4.9), applying the four language abilities at work, and for personal reasons, including socializing in the L2. (Appendix C shows complete raw data on advanced proficiency participants.)

4.4.4 Higher education, field of study and organizational level

When we look at formal education in this sample, 69 participants (97%) have a university degree, 45 (63%) have one graduate degree and 8 (11%) have three degrees. These educational facts might partially explain why this group of global business professional reported holding medium-high to upper management positions in their respective

organizations. Of the two participants without a college degree, one was a personal assistant to the company's managing director, and the other a small private business owner.

Among the degrees earned by the 69 participants with college degrees, there were 35 in the fields encompassing business & management, 29 in engineering, architecture and sciences, 10 in math and computer science, 43 in social sciences and 8 in humanities, which includes foreign languages and the arts. Many of the study's participants came to English-speaking countries, such as the U.S., in order to attend university, either undergraduate or postgraduate, or both. A large single cluster of 10 participants in this study (14%) are foreign nationals who work in the oil and gas exploration and services field, of which 8 (11%) work for the same company. 17 participants (24%) attended college or graduate school in English-speaking countries, not just the US, and stayed on to work in a multinational organization or large global corporations where their professional expertise, and perhaps language abilities, were in demand. (See Appendix D for complete data on participants field of study, undergraduate and postgraduate field of study.)

4.5 LEARNER PROFILES OF LESS PROFICIENT USERS

Research question No. 4 asked: **What are the profiles of participants reporting lower levels of proficiency?**

In order to answer how this group differs from the more advanced proficiency group, the following additional data was collected: participant's L1, spouse's L1 (if applicable), university diploma in an L2, enrolment in foreign language courses during college, language institute attendance, work with a private tutor, use of commercial language materials, or the Web, for foreign language learning.

4.5.1 Spouse's L1

Analysis of demographic data revealed that 30 participants had a spouse who spoke a different L1. This represents 49% of advanced L2 users, and only 1% of the less proficient.

Table 4.13 Spouse's L1

Self-reported proficiency levels (1-5)	Advanced		Non-advanced	
Non advanced 0-2, Advanced 3-5	(59 participants)		(12 participants)	
	Total Count	(%)	Total count	(%)
English L1	10	17%	11	92%
Spouse with different L1	29	49%	1	1%
US born	11	19%	9	75

A relationship appears to exist between having a spouse with a different L1, and having fluency in an L2. Whether the impact of this exposure to a foreign language at home is linguistic, cultural or attitudinal is difficult to ascertain, and is not the subject of this study. However, it could help explain the higher L2 proficiency levels. English as L1 and being born in the US are common factors found in the advanced group. In this sample there are English L1 learners who were also born in the US, and have a spouse with a different L1. Ideally, we would like to be able to separate these confounding factors influencing linguistic proficiency. We know from SLA theory that aside from formal instruction, amount of input and socio-affective factors influence motivation, and therefore language learning. 68% of the advanced proficiency users in this sample earned a university diploma in an L2, compared with 0% among non-advanced users. 49% of advanced speakers had a spouse who spoke a different L1, while only 8% of non-advanced proficiency users did. A similar relationship

exists between proficiency and having English as the L1. Only 17% of the advanced proficiency users spoke English as their L1, while 92% of less proficient users spoke English as L1. US born represented 19% of advanced proficiency learners, but represented 75% of less advanced.

4.5.2 English as L2

English was the most prevalent L2 spoken, studied, and proficiently applied in a professional setting by this sample population of professionals. English is not just a global language, it is the *lingua franca* of business for multinational corporations, science/academic research, international aviation and international diplomacy. It is one of the official languages of the United Nations, the World Bank and IMF, where several of the current study's participants work. According to Merriam Webster's definition: *lingua franca* is "any of various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech".

19 participants (27%) came from English-speaking countries, (17 from the United States, 2 from the United Kingdom), the remaining 52 were born overseas. Of those born in English-speaking countries, only 8 reported having an Advanced level of proficiency (level 3 or higher) in an L2, while none reported having Advanced (level 5= Native) proficiency. However, participants coming from multilingual countries, such as the Netherlands, or countries where English is among the official or national languages (India, South Africa, Philippines, Egypt, Spain), reported having an L2 proficiency at a level 5, and considered themselves bilingual, and in some cases multilingual.

4.5.3 English as *lingua franca* of business

At least 25 participants (35%) in this study stated that “English is the *lingua franca* of international business”, although this was never asked directly.

In a recent interview with CNN, Stephan Chambers, director of the MBA degree at Oxford University's Said Business School commented that

...while speaking English is almost a precondition for success for non-native speakers, a second language was not essential to English speakers. However, if the question is: “Is learning a second language an advantage, and is that advantage going to increase?” The answer's got to be yes ... almost certainly, as the balance of economic power shifts, and as supply chains, sales and deals start happening outside of traditionally the most influential markets.

(“Money talks - in many different languages,” n.d.)

Table 4.14 Participant’s L1, L2 and university diploma in L2

Self-reported proficiency levels	Advanced, Near Native & Native (59 participants)		Beginner & Intermediate (12 participants)	
	Total Count	(%)	Total count	(%)
English L1	13	22%	11	92%
English L2	45	76%	1	1%
University diploma in L2	40	68%	0	0%

In this study, 40 participants (68% of Advanced speakers) earned an undergraduate degree in an L2. However, the most common foreign language spoken with a high level of proficiency was English: 16 participants (23%) reported having a level 5 proficiency (Native) in English. These results are not surprising given that among them are 13 participants with graduate degrees, and 1 with an undergraduate degree, from English-speaking countries. There were an additional 8 participants (11%) that reported having a proficiency level 4 (near

Native) in English, who also had graduate degrees from universities in English-speaking countries. Only one participant reported having a lower current proficiency level in English (less than 3), while having earned a graduate degree in an English-speaking country. Interestingly, this individual was no longer living and working in an English-speaking country. Among participants who earned undergraduate degrees from English-speaking countries, 1 reported having a linguistic proficiency level 5 (Native), 4 participants reported level 4 proficiency (Near-Native), and 4 reported proficiency level 3 proficiency (Advanced). These results are to be expected, given the length of time, intensity and level of language exposure required to function effectively in a professional setting at the medium-high to upper levels of management in any organization, in any language.

From the data collected we cannot deduce causation since we may never know how much L2 proficiency resulted from formal instruction, and how much from ‘pushed output’ as a result of higher education in the target language, and from exposure to the language while living or working in the foreign language and culture. We know that L2 learners, especially students taking traditional foreign language courses at US universities are in need of more intensity, or ‘time at task’ in the target language, if they are to be able to reach higher proficiency levels.

Table 4.15 Learner profile comparison

Self-reported proficiency levels	Advanced, Near native & Native (59 participants)		Beginner & Intermediate (12 participants)	
	Total Count	%	Total count	%
Enrollment in FL college courses	41 (70%)		6 (50%)	
Registration in FL school/institute	33 (56%)		2 (17%)	
Use of private FL tutor	33 (56%)		3 (25%)	
Use of commercial FL learning materials	20 (34%)		3 (25%)	
Use of Web FL learning	17 (29)		5 (42)	

When comparing data of less proficient users with that of advanced proficiency L2 users several positive relationships are found in this sample of global professionals. There is a positive relationship between advanced proficiency and years of formal L2 instruction. Not only do they have more years of international work experience, but they also received 3.5 times more years of instruction, and they have resided abroad and participated in study/volunteering programs abroad during college at higher rates. As Table 4.15 above indicates, advanced learners also enrolled at higher rates in foreign language courses during college (70% vs. 50%) and language schools/institutes (56% v. 17%), worked with private tutors, used commercial language learning materials at higher rates than less proficient users. More importantly, analysis of data averages informs us that advanced proficiency users received three times the amount of formal L2 instruction that the less advanced did (12.2 yrs vs. 4.3 yrs). Also, 68% of the advanced learners in this sample attained a university diploma in an L2 while none of the less advanced in the sample did. Clearly, general formal schooling

and language instruction in an L2 make a significant impact on proficiency, even when it is self-assessed.

In regard to less proficient participants, 10 (14% of sample) reported having proficiency levels below 3 (Advanced) and 2 participants (3%) reported not having any proficiency, at all. Of this non-advanced subgroup, all but 1 are native English speakers, working in an English-speaking country (only one is a native Spanish-speaker working in a Spanish-speaking country); all but one have an English-speaking spouse, and their average years of international work experience is less than 11 years. SLA theories inform us that the amount, intensity and range of L2 input impacts proficiency levels. Clearly, the less proficient group in this sample has received significantly less input than the advanced group. Therefore, the self-reported proficiency levels of both groups do correlate with their self-reported language input profiles.

4.6 PERCEIVED JOB EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Research Question No. 5 asked: **How important are linguistic abilities at work and how much of a professional competitive advantage to global professionals?**

The research instrument asked participants, in Item 2, Part B to “Rank the importance for your job effectiveness of being able to communicate and perform business tasks and activities using the local/foreign language on a scale of 1-5”. (1-Unimportant, 2-Somewhat Important, 3-Medium, 4-Very Important, 5-Essential). Data analysis from a previous study (Grosse, 2004, p357) has shown that the greater a person’s belief that he/she knows a foreign language, the more likely one is to find it useful at work. Results indicate that 47 participants (66%) ranked it 5, or Essential, to their job effectiveness; 12 (17%)

ranked it 4, or Very Important; 5 (7%) ranked it 3, or Medium; 6 (9%) ranked it 2 (Somewhat Important) and 2 participants (6%) ranked it 1 (Unimportant).

Table 4.16 Self-ranking of importance of L2 abilities in job effectiveness (scale 1-5)

Importance Ranking Scale	1 Unimportant	2 Somewhat	3 Medium	4 Very	5 Essential
Number of participants	6	6	5	12	47
%	(9%)	(9%)	(7%)	(17%)	(66%)

The above results compare favorably with those of the EIU’s 2010 survey where 32% of respondents considered foreign language abilities the most important attribute in a successful expatriate (EIU, 2010). The present study confirms those results. According to 46 participants (65% of sample), foreign language abilities are a competitive advantage, a professional asset.

Of relevance in the above table is the fact that the less proficient users tended to cluster at the lower end of the ‘importance to job effectiveness scale’ which tells us that L2, proficiency, once attained, is perceived by learners as an important component of professional competence. We know that motivation is key in SLA (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, Dörnyei, Z. (1994), whether the motivation is External, i.e. in order to earn high grades in school, attend university overseas, emigrate, or find a better job, or the motivation is Integrative, i.e. have an affinity for the speakers of the target language and their culture, the country, or a spouse. We know that even though many of the advanced L2 users in this study might have started out with External motivation and, most likely later on, became ‘integratively’ motivated, the majority currently have both types of motivations, because they

know how important foreign languages are to their job effectiveness (External motivation), and they use their L2 to socialize outside of work and for personal use for education and entertainment (Integrative). We know from the data collected that this is not the case for most of less proficient users who are native-speakers of English, and consequently, because English is the *lingua franca* of business, they lack that External motivational factor to propel their L2 learning.

The comments from advanced proficiency participants in this study indicate a stronger belief in the professional competitive advantage of having foreign language abilities. Participants were asked: “What is the impact of not having foreign language and culture abilities?” one participant responded:

The individual who speaks the local language is viewed differently and thus treated differently. Take for example two people that speak the local language and see how fast a relationship is built ...then take a US national trying to force the local to speak English and see how the interaction dynamics changes. There is a difference. A level of ‘candid conversation’ is never achieved. Business is about relationships and this is where, comparatively, the US is losing out globally.

(No. 74 ‘RCV’)

I know of no instance where using English rather than the local language has been detrimental or can be detrimental to effective business communication.

(No. 66 ‘P’)

There is clearly a difference of opinion between these two participants. The first participant (No. 74 RCV) reported having advanced proficiency in two foreign languages (English level 5, Russian level 3) and an intermediate level in one (Portuguese level 2), while the second participant reported having intermediate level proficiency in one language (German level 2) and novice proficiency level in two languages (Spanish and Thai level 1). One could argue that it is the advanced proficiency level that represents the competitive

advantage, not the fact of having 'some proficiency'. The comments from advanced proficiency participants in this study indicate a stronger belief in the professional competitive advantage of having foreign language abilities. Participants were asked "What is the impact of not having foreign language and culture abilities?" one participant responded:

You need to have the motivation. Most people do not have it. You need the proof that they do make a difference.

(No. 35 'J')

The above participant reported having a proficiency level of 1.5 (between Beginner and Intermediate) in Spanish. Regarding the importance in job effectiveness, this participant who was actively involved in the global operations of his company, whose revenues depend on international operations, nevertheless, reported a level of 1.5 of job importance of foreign languages (between Unimportant and Somewhat Important). Again, one can deduce that the real impact of knowing foreign languages is not really appreciated until the individual learner achieves an advanced level of proficiency.

Take Russian or Japanese, if you do business with these cultures and you speak the language, they will remember you, and are likely to choose you over somebody else who does not have a cultural or linguistic connection to their culture.

(Participant No. 10 'I')

Although all 71 L2 users in this study, which included 59 advanced and 12 less-advanced users, ranked the importance of having L2 abilities for their professional effectiveness quite high (3.9-4.3 out of 5), the difference between the two groups (0.4) on the scale is important to note. Advanced users, disproportionately, have a higher estimation of the importance of L2 abilities to their job effectiveness. In fact, 40 participants (68% of the Advanced L2 users) ranked the skill at 5 (Essential). Whether his increase in the perception of importance is due to the increase in international experience and language proficiency, we are unable to tell from this study.

Item 8 (section C) of the research instrument asked participants about the competitive advantage of foreign language abilities in their work. 63 participants (89%) believe these abilities are a competitive professional advantage. These results are comparable to those of an earlier study (Grosse, 2004) in which 82% of the respondents considered these abilities important. One major difference with the previous study is the population, which was composed exclusively of graduates of one prestigious US business school, whereas the current study includes graduates from a wide range of universities and academic fields.

4.6.1 Language learning anxiety

In order to get a better picture of the learning profiles of the less advanced learners, participants were asked about their level of comfort in doing business in a foreign language on a scale 1-5 (Item 4, Section B of the instrument). Given that comfort is the opposite of anxiety, responses to this question may provide some idea of language anxiety for the present sample of L2 users. We know that personality has a lot to do with language anxiety (Horwitz, 1986), which in turn influences the individual's own self-assessment of proficiency. Self-awareness of language attrition may also be connected to language anxiety, and thus to the language use comfort level. Table 4.16 provides information on self-reported proficiency, comfort level, and ranking of importance of L2 at work. There is also information on the years of formal L2 instruction, whether the participant had a higher degree in the L2, and how many years of international work experience they have.

Item 2 of the instrument asked participants to "Rank the importance for your job effectiveness of being able to communicate and perform business tasks and activities using the local/foreign language" The following table (Table 4.17) provides important insight into

the relationship between proficiency, comfort level, formal instruction, international work experience and perceived importance of professional L2 abilities. The higher the L2 proficiency, the higher the comfort level in using L2 abilities. As is the case with years of formal language instruction and proficiency in this sample group, the more years of formal instruction, the higher the proficiency and comfort level; the more years of international work experience, the higher the proficiency, comfort level and perceived importance. We do not know if higher comfort level (less anxiety), is due to higher proficiency, which might in turn be due to more years of formal L2 instruction, or more years of international work experience. We cannot deduce from the current study.

Table 4.17 Self-assessed L2 proficiency, comfort level, years of formal instruction, international work experience and job importance of skill

L2 users Group Averages	Participant Number	Self-assessed L2 Proficiency Scale 1-5	Comfort Level in using L2	Formal L2 Instruction Years	Int'l Work experience Avg. Years	Job Importance Ranking Scale 1-5
Advanced	59	3-5	4.5	13.4	17.0	4.3
Non Advanced	12	0-2	1.5	3.7	10.8	3.9

4.7 LANGUAGE LEARNER STRATEGIES

Research question No. 6 asked: **What language learner strategies do global professionals apply?** Item 7 of the research instrument, Section B, inquired, “In situations where you lack sufficient language or cultural abilities, what particular strategies do you

currently use to compensate for the deficiency?’’ The research instrument, intentionally, did not define strategies as either language learner or communication strategies. The objective was to have the participants themselves respond with their own understanding of the term ‘strategy’. The most prevalent responses to the question, which most closely fit the definition of *language learner strategies*, are found on the next table (Table 4.18). One important distinction was found between the advanced proficiency users and less advanced. The more advanced users tended to provide more examples of communication strategies than language learner strategies. (For participant responses that most closely fit the definition of *communication strategies* an additional table was created in Chapter 5 where cultural communication is addressed at length.)

Table 4.18 Language learner strategies reported

Strategy	Number of participants	Sample %
Consult native/bilingual speakers or invite to meeting	10	14
Ask lots of questions	6	8
Be patient, slow down and take your time	6	8
Use Google Translate.	4	6
Give added care & clarity to communication	3	4
Use lots of gestures/body language, if necessary	3	4
Use lots of circumlocution/keep plugging away	3	4
Compensate with superior technical abilities in order to gain respect/Learn the basic field terminology/Be competent Technically	3	4
Rely more on written communication	3	4

For a complete list of all language learner strategies reported by individuals in this study, including participant number refer to Appendix F.

4.7.1 Use of translators and interpreters

EIU's 2012 survey found that 23% of respondents considered the poor quality of translators among the two top issues responsible for causing the greatest misunderstanding in cross-border communications and 27% considered the diversity of languages across countries to be the greatest inhibitor. Results from this study found that 19 participants (27%) had good experiences with translators because they helped with communication, saved time, or assisted in interpreting the local culture and in turn, avoided offending people by doing the wrong thing culturally.

For the language part, the thing here is not to speak unless you have a translator. As for the culture, follow the lead of someone who knows the culture or simply ask before making a foolish mistake.

(No. 59 'D')

I could not stay in business if I did not have the knowledge of local language (Bahasa Indonesian). My competitors (larger companies) use translators/interpreters with a very different business model and much higher overhead costs. Because of this, I can compete on cost because I don't need interpreters.

(No. 45 'M')

On the other had, 9 participants (13%) thought it less than ideal and better not to need an interpreter because they cause delays, are less effective than having foreign language abilities and generate distrust from customers.

Problem when you use English rather than local language you are restricted to translators and this dilutes the personal impact of being able to convey your message effectively. This is particularly important when you are negotiating contracts.

(No. 36 'C')

4.8 BELIEFS ABOUT L2 ABILITIES IN BUSINESS

Research question No. 7 asked: **What are the most common beliefs about L2 abilities in business?** The instrument asked the question in various ways and participants gave answers to this question throughout the 45 min interview. A transcript of the most pertinent responses are found in Appendix E, including the following sample responses from participants on the importance of language abilities in business:

29 respondents (41%) remarked that knowing the foreign language creates a relaxed, a positive work atmosphere, or puts people at ease, people open-up, it breaks the ice, it oils the wheels of business.

When you speak the local language you can connect better with people; you feel more connected to the culture; they feel more connected to you and are more willing to cooperate and work with you, which is necessary in order to negotiate and come to an agreement.

(No. 19 'P')

Another 29 national managers (41%) mentioned that knowing the local language is a confidence builder/gives self-assurance/it is better for expressing thoughts.

There has to be a meeting of the minds. If you don't understand the language it is a huge problem.

(No. 27 'T')

28 participants (39%) tell us that having knowledge of the local language shows respect and earns you credibility and legitimacy/you can get 'buy-in'.

The primary value of language learning is that it allows you to connect with a person at a human level. By making an effort to speak someone else's language you make a significant gesture to connect with them by finding the human dimension.

(No. 20 'E')

22 participants (31%) told us that having L2 abilities helps avoid misunderstandings in business.

When you speak a foreign language fluently you also learn the culture, customs and way of thinking which are different from yours. This helps you avoid problems/complexities of doing business.

(No. 67 'L')

There were 20 participants (28%) who believe that speaking or learning the local language shows courtesy and respect through your willingness to understand the local identity and pride of culture.

When you don't speak the local language, but English, it is very detrimental to communication because it isolates you from the local culture and may be perceived as imposing of cultural superiority and lack of respect for the local culture.

(No. 73 'D')

These global professionals sample tell us that foreign language abilities allow you to connect with people. 22 informants (31%) thought that when you speak the local language people listen, people pay more attention, your words immediately carry more weight.

In French Africa you cannot arrive and just speak English and assume everyone will understand. This is culturally insensitive. Must first ask if people would feel comfortable with you using English. Many times they will just not open up, close their doors and refuse to work with you because they are feeling disrespected.

(No. 21 J)

People feel honored that an American has taken the time and made the effort to learn their language. Most Iranians don't come across an American who is fluent in Farsi, and that makes me unique. Americans are not like many Europeans that are fluent in multiple languages.

(No. 37 B)

16 Informants (23%) deemed foreign language knowledge essential in order to avoid insulting or hurting people.

It is important to be careful of the choice of words, be aware of local business protocol and gestures. I have learned I have to be careful not to hurt or insult people and make them feel inferior.

(No. 46 'J')

15 global managers (21%) mentioned that speaking the local language builds trust.

When you have put in the effort to become fluent in someone else's language they automatically grant you a certain amount of respect, especially if their language is not a prolific one or if it is not absolutely mandatory for you to learn it. This shows that you respect and value them and their culture. Speaking their language allows you to build closer relationships with them and this carries over as mutual trust in your business interactions. Making the effort to learn their language allowed me to build stronger personal and professional relationships.

(No. 71 'Y')

13 participants (18%) commented that it is harder to get ideas across successfully without ability to speak the local language.

In negotiations language is the basis of communication. Language is part of the culture and reflects it very closely. The local language opens the channels of communication, especially between two cultures that are very different.

(No. 45 'M')

12 informants (17%) believed that one must build relationships to do business. FL abilities are essential to relate to people and build trust/trust is the foundation of good business relationships.

Using local language can be more important for social than business rapport, especially for building "*confianza*" (this means more than trust in Latin America).

(No. 10 'T')

12 global professionals (17%) remarked that the effort one makes in learning the local/foreign language is much appreciated.

As a diplomat, you are supposed to be building bridges, not taking them down. If you do not understand what cultural sensitivity is all about you will not be very effective and you will be alienating people and exacerbating a conflict with other countries, which as a diplomat you need to minimize. Foreign languages are one fundamental tool of diplomacy: In order to sign an agreement or negotiate a treaty,

you need to make the effort to speak LL. Your counterpart needs to see you are making an effort.

(No. 22 'F')

10 respondents (14%) said that understanding differences in gestures is important, like body language, facial and eye expressions, hand gestures, etc.

The importance of mirroring when you are in a different culture is key. In the Middle East people are very expressive with their gestures and body language while in Latin America and Europe are less over-enthusiastic. In the US personal body space is very different and you would probably appear too loud if from the Middle East. It matters that you send the right cultural message across.

(No. 41 M)

Appendix E contains full transcripts of the participants' comments on the use of L2 abilities, and the professional competitive advantage of having L2 proficiency. Using participant number and first initial, if necessary, these comments may be viewed in light of raw biographical and demographic data found on Appendix C.

4.9 SUMMARY

Analysis of demographic and linguistic data showed, as expected, that age and gender are not defining factors in understanding the learning profiles of advanced L2 proficiency professional users in this sample. However, exposure to foreign languages via years of formal instruction, international work experience, traveling, studying or volunteering in the target language, having a family or community connection to the target culture, or being married to a foreign language speaker did clearly separate advanced users from less-advanced L2 users. Data analysis revealed that advanced proficiency L2 users reported applying the full range of difficulty of receptive and productive abilities (Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing) in their daily professional tasks, as well as for socializing for work and outside of work. In addition, they reported applying the four abilities for personal purposes, such as

education and entertainment as well. Non-proficient users, on the other hand, reported applying the four abilities very differently in the course of their professional work. They applied these in a more limited manner, not having the ability to speak or write professionally at an advanced level. Difference in years and levels of formal L2 instruction, as well as language motivational factors between the two groups, could partially explain differences in L2 proficiency.

Compared with EIU 2010 survey results, the current study found a larger percentage in the sample population of global professionals considered foreign language abilities to be an important professional advantage (65% vs. 32%). Motivational factors, such as the role of English as a *lingua franca* of business could explain, in part, the fact that English was the most widely studied, and proficiently applied L2. Another factor could be that a significant number in this sample had advanced degrees from English-speaking universities, worked for US-based businesses, had immigrated to English-speaking countries, or had an English-speaking spouse. Therefore, the advanced level of proficiency achieved, reinforced via higher education, or professional work, in a L2, may explain, to a significant extent, why this sample of L2 learners both achieved, maintained, and perhaps, improved proficiency over time after receiving formal L2 instruction. We know that the less proficient L2 users did not have these same motivational factors, large amounts of L2 input or opportunities for L2 output, simply because their L1 is English, they live and work in English-speaking countries, or are not married to native speakers of a language other than English. This limited sample does not allow us to extrapolate to all global professional L2 users, or the entire population of native English speakers. However, it does offer insight into certain key factors influencing linguistic proficiency.

As expected, a greater proportion of advanced proficiency considered L2 skill essential to job effectiveness, and a professional competitive advantage. They also felt greater

comfort level in applying these abilities at work. A list of the most prevalent beliefs on the professional use of language abilities was presented, together with a selection of transcribed comments. A table with the top strategies reported by global professionals to compensate for weaknesses in L2 proficiency was presented. The most prevalent strategies reported included consulting with other fluent, bilingual, native local language speakers, or with an acquaintance or colleague. With respect to the use of translators, 27% had a favorable opinion or experience, while 13 % did not. All relevant participant comments have been transcribed and included in Appendix E.

Chapter 5: Analysis of culture-relevant data

Interconnectedness through modern technology has deluded many people... There is the false assumption that just because we can reach anyone in the world so easily through email or Skype, we are, therefore, all the same.

Nancy J. Adler, chair in management, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, (Quote taken from EIU, 2012, p4)

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will summarize the research findings around the applications and beliefs of culture abilities in intercultural business communications. As has explained been explained, the current study has artificially separated language-specific data from culture-specific data in the questionnaire, not because the author believes that language can ever be separated from its cultural meaning. Given that the natural audience for this research is the business community, this particular group does view them as separate and apart. In fact, business schools offer courses in foreign language and courses in cultural awareness. Human resources recruit people with specific language skills, separate from culture sensitivity skills. The EIU study, the impetus for this study, separates in its research the views of participants regarding language and culture. Therefore, this is the rationale applied for such separation in the current study.

In order to answer the four culture research questions related to the professional application of culture abilities, the research instrument (Appendix A, section C) asked the following nine open-response items to gain insight into participants' beliefs, opinions and experiences related to cultural issues in business communications as well as the importance and impact of having such abilities. Part C of the instrument, items 1-9, included requests to:

1. Define 'cultural sensitivity'
2. Outline professional activities impacted by culture

3. Share personal anecdotes on professional application of culture abilities
4. Address the organizational impact of a lack of culture and language abilities
5. Compare their own language learning to culture learning experiences
6. Address the relationship between language and culture and the effect of language proficiency on cultural communication
7. Share culture strategies used
8. Explain the competitive professional advantage of having these abilities
9. Offer advice to future global managers regarding the professional value in the working world of gaining foreign language and culture abilities

This chapter will discuss participants' responses to the above requests. Among the main themes that emerged from the analysis of culture data were major themes traditionally addressed in the field of International Business Communication (IBC) namely, cultural relativity, context, time orientation, negotiation style, individualism vs. collectivism, social status and authority, non-verbal communication. However, additional issues were highlighted in participants' responses as having key relevance to business communications, although these are not traditionally addressed, directly or specifically, in the IBC courses, namely, the issues of trust and respect, and the impact of religion and paralanguage in business communications.

Data analysis was performed following the free-coding procedure which included all of the participants' views on language and culture in business (A complete transcript of the relevant participant comments appears on Appendix E, it includes individual comments, along with the number assigned to the participant for identification purposes and his/her initial, to allow for comparison of demographic and other L2 learner data from data tables).

5.1 ARE CULTURE AWARENESS ABILITIES CONSIDERED A PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?

Cultural research question no.1 was addressed by asking items 1, 4, 8 & 9 from the above list of open-response questions in the research instrument.

5.1.1 Defining culture sensitivity

Open-response item 1 read: “You often hear the term ‘cultural sensitivity’ being used. What does this term mean to you and how does it become part of your professional activities? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience”. The term ‘cultural sensitivity’ was selected for use in the current study, over the various alternative terms (see glossary), not because it is a well-defined concept applied in academia, but rather because it is the one used in the study Economist Intelligence Unit study (EIU, 2010) that was the impetus for this research, as well as one commonly used, and easily understood, by global managers. A comparable term, ‘cultural awareness’, is more often applied in academic research than the business world, even though it is another term colloquially used and understood by business practitioners.

The EIU’s 2010 survey found that 73% of the participants considered cultural sensitivity the most important attribute of a successful international manager, and the same study also found that 50% of participants felt that cultural and national conflicts between staff was the issue posing the greatest difficulties for international expatriate managers, while 47% found it to be the inability of foreign managers to understand the local culture (EIU, 2010). On the other hand, the cited survey found that 51% of international managers felt that differences in cultural traditions between countries were the greatest source of misunderstandings during cross-border communication (EIU 2012). In the current study,

when participants were asked to define cultural sensitivity as a concept, their responses included:

Cultural sensitivity means having an open mind to different premises that guide thinking and behavior and therefore communication when interacting with the local community. Having an attitude towards bringing about change means giving up your established premises and accommodating to a different rhythm and ways of reaching consent and interpreting the local culture.

(No. 73 'D')

Cultural sensitivity means being able to read the message: “what works for you does not work for us”.

(No. 28 'N')

In my industry cultural sensitivity takes the name of “localization”: taking into account/adjusting company policies to the specific needs, elements and practices, which allow for the local processes. i.e. we don't market using first names but rather Mr. & Mr.(Last name). Not to be rude.

(No. 33 'J')

When I worked as a lawyer in Europe, I learned just how differently attorneys in various European countries approach the practice of law. In order to understand the opinions they provide, you really need to understand how they approach and interpret the law in general, based on their local culture.

(No. 66 'P')

Every place has its secret key or code and you must figure it out and learn it.

(No. 61 'L')

5.1.2 Professional competitive advantage of culture abilities

Open response item 8 asked: “In what ways do your foreign language abilities and cultural knowledge/cultural sensitivity give you a competitive advantage in your work? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience”. Results indicate that all participants (100%) consider knowledge of local language and culture a competitive

advantage in cross border communications. “Knowing the foreign language and the culture helps build personal relationships and friendships”, said 12 participants (17%). One participant commented:

The fact that I speak two languages well, plus have many years of experience living in foreign countries, I can say I understand the cultural code and have the credibility to do business locally. I depend on my knowledge of the local language to do business, which definitely affects my company’s bottom line.

(Participant No. 8 ‘J’)

I have a competitive advantage over colleagues, because I know I am treated differently from my colleagues, i.e. I get invited more often to events and activities, I am treated almost like one of them.

(Participant No. 72 ‘O’)

Culture is more important than language. I’ve done business in 13 countries in Asia and I don’t think I needed to learn 13 different Asian languages to succeed in business. Some of these languages take at least four years to learn. English is the language of international business. Cultural knowledge and sensitivity is what really matters in this instance.

(Participant No. 53 ‘S’)

5.1.3 Organizational impact of perceived lack in culture abilities

Open response item 4 asked: “In reference to foreign language and cultural awareness, if a person lacks these abilities, what is the greatest impact on a company's bottom line? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience.” There were 35 participants (49%) who stated that a lack of foreign language and cultural abilities was detrimental to the effectiveness of business professionals.

Lack of culture abilities can be more detrimental to a company than the lack of foreign language abilities. Negotiations can come to an immediate halt, or worse, the work of many years and many individuals can be undone by the lack of culture abilities.

(No. 72 ‘O’)

Language and culture abilities are no longer luxury assets, or even competitive advantages, they are essential tools of business in today's globalized world.
(No. 61 'L')

The remaining participants (51%) said it could be problematic. For some participants 'detrimental' was perceived as too strong a word.

12 participants (17%) stated categorically, that their own culture and linguistic abilities were required qualifications for their current job, which they would not be able to perform without them. 11 participants (15%) remarked that culture knowledge was 'the' advantage, and was of more crucial importance in cross-cultural communications than linguistic abilities. 3 participants (4%) were of the belief that, in business, one can survive without the knowledge of the local language, but not without the knowledge of the local culture. There were, however, a small number of participants who believed that there was no need for knowledge of local culture. Knowledge of local language is sufficient for business, 2 responses (3%).

A previous study (Grosse, 2004) found that 89% of respondents considered cultural knowledge a competitive advantage in their work. This affirms the earlier results. We obtained an affirmation of the earlier results when we asked (Item 8): "In what ways do your foreign language abilities and cultural knowledge/cultural sensitivity give you a competitive advantage in your work? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience".

When you learn how people like to eat their food, how they like to drink their tea, what music they like to listen to, you have an advantage in business. If you know how your customer thinks, you have more access to them. When you study Chinese characters you are learning about the way Chinese culture thinks. Language and culture learning go hand in hand.

(No. 63 'RR')

When you speak the local language you complement the business relationship, which you might have successfully carried out using a foreign language. By speaking the

local language you are opening yourself to the whole environment around you, get more out of the whole local situation, allow people to communicate and share with you in a wider scope in areas which could affect your business. When you speak the local language you can catch what is going on around you, read the local newspaper. You have multiple channels of communication while if you only speak English you are operating on a more limited 'mono channel' of communication.

(No. 26 'E')

I have experienced instances where colleagues were no longer welcomed back to the country because they were perceived as rude: being pedantic, or perceived as talking down to people.

(No. 72 'O')

The answer lies in that US expats are now the minority worldwide. This is because there is a belief that most Americans lack the abilities on a comparative basis. Thus, there has been a realization that they affect negatively the bottom line of the Company.

(No. 74 'RC')

International development and environmental workers often arrive in new countries assuming that what worked in one country will also work in another without understanding that there are subtle yet powerful economic, social and cultural differences which must be taken into consideration and understood.

(No. 21 'M')

In the current study, 63 participants (89%) affirmed the competitive advantage of having both abilities. The work-related examples given by 28 participants (39%) were about the importance of both abilities. 15 participants (21%) stressed the importance of culture abilities over language abilities, even though they had already affirmed the advantage of knowing the language at work, and 27 participants (38%) discussed the importance of foreign language abilities. The researcher believes this distinction in stressing the importance of language vs. culture abilities may carry some important relevance. Like the previously referenced study (Grosse, 2004) the current study found what appear to be a small but important percentage difference between the perceived competitive advantage of culture vs. language abilities, in particular on the part of advanced proficiency users (in Grosse 82% vs.

89 %). In the present study, 21 % of respondents stressed the crucial importance of culture abilities, without denying the need for language abilities. It is important to note, however, that since the research instrument did not separate the question of professional competitive advantage between culture and language abilities, the data results are not comparable to Grosse's study. Therefore, this important distinction can only be implied, and not confirmed from these results.

Although the current study did not ask the same questions posed in the EIU surveys, aggregate response data in this sample indicates that 17 participants (24%) used the word "crucial" when talking about the need for cultural sensitivity or training. When asked to define cultural sensitivity and discuss its impact on the effectiveness of professional communication, a full 100 % of the respondents discussed 'the importance of being aware of differences in values, norms and customs across cultures or countries'.

5.1.4 Recommendations for future global managers

Item 9 in the culture section of the research instrument asked: "With regard to language and culture, what advice would you give someone thinking of going into international business today?" Aside from recommendations on studying foreign languages and becoming fluent in any foreign language, or specific Less Commonly Taught Languages, 17 informants (24%) recommended spending time abroad learning about the culture while experiencing it first hand. In fact, 16 participants (23%) believed foreign language abilities can be learned in a classroom, or through a book, while culture abilities must be lived in the foreign land. 14 (20%) were of the belief that speaking the local language is a tool that allows you to learn the local culture.

Moreover, 13 participants (18%) mentioned how ‘crucially important’ cultural training was. We know that many of these individuals received cultural sensitivity training through their company’s HR departments in order to prepare them for overseas travel or assignments. One participant’s advice:

... “Don’t go with any stereotyped notions about people. Take the person as a person. Apply the cultural aspects about that culture and try and put into perspective the person and the particular context. Appearances can be deceptive, take people for what they are. Above all, don’t be arrogant, be humble, learn from other people and you can succeed. Understand some cultures are individualistic, others communitarian, some make fast decisions, other take a long time to reach a group consensus.”

(No. 53 ‘S’)

Refrain from applying the conclusions from your culture anywhere but in your culture. Question the every beliefs of your own culture. Try to learn as much as possible about the history of the place you are visiting so you find the historical origins of ways of perceiving things. Have a reflexive mind and an attitude of revising your own personal assumptions.

(No. 73 ‘D’)

Whenever I encounter a new and unfamiliar place, I try to follow the United Nation’s Motto: “Arrive, observe, listen”.

(No. 2 ‘C’)

5.2 BUSINESS ACTIVITIES IMPACTED BY CULTURE

In order to answer cultural research question no. 2, open-response item in the instrument 2 asked: What types of professional activities are impacted by culture?

A sub category of cultural ‘norms and values’ are differences in business etiquette, defined as the code of conduct worth knowing and observing in order to maintain good relationships without offending others. Results of the interviews indicate that 30 participants (42%) believed it was important to know what constitutes the local business etiquette, such

as differences in dress code (including colors), table manners, forms of address, giving and receiving of gifts, making appointments, touching, handling of shoes, etc.

Dress code is important to know and follow. In certain cultures white dress signifies the color of death (India). In china you don't give white flowers since they are a symbol of death. In India the keeping of handkerchief in the pocket is very unsanitary while in China spitting in the street is acceptable.

(No. 45 'M')

You must be aware of cultural differences in business etiquette. In Asian countries form is very important (greetings, bowing, accepting and giving a business card, hierarchy).

No. 61 ('L')

Data results indicate that at least 13 participants (18%) stated that it was important to learn about the local culture, practices and rituals in order to avoid offending and insulting people.

5.3 THE LANGUAGE-CULTURE CONNECTION

Cultural research question No. 3 asks: what are participants' views on the language-culture connection? Two open-response items in the instrument (5, 6 & 7) asking informants to address the relationship between language proficiency and cultural communication and to share their experiences and strategies regarding language learning vs. culture learning.

5.3.1 Linguistic relativity

Item 6 of the instrument asked informants to "address the relationship between language learning and culture learning, and the effect advanced language proficiency has on cultural communication". Data analysis of responses from the participants in the current study revealed a variety of opinions on the culture-language connection. 26 participants

(37%) reported that it is important to understand the language-culture connection in order to be able to ‘read between the lines’ the person’s culture, preferences and idiosyncrasies.

Linguistic relativity (Boas, Whorf, Pinker) informs us that the structure of a particular language influences the way the speakers of the language view the world. It is this ‘relativity of languages’ that informants allude to in their comments about their encounter with a second language and discovering novel ways of expressing concepts in the target language.

Language and culture learning are totally intertwined. The way of speaking reflects a way of thinking. People, at the end of the day, live the way they think. When I speak German I think differently than when I speak English or Spanish. This has been a complete eye opener. I could not imagine my career without this insight.

(No. 61 L’)

When you start learning a foreign language you see where languages are equal and where they differ. As a result, you begin to think about languages differently; it gives the process of speaking a new depth and makes it three-dimensional.

(No. 57 ‘D’)

24 participants (34%) opined that knowledge of foreign language and knowledge of foreign culture go together. It is a *sine qua non*. They are inseparable.

The intricacies, structure, and phrases of a language can shed light on certain aspects of a culture. Because language formulates our thoughts, the intricacies of a language also shed light on the thought processes of the people in that culture.

(No. 71 ‘Y’)

The structure of the language reflects the thinking of the culture. When you learn a foreign language you learn a way of thinking, according to 16 participants (23%). One participant commented:

“Language has nuances, which is what people understand based on their preferences”.

(Participant No. 3)

Culture is imbedded in the language, commented 3 participants (4%)

If you learn the language without learning the culture people will not always understand what you mean and you will most likely use inappropriate words in inappropriate contexts. Culture impacts pronunciation and dialects. The culture (philosophy, traditions, etc.) influences the language and must be understood.

(No.27 'T')

It is hard to understand the culture if you don't know the language. It is like a half blind person". Learning the structure of the language helps understand structure of culture (priorities) i.e. in Quechua, man's relationship to nature, in Brazilian Portuguese, male chauvinist attitudes.

(Participant No. 3)

5.3.2 Language vs. culture learning

Item 5 asked participants to "compare their own language learning to culture learning experiences". Their remarks were widely varied and are partially summarized in the following table. (A full transcript of participants' comments is found in Appendix E.)

Table 5.1 Participant’s opinions on language vs. culture learning

Opinion	Number of participants	Sample %
Learning the local culture is easier than mastering the local language	9	13
Learning a foreign language is straight forward and less complicated than learning a foreign culture	4	6
An individual’s level of proficiency in the local language and local culture are usually not matched	2	3
No need for knowledge of local culture. Knowledge of local language is sufficient for business	2	3
FL knowledge helps bridge the cultural gap	2	3
People forgive your lack of knowledge of FL as long as you are sensitive to local culture	1	1

In summary, a total of 69 participants (97%) understood the language-culture connection and were aware that by learning the language, they were able to learn key aspects of a way of thinking of its people.

You learn the foreign culture by exposure to the foreign language. Learning a foreign language means cultural learning. Proficiency in a foreign language is not sufficient, there is a gap. If you don’t develop knowledge of the culture you run the risk of being stigmatized. Linguistic proficiency does not equip you to operate in a foreign culture; you need a ‘shared framework’. I was at great disadvantage until I had one.
(Participant No. 73 ‘RCV’)

5.3.3 Language learner strategies vs. communication strategies

Item 7 of the research instrument asked: “In situations where you lack sufficient language or cultural abilities, what particular strategies do you currently use to compensate for the deficiency?” Participants’ answers to this question resulted in a variety of responses

which included both second language learner strategies (LLS) as well as communication strategies (CS) which also apply to users of their L1. First, there is the difficulty in separating communication difficulties perceived by the L2 user as stemming from a shortfall in 'linguistic knowledge' on the one hand, and those stemming from a 'cultural understanding' shortfall on the other hand. In fact, even today more than 30 years since academic research in this SLA area of study, there is still no agreement among SLA scholars, some of which view LLS...

“in large terms as, general patterns of behavior combining mental, physical, and social activity, and those who see it in small and specific terms, purely as cognitive and meta cognitive behavior.”

(Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p278)

Table 5.2 Communication strategies

Strategy	Number of Participants	Sample %
Sit back, observe, be quiet, listen carefully and try to interpret.	10	14
Consult with or hire a native professional, local translator or cultural interpreter	9	13
Avoid offending	8	11
Smile, be pleasant, invite and socialize	4	6
Prepare well ahead of time by making effort to study and learn about country and its local culture	3	4
Be curious and flexible, especially about culture	3	4
Study and learn about the culture and history of the country	3	4
Navigate with your heart, use your intuition and try to convey a message of sincerity	2	3
Do not get right down to business. Connect with the people first	2	3
Less socializing, keep low profile	1	1
Avoid quick reactions and decisions; think more carefully before speaking	1	1
Invest more time and effort in building relationships	1	1
Try to learn from and connect with the person	1	1
Try hard not to show confusion or your personality	1	1
Make significant effort to show interest in culture and local way of life	1	1
Improvise	1	1

Both Dörnyei (2005), a second language learning motivation expert, and Skehan (2003), a scholar of individual differences in SLA, continue to be ‘skeptical and dismissive’ due to the lack of clarity in the unit of analysis representing LLS. It is their opinion that the construct of LLS cannot at the same time encompass all three language-processing functions of cognition, emotion and behavior. In order to accommodate both view points, the current study has created, in a rather arbitrary fashion, two scales separating the responses to Item 7 between the two types of strategies, namely LLS and CC. In the previous chapter, Table 4.18, outlined what are commonly assumed to be LLS. On the other hand, the above table (Table 5.2) has grouped exclusively responses that can be construed as CC, which are by definition different from LLS, and may be used by both second language learners and L1 users alike.

5.4 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Culture research question No. 4 asked: How do International Business Communication models assist us in explaining and describing the categories of culture learning reported by this group of professionals?

5.4.1 Cultural anecdotes

In order to answer cultural research question No. 4 informants’ were asked in item 9 of the instrument to “share anecdotes about professional application of culture abilities, these anecdotes were then categorized according to the key cultural communications concept referred to in the example.

The major differences in responses regarding the importance of having the necessary awareness of differences in cultural values, norms and customs had more to do with the an important choice of words used by the participants that imply more than superficial differences in semantics. Words like ‘becoming aware’, ‘knowing’, ‘recognizing’, ‘accepting’, ‘respecting’, ‘following’ or ‘playing’ by the local rules and customs, refer to key differences attitude described and encompassed in Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) construct, as well as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

5.4.1 Trust and respect

There were two values mention often by the participants in this study in their discussion of language and culture abilities in business. These are RESPECT and TRUST. A large number of participants remarked that respect was a necessary precondition for building trust, which in turn is necessary for building a healthy human relationship. A good relationship, several global professionals in the current study reported, is the foundation of mutually beneficial cross border trade.

Data results indicate that 32 participants (48%) used the word RESPECT in their comments; 28 participants (39%) remarked that learning, or speaking the local language showed respect for the local culture and identity of the people. There were 6 participants (8%) who stated that it was impossible to gain respect without understanding the local context.

Respect for the local culture means that just because you have science and research behind you to back your point of view does not mean you have the right to impose your point of view. You are not the only one with a monopoly on the truth.

(No. 73 ‘D’)

An additional 6 participants (8%) said it was impossible to gain respect from clients without understanding the local context.

When living and interacting with people in West Africa, it was important to know and understand the cultural significance of greetings. It is a form of respect to shake a person's hand at the beginning of an encounter and follow a pattern of exchanges that includes asking about their health, their family, if they slept well, etc. Although Americans oftentimes begin an interaction or a meeting with a simple hello (or sometimes not even that), if I did not take the time to genuinely greet someone and inquire about how they were doing then there would be no progress made during the interaction and it is interpreted as a form of disrespect.

(No. 71 'J')

In French Africa you cannot arrive and just speak English and assume everyone will understand. This is culturally insensitive. You must first ask if people would feel comfortable with you using English. Many times they will just not open up, close their doors and refuse to work with you because they are feeling disrespected.

(No. 21 'M')

You might be able to negotiate one single deal acting like an 800 lb gorilla (i.e. Walmart) but that does not mean they will be willing to do business with you again, unless you show respect and earn their respect in return.

(No. 9 'D')

The concept of TRUST was mentioned by a total of 47 participants (66%), in comments including:

My current work demands that I carry out political lobbying. If I did not speak the language and understand the culture, I would not be able to build the necessary trust and relationships with people to be able to carry this out, or else the work would take greater effort and a longer time to complete.

(No. 3 'M')

17 participants (24%) asserted that following local customs, habits and norms was essential to building trust. 12 participants (17%) said that speaking the local language was trust; and trust in turn is an essential component for building a business relationships. 11 participants (15%) said clients trust you more when you have an understanding of the local

culture, history, politics and religion. 7 participants (10%) believed that the use of translators inspire mistrust in professional communications

The problem when you use English rather than local language you are not restricted to translators that dilute the personal impact of being able to convey your message effectively. This is particularly important when you are negotiating contracts.

(No. 36 ‘C’)

2 participants (3%) noted the key importance of becoming aware of differences in intonation in order to be effective in business communications.

There is a saying in education that goes “kids don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care”. I think in international transactions when you are communicating across cultures it’s the same thing. People will view you as an outsider until they know you are sincere and culturally sensitive. Then they can view you as a ‘foreign caring insider’.

(No. 48 ‘S’)

5.5 Cultural relativity

By defining culture as ‘learned behavior’, we have learned from the anthropology (Boas) that there is no absolute ‘right or wrong’ applied to social norms, values and customs, all of which vary greatly across human groups. This is one of the first lessons individuals learn when we venture outside our own social group for the first time. As expected, most of the current study’s participants noted the importance of understanding Boas’ concept of cultural relativity, namely, the fact that the dos and don’ts, and cultural taboos, can vary greatly across countries. One participant commented:

The concept of disrespect is a relative cultural term. When you are late in arriving at a meeting there are different etiquette rules. In US it’s OK to announce yourself by greeting the audience or speaker, while in other places it is the rule to best sneak in and not make any noise. What is disrespectful depends on the person’s cultural assessment.

(Participant No. 48 ‘S’)

It is important to be aware of local mores and taboos. In the Middle East you don't throw food away; to shake a woman's hand, a male waits for her to first extend it to him; you keep greater body distance; a house is a home, not an investment.
(No. 20 'E')

Banya. The way to have a business meeting in Russia is in a '*banya*' (steam room/sauna), as a way to get together, have fun, and drink Vodka. It is unlike the formality of American business meetings. Political correctness and legal liability at work means you cannot joke and relax at work or tell sexual jokes. In Russia, people are more 'real', even when depressed, because they show it. In the USA people pretend or fake they are happy all time. Russians don't smile much, especially with strangers. In the US you pretend you know, while in Russia you ask what's wrong and its no problem to seem ignorant.

(No. 68 'M')

In Lao, Thailand and Vietnam and in most of Asian cultures it is considered disrespectful to point with your toes at something (most dirty part of the body) or to touch someone's head (most respectful part of body), especially if this is an older person. This is insulting and a sign of the greatest disrespect.

(No. 72 'O')

5.5.1 High context vs. low context cultures

There were 24 participants (34%) who alluded to the concept of 'context' in intercultural communications; 18 mentioned the specifically the concept of high vs. low context cultures (Hall, 1966) and compared the US (a low context culture where very literal communication predominates), with that of Asia, Latin America or the Middle East (high context cultures where much of the content that is communicated does not require speech).

Participants remarked:

In Mexico there is a saying: "*Observar mucho, oír mucho, y hablar poco*" ("Observe a lot, listen a great deal, and speak little"). There is a non-confrontational style based on the belief that "*el que se enoja, pierde*" ("He who gets mad, loses"). This is an indirect communication style. The language is not direct, but used to hide behind it. Examples: "*tú me entiendes?*" ("Know what I mean?")

(No. 2 'C')

You must be aware of cultural differences in business etiquette. In Asian countries form is very important (greetings, bowing, accepting and giving a business card, hierarchy), while in Germany, where people are more direct and to the point, they want to get things done fast. They might appear rude to outsiders, but they don't mean to.

(No. 61 'L')

It's important to understand and adapt yourself to the different ways people relate and communicate with each other. For example, there are different styles of communicating in US vs. Latin America where there is a lot of preamble before starting business, which takes time, while in the US there is no problem in getting more quickly right to the point, rather than spending time building a relationship.

(No. 8 'J')

In Ecuador using the term 'liar' is considered taboo and greatly offensive. In German (a culture with more direct communication) you can use the term without problems.

(No. 16 'B')

When you speak the local language you can think and negotiate like a local and this facilitates negotiations because you can interpret the local context better.

(No. 31 'M')

5.5.2 Time orientation

Similar to anthropology's concept of polychronic time (Hall, 1959), the term synchronous time (HTT) is used to talk about cultures where activities overlap, or there is a lack of prioritization and people are comfortable with interruptions, changes in plans or performing more than one task at the same time. This time orientation contrasts with cultures with sequential time orientation where activities are clearly prioritized performed 'one-at-a-time' until completed. Results of this study revealed that 13 participants (18%) believed that understanding the differences in time orientation is being an important component in cross cultural effectiveness. Regarding time one participant commented:

In West Africa people have a much more fluid sense of urgency, "it will get done when it gets done." To show up an hour late for a meeting to them was not a sign of disrespect to anyone else or to the group. They are used to spending time waiting for

things before they move on to the next task. I had to adjust my expectations and learn to not take their tardiness as a sign of disrespect.

(Participant No.71 'J')

Be sensitive to the sense of time and pace of work. Do not be rigid or get offended by people who see these differently. For example, in Caribbean countries being late or not showing up is not a serious offense.

(No. 19 'P')

5.5.3 Negotiation style

One of the culture-bound behaviors most often mentioned by the practicing global managers in this research was style of negotiation. In this sample, 18 participants (23%) mentioned it as an important cultural issue to be aware of in order to be effective across cultures. Many mentioned the contrast between Americans and Japanese or Korean business professionals. The former are very literal, direct and to the point. Informal, fast-paced and transparent, meetings are short, involving fewer individuals present. Japanese and Korean communication styles are less literal, more vague, with lots of silences, indirect, formal, slow, laborious, with less transparent decision making process, requiring many long meetings with multiple participants present, and never deviating from the hierarchical chain of command.

One participant commented:

When you do business in many different parts of the world you have to go into business negotiations with the awareness that in certain cultures business decision-making takes longer in certain countries than others, i.e. Asian countries (Japan, Thailand) they take time and nothing happens quickly. This is always difficult for Americans to understand. Also that in certain countries it is rude to say No. This does not mean they are agreeing to anything. Some cultures are less direct and you must understand this.

(Participant No. 53 'S')

Style of communication and structure differences are very important. With Americans and Europeans there is more emphasis on substance in negotiations, and

much less on form. By contrast with Asian cultures there is more emphasis on form. In Central African countries style is very important. In South East Asian countries both are important but you get things done. The way you provide feedback is key. Things like how you address people based on their status in their community, age, etc. is very important. In many cultures you have to be careful how you word hard data in a report (economic data) so it is not offensive or harsh and make things more positive.

(No. 54 'G')

5.5.4 Social status and authority

Power Distance (Hofstede, 1980) defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”. There were 3 participants (4%) who specifically mentioned differences in views on authority as being an important cultural issue to be aware of. Others referred to it indirectly as part of the decision of ‘negotiation styles’, already discussed above.

In some countries it is very important to ensure the highest-level person in the room is shown more respect. If you don't, you could be punished. The punishment could vary from not meeting with you later, not meeting with you at all, or even disregarding your attempts to make contact.

(No. 59 'D')

Culture awareness assists me in knowing whom I need to consult with and pay respect to in order to get things done, and whose toes not to step on.

(No. 71 'Y')

The issue of social status differences within a culture and how you deal with it is something different in every culture. Americans have a belief that we are all at the same level and all should be treated equally. This is difficult to understand in other places.

(No. 48 'S')

5.5.6 Individualism vs. Collectivism

Encompassed within the cultural issue of negotiation style was a discussion of cultural differences with respect to Communitarianism vs. Individualism (Hofstede 1980, HTT, 2000) and Victor's LESCANT acronym (under the letter 'S' for Social Organization).

There were 3 participants (4%) in this research who alluded specifically to the differences between Communitarian vs. Individualistic cultures as an important culture learning issue.

One participant commented:

In large groups, many Asians do not speak up, even if it is to ask what they don't understand. Standing out from the group is perceived as being immature and wanting to show-off, while in America there is no problem speaking up or asking questions.

(Participant No. 69 'W')

In Latin America people work more in groups at work than alone at their desks. The culture is more collaborative while in the US people prefer email and group discussions are considered more stressful thus conflict is avoided rather than promoted. If it is avoided, it takes longer to be productive.

(No. 41 'M')

5.5.7 Religion

Although, typically understood as encompassed under social status and authority, the role of religion in society is not usually discussed in business or academic circles. At the same time, religion does fit under Victor's LESCANT acronym under Social Organization, as well as Hofstede's collectivism and HTT's Communitarianism. The importance of being aware of the role that religion plays in society was mentioned by 3 participants (4%), a smaller percentage than anticipated. One participant commented:

In Malaysia, a Muslim country you don't schedule meetings on a Friday, a day when most men attend Mosque. If you do, your meeting might be postponed for weeks as a sign of them not appreciating your offensive gesture.

(Participant No.72)

As expected, religion per se is not mentioned as an independent factor in any of the conceptual framework theories applied in this study, however, it is nonetheless encompassed

within the social factors of social organization, status and authority, thus ultimately, does play an important role in business communication.

5.6 Non-verbal communication and paralanguage

Proxemics (Hall, 1966) is part of non-verbal human communication, assists us in understanding the variety of behaviors people use to communicate without the need for uttering a sound. The non-verbal repertoires, and their meaning, vary widely across cultures, i.e. standards of personal distance for intimate, personal, social or public interaction. At least 5 participants (7%) noted the importance of understanding cultural differences in what is considered acceptable 'personal space', in order to be 'culturally sensitive'. This issue, though highlighted by informants in the current study, is not typically part of a business communications course. Participant comments include the following:

Personal space is a cultural difference. Russians are not used to American personal space, which is much closer.

(No. 68 'M')

In the Middle East you keep greater body distance while speaking to people.

(No. 20 'E')

In Indonesia there are differences even between islands. The Javanese psyche is different from the Balinese. If you are too forward and show emotions in Java it can be insulting, while in Bali it's the opposite. With the former you should be more detached in negotiations, otherwise you are viewed as 'invading their personal space'.

(No. 45 'M')

In addition to personal space, paralanguage, which encompasses gestures and body language, is communicated by way of posture, facial expressions, hand or eye movement. All of these combined represent a key component of human communication, whether or not they are accompanied by speech. In this study, 11 participants (15%) mentioned non-verbal

communication as being an important cultural difference across cultures. One participant remarked:

Classic examples of cultural issues that affect business are differences in acceptable body language such as using your left hand to eat or greet in the Arab world, showing the soles of your feet in the Middle East and Asia, using animated hand gestures to speak in Japan, while in Italy the lack of hand gestures could be perceived as being non authentic.

(Participant No. 36 'C')

Foreign language learning gives you a vision into the culture. You cannot get that deeply into the culture without first learning the language. I find that when I switch to speaking Japanese I begin bowing to people, and as soon as I switch to French I begin to greet people by kissing them on both cheeks.

(Participant No. 10 'T')

In West Africa it is considered impolite to offer someone your left hand in a handshake, to eat with your left hand, or to hand someone something (money, an object, etc.) with your left hand. If you were not aware of this cultural norm, you could quite easily offend multiple people in the course of a single day.

(No. 71 'J')

Importance of knowing local customs, i.e. Bowing low enough as sign of respect (Japan), or sticking chop sticks upright into rice (sign that somebody has died).

(No. 9 'D')

Pragmatic competence (Koike, 1989) is another component of both cultural and linguistic proficiency. In addition to proficiency in the standard codes of grammar, lexicon, phonology and phonetics, the pragmatically competent speaker is aware of the appropriateness of his/her utterance within the 'context', i.e. given the manner, audience, event, time and place, etc.

If you learn the language without learning the culture people will not always understand what you mean, and you will most likely use inappropriate words in inappropriate contexts. Culture impacts pronunciation and dialects. The culture (philosophy, traditions, etc.) influences the L and must be understood.

(No. 27 'T')

Understanding when informal language is appropriate, and when not, is important. Phone conversations can be impacted by cultural reasons: knowing how to start, end and say goodbye is very important. One thing is email, another is letters and official documents. It is key to know the different forms of address that are culturally appropriate.
(No. 10 'T')

Intonation is another important element of paralanguage and an issue mentioned by at least two global managers in this study. It is a cultural characteristic of every language, which can often lead to serious misunderstandings (Gumperz, 1982), without the L2 user ever realizing what is at stake, even when the grammar and the lexis is perfectly accurate. Gumperz' research on pauses, expressions, gestures, proved that, when combined with context, all have important cultural meaning which, once they deviate from the cultural conventions, can have serious communication implications. This aspect is at the heart of the intersection of language and culture learning. It is part of non-verbal communication, which comprises both language and culture.

5.7 SUMMARY

All the participants in this study were of the opinion that cultural knowledge, or abilities, in terms of understanding differences in values, norms and customs, was an important competitive advantage in professional cross-border communications. In the present research, the incidence of the importance of abilities in cultural sensitivity was even higher than that found in both EIU surveys (EIU 2010, 2012). Nevertheless, there were important differences in the terminology chosen to express the depth and type of cultural knowledge. Boasian theories of linguistic relativity and the language-culture connection are helpful in understanding why these insights arise, once L2 learners experience a different culture, or in the course of professional cross border communications. International Business Communication (IBC) theorists, such as Hofstede and HTT can be helpful in

understanding cultural differences in communication in a global professional business world. They help explain differences across cultures in terms of context, time orientation, negotiation styles, individualism vs. collectivism, non-verbal communication, and attitudes towards authority, among others. However, these typological models based on country-by-country categorizations, though handy, are often not accurate or current, and appear reductionist in an effort to simplify in an effort to make sense of a complex cultural world in the pursuit of effective business communications. On the other hand, David Victor's LASCANT acronym offers a useful and more comprehensive acronym that outlines a wider range of cultural factors encompassing human communications.

The data collected in the current study on culture abilities informs us that many of learners may not have otherwise gained these important insights to communicate effectively across borders, without having experienced first hand, through interaction with the culture, the realization of cultural and linguistic relativity. The transcripts of individual participant comments reveal a depth of cultural knowledge, as well as insight into the culture-language connection, which the aforementioned IBC models, alone, could never have imparted. The fact that the majority of participants in this sample were advanced proficiency learners further substantiates the link between linguistic competency and cultural competency at the higher levels of proficiency as ACTFL's Five Cs, CEFR framework and the ICC model predict.

This chapter has outlined the research findings around the applications and beliefs of culture abilities in intercultural business communications. It has analyzed the data collected on participants' understanding of the term 'culture sensitivity', work-related experiences with culture and the professional and institutional advantage of having cultural awareness abilities. Lastly, it has explored the opinions and experiences of practicing global professionals on the issue of the language-culture connection and the culture learning strategies employed.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

6.0 OVERVIEW

The overall purpose of this dissertation was to provide a better understanding of the specific ways in which practicing global professionals apply second language abilities and cultural awareness abilities in their daily work in the course of completing transactions across borders. This final chapter summarizes the research findings in the two areas and discusses the implications for US businesses and their human resource departments, as well as the implications for curricular design in higher education, in both business schools and foreign language departments. The first section interprets the findings and draws conclusions in light of the 7 Language research questions, and follows the conclusions with recommendations to all of those involved in the preparation of competent global professionals. The second section interprets the findings and draws conclusions in light of the 4 Culture research questions, and also makes recommendations. The third section addresses the limitations of the research. The fourth and final section offers suggestions for future research.

6.1 RESEARCH QUESTION NO.1: WHO ARE THE GLOBAL PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY APPLYING THEIR L2 ABILITIES IN THEIR WORK?

The answer is that the majority have self-reported advanced language proficiency, are college educated in an L2, are not native English speakers, and not US born. Their greater proficiency is not surprising, given the regular application of their language abilities in their professional work, which, in turn, provides them with continuous feedback, both from native speakers and other L2 learners, confirming their level of linguistic effectiveness in the target language. The relationship between advanced proficiency and the actual use of the four language abilities at the highest level is not surprising, given the amount of language

input, time-at-task and level of instruction required to master the complex abilities required for professional networking or the preparation and presentation of reports in an L2.

The biographic, demographics and linguistic characteristics of this sample of learners suggest that L2 proficiency came before L2 practice in international professional work, and most likely, the opportunities for this work were available, in large measure, because of L2 proficiency. Many of these global professionals declared that they would be unable to perform their current jobs without having advanced L2 proficiency. Therefore, one could argue, that the sample is a self-selecting group, namely, that they are global professional because of their L2 abilities and thus, are able to apply their L2 abilities in their work because of they have advanced proficiency. The majority happen to be university educated in the US, non-native English speakers and foreign born. All these factors go a long way in explaining why these learners are able to apply their L2 abilities professionally.

Over the past years, foreign language requirements in US schools, instead of being strengthened, have been weakened, mostly due to budgetary concerns, but also due to a shift in academic priorities. This dilemma could be resolved by teaching certain core courses in an L2 the way bilingual and dual language programs currently do. Many of the advanced proficiency participants in the current study graduated from such schools. Ideally, all school age children would receive continuous foreign language instruction during K-12, instead of our current system where many college freshmen take their first foreign language course. This places future US global professionals at a professional competitive disadvantage *vis-à-vis* other foreign born and educated professionals, such as the majority of the participants in the current study.

International competition for skilled upper managerial talent is intense. US-based, upper management jobs with American and multinational corporations, such as the ones held by many of the participants in the current study, were filled by the best qualified

candidates, those possessing both ‘hard abilities’ (technical expertise) and soft abilities (including languages and culture). These jobs, in many instances, would have gone to US born and educated nationals with the requisite ‘soft abilities’ for global work. The data in this research appear to suggest that other countries, mostly those located in northern Europe, Latin America and Asia, are doing a better job at preparing their students, especially at the younger levels, to become proficient in foreign languages. The US should consider learning from their success and not waste time ‘reinventing the wheel’. This researcher believes that the success in other countries is due more to differences in ‘mind set’ and educational priorities, than to budgetary or pedagogical inadequacies.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 2: HOW ARE L2 ABILITIES APPLIED AT WORK?

The four language abilities are applied at work in a wide range of professional tasks of increasing difficulty that coincide with self-reported levels of fluency. Again, there is a clear relationship between self-reported proficiency and the level of complexity of language abilities applied professionally. These results are not surprising since learners know which language tasks they have the necessary abilities to accomplish effectively in a second language. Otherwise, when the learner finds himself lacking in the necessary fluency to accomplish a task, most likely, he will switch to his/her L1, or a different L2, in order to accomplish the task with professional effectiveness. In other words, these professionals are not likely to risk the efficacy of a professional task in order to develop their L2 fluency. On the other hand, once they know they have a skill, you use it to their advantage to further their career. But if they know they don’t have the skill, they do without.

US organizations are ill prepared to meet the needs of a rapidly globalizing economy. Corporate leaders and human resource managers need to send a clear message to the market

place on the exact abilities and proficiency levels required to fill job openings. They need to demand, as well as verify, the specific levels of advanced foreign language abilities needed in the workplace. By applying proficiency standards (in the four abilities) developed by either ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), or CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), HR departments could evaluate students and certify to prospective employers that job applicants have the required level of linguistic proficiency. The European Union's CEFR, which includes a six-level standard to measure L2 proficiency (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) is increasingly being adopted by countries and companies around the globe. There is a need to verify that the abilities job applicants claim to possess are genuine. Companies need to have professionals in their HR departments with the necessary expertise in multilingual and multicultural abilities to search for, interview and assess the individual applicants with the abilities wanted for each job. For example, if advanced L2 abilities in writing are preferred, these should be assessed or verified during the hiring process. In short, 'trust but verify' the job applicant's L2 proficiency using the assessment instrument that already exist. More importantly, companies need to remunerate according to the specific abilities being sought.

6.3 RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 3: WHAT ARE THE PROFILES OF ADVANCED PROFICIENCY LANGUAGE USERS?

Data analysis results tell us that in addition to the already discussed demographic characteristics, these advanced, near-native and native speakers have received the most formal language instruction at all levels (K-12- college), they have taken advantage of opportunities to study and live abroad, and have much higher rates of participation in college language courses, language schools, private tutoring, use of commercial language materials and the Web. These significantly greater amounts of language exposure go a long way in

explaining the greater levels of proficiency and ability to function in the target language. The higher levels of self-reported proficiency also explain the higher levels of comfort in using the language at a professional level. These speakers come from countries with multilingual and multicultural traditions, where they attended bilingual or dual language schools, earned university degrees in an L2, or all of the above. More importantly, many of these advanced users were exposed to foreign languages at home while growing up, had a family or community connection to the language, and currently stay in touch with friends and family who speak the L2. All of these language input factors help explain why the higher proficiency was attained and how it is maintained. Similarly, the self-reported proficiency levels of the less advanced users can be deemed to be quite accurate, since we may assume that they, too, receive regular feedback on their linguistic abilities, or lack thereof, in the course of their professional work in communication with clients in a second language.

Advanced foreign language requirements for college graduation, especially for students in business schools, should be established and standardized, which should include a certification of the level of proficiency in the four abilities. LSP (Language for Special Purposes) courses, in business as well as other subjects, provide opportunities for task-based activities to develop the four language abilities in the professional context. However, they do not offer the ideal means for attaining advanced L2 proficiency. These courses represent shortcuts, typically, they do not produce the type of advanced proficiency abilities, such as the ones reported and applied by the majority of the professionals in the current study. One of the main challenges of LSP courses is that they are, usually, taught by individuals without a great deal of experience in the field, especially those in business. Ideally, US colleges should offer advanced level subject course taught by fluent or native speakers, national or international visiting faculty. This might not be easy given the existing power struggles between academic departments and tenure-seeking faculty at US universities. Nevertheless, it

would provide students with much needed exposure to authentic and academically challenging L2 content in their academic subjects, as well as a unique opportunities for intercultural exposure.

Language departments should offer interdisciplinary courses that appeal to a wide range of students. Applying ACTFL's 5 C's in L2 literacy development in specially courses based on specific tasks and genres (Swaffar & Arens, 2005) can lead to the development of higher cognitive abilities while contributing to culture knowledge in students, especially those in business. Such courses may be interdisciplinary courses in literature, philosophy, history, film, etc. The culture-awareness value of understanding the voices of multiethnic, multilingual individuals and other societies with their unique 'subjectivities' cannot be overemphasized (Kramsch, 1998, 2009; Byrnes, 2009). Greater access to a rich array of interdisciplinary courses where advanced multiliteracies may be developed should be considered for the current digital generation.

6.4 RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 4: WHAT ARE THE PROFILES OF LESS PROFICIENT USERS?

Their profile is the opposite of that of the advanced learner described above. These results are not surprising given the consistent non-application of L2 abilities at work, on the part of less proficient learner, which provides them with continuous feedback of their lack of linguistic effectiveness in the target language, both from native speakers and other L2 users. The relationship between low proficiency and the low use of the four language abilities is not surprising, given the substantial amount of language input, time-at-task and level of instruction necessary to master the complex professional abilities, such as professional networking or the preparation and presentation of reports in an L2. These less proficient learners have had limited language exposure to the target language in terms of formal

language education at all levels (K-12-college), language schools, tutoring, living and working abroad, commercial language materials and the Web. Their lower participation rates go a long way in explaining their lower linguistic proficiency and comfort levels in using the language. The fact that they have fewer years of international work experience might indicate that, as a group, they tend to be less active in global work, perhaps, due to their lack of advanced language abilities. However, this may not be ascertained from the data collected in the current study. Nevertheless, the fact that the less proficient users are more likely to be native speakers of English, have a spouse who speaks the same L1 and be US born, does tell us something important. Having the *lingua franca* of business as an L1 and using it at home, exclusively, does appear to be a disincentive for gaining proficiency in a second language, especially for professional purposes.

Foreign language departments could be instrumental in providing assessment and certification of the linguistic proficiency of students for the benefit of business schools as well as prospective corporate employers. Current digital technologies offer limitless opportunities to increase time-at-task in the target language. Learner-driven activities will encourage both depth and volume of language input, which in turn, may increase the current number of graduates achieving advanced proficiency. Student enrollment in language courses might increase by attracting qualification-seeking students who are driven by the economic utility of having a certification of their linguistic proficiency. Future employers would need to trust the academic product of foreign language departments. This could eventually happen, once the private sector gains confidence in the reported level of proficiency and intercultural literacy of university graduates.

Finally, language-teaching faculty need to expand language input to help students acquire the necessary proficiency. They need to take advantage of current digital technology to significantly expand opportunities for language and culture input, as well as student

output outside of class. SLA research has informed us of the need for substantial volume of L2 input and output in order for learners to reach advanced levels of proficiency. Opportunities for learners to significantly expand their time-at-task in the L2 are limitless today, thanks to digital technologies and the Internet: gathering information on websites, downloading podcasts, contributing to Wikis, engaging in two-way communication via social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, etc.), email, instant messaging or short messaging services (SMS) and texting (Facebook Chat, Whatsapp), videoconferencing (Skype, Facetime, Google Hangouts, etc.), video-hosting (Tumblr, Googledocs, etc.), and sharing information via photo and file-sharing (Flickr, Dropbox, etc.), micro-blogging (Twitter), or participating in virtual social networks (Second Life), video-sharing (YouTube) or computer games, among many others. It is important for language teachers and learners to consider the new role of multiliteracies, which result from changes in the learning preferences of students of the digital age, and the flood of ‘infotainment’ available. There exist today endless mediums and opportunities to expand the volume and genre of language input, as well as output, with the goal of achieving advanced proficiency through content that is both generationally appealing and personally relevant to a wide range of language and culture learners.

6.5 RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 5: HOW IMPORTANT ARE LINGUISTIC ABILITIES AT WORK AND HOW MUCH OF A PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?

Analysis of data results tells us that these abilities are considered very important, or essential for the majority of participants, although the rate for fluent speakers was greater than for the less proficient. These results corroborate quite closely the results from a previous study (Grosse, 2004). Many participants in the current study revealed that they would not qualify for, or would be unable to perform their current job if they did not have

their present level of proficiency. These results are not surprising given that international trade is increasingly important to the economic survival of certain industries and countries, and we know that the whole world does not speak one same language. Native speakers of English from multilingual countries reported, however, having the greatest professional linguistic competitive advantage.

ACTFL proficiency standards, or the CEFR, could be used more extensively for the purpose of assessing the level of linguistic proficiency. It would be ideal if the private sector could arrive at standard procedures for testing L2 proficiency comparable to the ones applied by the US Department of State as part of the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT), or the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).

Organizations, in both public and private sectors, need to send a clearer signal, by the way they promote and remunerate employees, that they value advanced L2 competencies. Otherwise, the global leaders of tomorrow will not know how to accurately analyze and assess the economic cost-benefit of investing the necessary time, effort and money in acquiring advanced language and culture competencies. As past studies have concluded (Grosse, 2004; Grosse & Voght, 1991; Lafford, 2012; Fryer, 2012; English, 2012), future global professionals and current business students will be able to better assess the economic utility and professional competitive advantage of acquiring advanced linguistic proficiency and cultural competence, only if the employers begin by sending the right signal to the marketplace. US business schools need to accelerate the current level of internationalization of their programs, faculty and student body, as previous studies have advised.

The current study endorses the recommendations of "Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century" (National Standards, 2006) and the Modern Language Association (MLA) Report, "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New

Structures for a Changed World" (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007). University language departments need to update their managing structures and programs, internationalize their curricula and faculty, offer more interdisciplinary courses, focus on developing literacy in the L2, rather the traditional single focus on literature courses.

In order to increase the global effectiveness and vision of US students, this researcher supports ACTFL's 5Cs of Content in foreign language education (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities), but also shares the vision encompassed in the additional Five Cs (Levine & Phipps, 2012) of second language literacy and cultural competence (Context, Complexity, Capacity, Compassion and Conflict). When taken together, these ten Cs refer to an Intercultural Literacy whose context is not only globally appropriate for students today, but imbued with personal relevance and responsibility. This researcher endorses the value of this approach for all students, especially for business students who may possess a narrower view of the professional and academic applications of second languages.

6.6 RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 6: WHAT LANGUAGE LEARNER OR COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ARE USED?

Results revealed a short list of the main language learner strategies employed by global professionals in order to compensate for perceived weaknesses in L2 abilities. These include: consulting with a fluent/bilingual/native local language speaker, asking lots of questions, being patient, slowing down and taking your time, using Google translate, giving increased care and clarity to communication, using lots of gestures and body language, using circumlocution and plugging away, compensating with having technical competency or superior technical abilities, learning the basic field, relying more on written than spoken

communication. Many of the additional strategies reported were communication strategies which any L1 user may apply.

These strategies, according to Dörnyei say more about individual motivation, and according to Skehan about individual differences. They could also be viewed as part and parcel of Kramsch's *symbolic competence*, or even Appadurai's *desire* or ability to dream a better future. Whether said strategies are viewed as language learning, communication, or stemming from the symbolic competence of the multilingual subject, they undoubtedly express a deep desire to communicate effectively across the cultural divide.

The sample of global professionals in the current study represent is, probably, a self-selecting group of successful professionals, all exhibiting in an intact form the kind of human capacity to *desire* or *imagine* a future, which according to Appadurai needs restoring in order to begin resolving the issues around poverty in slums such as exist in Mumbai, India.

Most of the participants in the current study are foreign born and multilingual and are, very likely, also in possession of "The triple Package" of characteristics outlined in "The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits Explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America." (Chua & Rubinfeld, 2014) which makes them successful at intercultural communication strategies, and thus are well represented among the groups of successful immigrant to the US. These two legal scholars have studied the tension between a 'superiority and inferiority complex' or a 'simultaneous belief in your group's specialness' which leads to a deep-seated anxiety about inadequacy but pushes them to succeed, when they are also combined with the third variable of impulse control. The exploration of such a complex issue lies beyond the scope of the current study. Nevertheless, it does relate to the challenge of clearly defining the construct of *strategies* as a unit of analysis, given the difficulty of separating second language learner strategies from communication strategies, individual motivation, individual differences, symbolic competence, desire or the tension

between an inferiority and superiority complex of this group of immigrants, unless we can first untangle the bundle of functions and processes in cognition, emotion and behavior, as critiqued by Dornyei and Skehan (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p25).

6.7 RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 7: WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON BELIEFS ON THE USE OF L2 ABILITIES IN BUSINESS?

The analysis of results revealed that the opinions were varied. They were organized by topic and prevalence. A full transcript of comments with participant's number and first initial is found in Appendix E.

6.8 CULTURE-RELEVANT RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 1: ARE CULTURE ABILITIES CONSIDERED A PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?

The definition of culture applied in the current study is closely tied to Tylor's,

Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

(Tylor, 1871)

Clearly, such definition is not exclusive to culture spelled with a 'Big C', such as the great works of literature and the arts from a particular civilization; on the contrary, the culture we are examining refers, especially to the culture that is spelled with a 'small c', namely, the popular culture of our immediate group and our daily life.

The majority of participants asserted that culture awareness abilities are an advantage, although advanced proficiency speakers, on average, considered them more crucial than simply important. The majority of participants believed foreign languages and culture were important to job effectiveness, and thought they represented a significant professional competitive advantage, especially when their competencies were advanced.

These results corroborate the findings from previous studies (Grosse, 2004; EIU 2010, EIU 2012).

Current L2 learners would have an easier time calculating the future economic rewards of spending an extended time abroad acquiring a language and learning the culture through studying, volunteering or working if they had a clearer understanding of the economic or professional benefits. The current average length of time US students spend abroad needs to be extended in order to increase the depth of learning of both language and culture (EIU, 2012). As recommended by other researchers, US business schools need to increase the requirements, availability and range of overseas 'linkages' available to students (academic semester, exchanges, jobs or internships) so that all future graduates have a substantial (3-12 months) overseas experience under their belts upon graduation.

This study has shown that advance proficiency is required in order for an L2 learner to apply the four language abilities in a professional setting. Because advanced proficiency requires a significant investment of time, effort and resources, it is important for students to plan ahead by setting their goal as reaching advanced proficiency, otherwise, most likely, they will not derive a clear professional competitive advantage from studying a foreign language. Hopefully, in the near future global companies will clearly signal to the employment market how much they value foreign language and intercultural competences. Even if students have to put their career, or studies on hold, they need to make it a priority to spend time overseas, preferably for a minimum of one year, studying, working, volunteering, or better, finding a job or internship. Their goal should be total immersion in the language and culture in order to reap the benefits of advanced language fluency and intercultural competence, despite the costs.

Research has revealed the need for students to participate in study abroad for the advancement of linguistic proficiency, as well as cultural knowledge (HAN Yueqin, 2013,

Liu, 2013). In the context of international business education, empirical data supports the validity of the results of the current study, especially with respect to gaining cultural awareness abilities. Recent data has revealed the increase in the number of US students studying abroad, especially over the last decade. Nevertheless, study abroad does not include the majority of US college students (IIE, Open Doors Report 2012), and the typical duration tends to be less than 1-3 summer months. Although the majority of U.S. students like to say they would like to go overseas, according to government statistics, only 1% of all students studied abroad during any particular academic year and only 14% of total U.S. undergraduates have studied abroad at some time during their entire undergraduate studies (“Who Studies Abroad, Who Stays Put and Why,” NYT, 3/21/2013). Nevertheless, study abroad by US students enrolled in higher education has more than tripled over the past two decades. The increase shown in the most recent Open Doors report (<http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data>) shows a steady rise in study abroad numbers each year since 2008-2009 as the economic recession of 2007 caused a decline. Universities in the US need to continue to encourage, or require, all students to study abroad, for at least one academic year. They also need to make this more affordable, instead of a special revenue generator. They should be more flexible in allowing students to register, pay tuition, and take authentic L2 courses at overseas universities, for academic credit, via special arrangements, following a workable model such as the Erasmus study abroad program that currently exists in Europe.

6.9 CULTURE-RELEVANT RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 2: WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON BELIEFS ABOUT THE WORK RELEVANCE OF CULTURE ABILITIES?

All participants mentioned the importance of being aware of differences in cultural values, norms and customs across countries and cultures. This is how a great majority of

participants defined the term “cultural sensitivity”, although some participants reported not liking the term. “One can survive without the knowledge of the local language, but not without the knowledge of the local culture”, is how one participant saw this. All the comments by the participants are grouped by the cultural concepts studied in International Business Communications. A full transcript is found in Appendix E.

US colleges and universities should put in place specific requirements for advanced proficiency in both language and culture learning, certified through proficiency testing, assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence and foreign work experience via volunteer jobs, internships or exchanges exceeding the typical summer period. The beneficial impact of international exchange programs and local internships for business students in terms of foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness are well documented.

6.10 CULTURE-RELEVANT RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 3: WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON VIEWS ON THE LANGUAGE-CULTURE CONNECTION?

The majority of informants was very aware of this connection and had much to say about its importance. The majority of participants believed that having cultural abilities was a professional competitive advantage in cross border communications. A few informants remarked that culture knowledge was ‘the’ advantage, of ‘crucial importance’ in cross-cultural communications, and of greater importance than linguistic abilities. They also believed that the lack of these abilities could be problematic, or even detrimental to business success. The differences found among participants in the reported relative importance of language vs. culture abilities indicates a tendency for the more proficient L2 users, and those with the most experience in global professional work, to consider culture the essential or decisive skill, over language. Analysis of informants’ beliefs and experiences surrounding language, values, behaviors and customs across cultures provided us with a deeper

understanding of the powerful and complex role personal meaning can play in professional intercultural communications.

Compensatory strategies used when culture abilities were found to be inadequate were varied. The most common was: sit back, be quiet, listen carefully and observe, try to interpret local culture. Analysis of data results revealed that opinions were quite varied. They are organized by topic and prevalence. A full transcript of comments with participant's number and first initial is found in Appendix E.

In the current study we have addressed what the four key players (corporations, business schools, language departments and future global professionals) should do in order to meet the present and future human resource needs of US organizations, in order to compete in today's global market place. Corporate leaders need to specifically demand that the market place provide the advanced abilities they need. They need to verify the level of abilities of candidates, and more importantly, they should remunerate and promote according to the value added by these abilities to the organization. Business schools should accelerate the current level of internationalization of their programs, faculty and student body, as previous studies advised (Kwok & Arpan, 1994, 2002). Advanced foreign language requirements, including certification, should be strengthened; LSP courses in business should include activities to develop the four language abilities in the professional context; a rich array of interdisciplinary courses geared to the current digital generation should be offered, for credit, where advanced literacy in L2 may be developed. Courses on ICC should be included, competence level assessed and requirements standardized.

6.11 CULTURE-RELEVANT RESEARCH QUESTION NO. 4: HOW DO INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION MODELS ASSIST US IN EXPLAINING AND DESCRIBING THE CATEGORIES OF CULTURE LEARNING REPORTED BY THIS GROUP OF PROFESSIONALS?

Victor's LESCANT acronym, which is not a theoretical model, offers a practical guide for global professionals to organize and analyze cultural factors encountered in a different culture. The other two IBC models evaluated in the current study (Hofstede, HTT) encompass some of the main cultural communication issues highlighted by the participants, but do not address others, namely, non-verbal communication and paralanguage. Comments by the participants when discussing cross-cultural communications referred, in varying measure, to the four cultural dimensions in Hofstede's model (Power Distance, Individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity and Uncertainty avoidance); they also alluded to the 5 cultural Dilemmas in Hamden-Turner Trompenaars Model (Universalism versus particularism, Individualism versus communitarianism, Specific versus diffuse, Achievement versus ascription, Sequential time versus synchronous time). However useful for understanding cultural differences thus improving cross-cultural communications, Hofstede's and HTT's binary theoretical models leave no room for other, perhaps more important aspects of communication, all of which are part and parcel of the cultural components of language, i.e. paralanguage, such as pragmatics, non-verbal communication, such as *proxemics*, and other subjective aspects of language which are encompassed in Kramsch *symbolic competence* and are embedded in the first letter Victor's LESCANT acronym, 'L' for *language*. On the other hand, IBC models, such as the widely used Hofstede and HTT, do not incorporate or clearly specify the key role language itself plays in intercultural communications. The study's participants alluded to the importance, not only of using the right *word*, and especially the right *tone*, but in addition, to *silence*, avoiding certain gestures and following the culturally appropriate body *distances*. Equally important as the cultural values expressed in the said binary models, these key components of language are key to effective

intercultural communication, as the seasoned global professionals have communicated in their responses. Furthermore, one significant drawback of the binary models is that they simplify the world and leaves little room for the multilingual subject, especially, does not fit neatly into any one space, but rather, as Kramsch informs us, is constantly evolving and re-signifying its voice, both across time and space. The complex subjectivity and *hybridity* of today's multilingual global professionals, mostly living in a *third space*, can not easily be explained by the reductive worldview implied by the current and widely applied IBC models.

Although cultural communications courses may provide future global managers with an ideal foundation to begin building cultural awareness abilities, nothing can replace first-hand personal experience with other cultures. In addition to reasonable foreign language fluency requirement, study, volunteering or working abroad for a minimum of a year, should also become a standard college graduation requirement. Competency in ICC should be taught in business schools or as part of international business courses. These should include the assessment of abilities using any one of the ICC assessment instruments available.

Aside from the assessment of ICC there exists the test for CIQ, Cultural Intelligence Quotient (Earley & Ang, 2003), which has been growing in acceptance in the business community because it takes into account the role of cognition (the mind), the senses (body), and emotions (motivation), in order to improve cultural perception. Maybe in the future, CQ and ICC will form part of the international business curricula, in addition to the cultural study models developed by Hofstede, Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars and Victor.

6.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

Given the convenience sampling methods applied in the current research, one could argue that the findings may only apply to the sample population of informants, and are not

generalizable to the general population of working professionals around the globe, or even within the US. The current study carries the typical drawbacks of convenience sampling, namely, researcher biases as a result of the informants being drawn from colleagues, friends and acquaintances of the researcher and findings reflecting the characteristics of this group. Thirty two participants, or 45% of the sample were born and raised in Latin America, which, according to Burke (Burke, 2009, p4) is the hybrid region of the world 'par excellence'. Nonetheless, the researcher believes, nonetheless, that these results do have important relevance to language teachers, business curriculum designers and business professionals. Paying attention to the needs of current practicing global professionals and listening to their beliefs and experiences with foreign languages and culture awareness may contribute to a deeper understanding of the powerful and complex role personal meaning can play in professional intercultural communications.

Another limitation of the current study stems from the design of the research instrument. Specifically, item 3 (Section A), that collected data on the practical work applications of language abilities should have included all the items later compiled in a table, so as improve the consistency and reliability of the findings. As a result, participants may have under-reported specific professional tasks they currently perform using the L2. Item 8 (Section C) of the instrument that asked about the competitive advantage of abilities, should have been separated into two questions, one relating to the competitive advantage of foreign languages, and the other to culture abilities.

The researcher stands by her rationale to include in the study global professionals working in many different types of organizations, private, public and multilateral organizations, as well as many sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, the study never analyzed the data by type or size of organization, in order to detect differences in participants' beliefs or attitudes toward language and culture related to these factors. Future

studies may want to look into the effects of such differences. The current study, moreover, collected more quantitative and qualitative data than was possible to thoroughly analyze for inclusion in this dissertation.

Were an agreement to exist in the field of SLA, (Ortega, 2014, p8), regarding the parameters of language acquisition, in terms of the timing and the number of languages acquired, for purposes of analysis, the current study would have been required to make a distinction between the various types of LA represented in this sample of participants, namely, monolingual LA, bi/multilingual first LA, child early first LA, second LA, second dialect LA, etc. However, the type of acquisition was not defined for this study, nor was bilingualism defined or distinguished from multilingualism, nor were the various types of L2 learning defined for the participants.

6.13 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should look at differences in the perceived competitive advantage of having advanced foreign language abilities between global working professionals and students, between student bodies attending small private prestigious business schools and those in large public institutions, as well as in different regions of the country. They should look into the level of internationalization of the universities, their students, programs and faculty, to see if different schools have an impact on the global views and perceptions of their students.

Moreover, future research could replicate the part of the current study that analyzed the professional application of the four language abilities in daily professional tasks and activities. By polling both practicing business professionals and students, via an online survey of business school graduates across the US (i.e. CIBER affiliated schools), a larger random

sample would allow for more generalizable conclusions that may be more representative of the general population of global professionals than the ones reached by the current research. Future studies may compare data from across the different stakeholders in globalization (schools, universities, government and corporations), comparing the readiness and impact of language and culture competence in cross border communication. The current study supports many of the suggestions made by previous studies directed at future global professionals, corporations, schools of business and language departments, in an effort to increase the foreign language fluency of US global professionals. It is inevitable that we will see an acceleration in the pace of globalization and global integration, whether or not the necessary changes are made to increase the availability of fluent US global professionals, in order to meet the current language needs brought about by demographic changes, technological innovation, increased competition and the shift in the balance of trade between mature and emerging markets.

Aside from looking at differences in the perception of the importance of language abilities, future studies should include a research instrument that assesses Byram's ICC, so that differences in intercultural knowledge, language abilities and attitudes can be compared, for instance, across individuals, between different economic sectors, between public and private organizations, between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, between students and practicing global professionals, between students attending small prestigious private business schools and large public universities.

Appendix A. Final Research Instrument

Language & Culture Study Questionnaire/Interview

Echavarría Fall 2012

Part A: Biographical/Demographic information

1. Type of organization/business you work for:

a) Private Government Non-profit/NGO Manufacturing Technology
Service/Consulting (specify) _____ Other _____ (check all that apply)

Nature of the work: _____

b) Size: Approximate number of employees _____

2. Job category you perform:

Sales & Marketing Public Relations Management Human Resources
Administration Research Technical Assistance/Training
Other (specify) _____

3. Rank/title: _____

4. Number of years you have worked in an international business setting? ____ yrs

5. Location: _____

6. Major in college: _____ Postgraduate (Major): _____
Degree: _____

7. Age: _____ Gender: Male Female

8. Country of birth: _____

9. Nationality: _____

10. Mother tongue(s): _____

11. Marital Status: Single Married/Partner Divorced/Separated

12. **Current** use of foreign languages at home:

a) If married/living with partner, the spouse/partner: US-born Non-US born

b) If married/living with partner, the native language of the spouse/partner:

c) If married/living with partner, the language(s) spoken at home: _____

d) If applicable, language(s) spoken with children: _____

13. How many years of **formal** language instruction did you have prior to your professional experience? _____ yrs

K-5 __yrs/Middle School __yrs/High School __yrs/College __yrs/After College__ yrs

14. What other types of foreign language learning have you participated in, **either during or following your formal language education?** (check all that apply)

- ___ Foreign language(s) were spoken at home
- ___ Spent time with foreign language-speaking family/friends
- ___ Resided overseas
- ___ Traveled abroad
- ___ Private tutoring
- ___ Other (please specify) _____

15. Years/months of experience living abroad:

Country 1 (name country) _____ years _____ months _____ reason: _____

Country 2 (name country) _____ years _____ months _____ reason: _____

Country 3 (name country) _____ years _____ months _____ reason: _____

Country 4 (name country) _____ years _____ months _____ reason: _____

Additional: _____

Part B: Language use, self-assessment, perceptions and beliefs

1. Rate your current foreign language proficiency, based on the following scale:
(1 = Elementary, 2 = Intermediate, 3 = Advanced, 4 = Near-Native, 5 = Native)

Language 1 _____ Proficiency level (scale 1-5) _____

Language 2 _____ Proficiency level (scale 1-5) _____

Language 3 _____ Proficiency level (scale 1-5) _____

Additional: _____

2. Rank the importance for your job effectiveness of being able to communicate and perform business tasks and activities using the local/foreign language?

Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Medium	Very Important	Essential
1	2	3	4	5

3. Regarding your **work**, please elaborate on the specific context, situations and tasks in which you currently rely on the use of foreign language abilities:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

4. Regarding your **personal** activities outside of work, please elaborate on the specific context, situations and tasks in which you currently rely on the use of foreign language abilities:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

5. Rank your current level of personal comfort with doing business in a foreign language:

Most Uncomfortable					Most Comfortable
1	2	3	4	5	

6. If you feel that you have already achieved a workable level of foreign language proficiency that allows you to communicate well enough to do business in a foreign language, which of the items from the following list describe **how you learned** your foreign language(s)? **(check all that apply)**

- Have a family or community background in the foreign language
- Attended school overseas in the foreign language while growing up
- Studied abroad during college
- Spent time abroad as an adult working or volunteering
- Enrolled in foreign language courses in college
- Attended a language school/institute
- Hired a private tutor
- Used commercial language learning materials (i.e. Rosetta Stone, etc.)
- Used the Web
- Other: (specify) _____

7. If you feel that you have not yet achieved a workable level of foreign language proficiency that allows you to communicate well enough to do business in a foreign

language and culture, which of the items in the following list describes what you are **currently doing** to improve your foreign language abilities? (**check all that apply**)

- Maintaining family, community or personal contacts in the foreign language
- Attending school in the foreign language
- Spending time abroad working, studying or volunteering
- Enrolling in foreign languages courses in college/university
- Attending a language school/institute
- Working with a private tutor
- Using commercial foreign language learning materials (i.e. Rosetta Stone, etc.)
- Using the Web
- Other (specify) _____

8. When conducting international business in English with non-native/fluent speakers of English, are there communication advantages in speaking the native language of the party or country instead? Please elaborate.

9. Are there instances in business, which you have experienced, where using English rather than the national/local language can be detrimental to effective business communication? Please elaborate.

Part C: Language and culture applications, beliefs and experiences

1. You often hear the term 'cultural sensitivity' being used. What does this term mean to you and how does it become part of your professional activities? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience.

2. Based on your personal professional experience, what types of activities and tasks can be impacted or affected by cultural issues? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience.

3. Please provide specific examples **related to your work** where the context, situation or task was affected by cultural issues.

4. Once you can speak a foreign language with a high degree of fluency, in what ways do you believe it affects the cultural aspects of doing business? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience.

5. In your experience, compare the learning of a foreign language with the learning of a foreign culture. Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience.

6. In reference to foreign language and cultural awareness, if a person lacks these abilities, what is the greatest impact on a company's bottom line? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience.

7. In situations where you lack sufficient language or cultural abilities, what particular strategies do you currently use to compensate for the deficiency?

8. In what ways do your foreign language abilities and cultural knowledge/cultural sensitivity give you a competitive advantage in your work? Please explain and provide an example from your own personal experience.

9. With regard to language and culture, what advice would you give someone thinking of going into international business today? _____

Appendix B1. Study Recruitment email (English version)

Dear _____,

I am contacting you to ask your assistance. I need participants for my dissertation study and thought you, or an acquaintance of yours, might be an ideal candidate.

I am researching the current business applications of foreign language and cultural abilities, and the personal beliefs and experiences surrounding these abilities in today's professional world. Anyone with at least 2 year's experience handling international (cross-border) transactions, of any type, qualifies for my study, whether or not they speak a foreign language fluently.

Please let me know if I can take a few minutes of your valuable time (30 min) to complete the questionnaire (attached), either in person or via Skype. With your permission, I would record the audio under a pseudonym. Please let me know when you might be available.

I would also appreciate if you could recommend any friend or colleague that qualifies as a participant in this study.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Best regards,

María Luisa Echavarría, PHDc, MA, MPA, BA, BA
University of Texas at Austin
email
Skype address
Tel

Appendix B2. Recruitment email (Spanish version)

Estimado/a _____,

Te escribo hoy para pedirte un favor, tu colaboración con mi estudio de investigación del doctorado para el cual necesito participantes y creo que tú eres un candidato ideal.

Estoy investigando las aplicaciones actuales de las habilidades en lenguas extranjeras y cultura en el mundo profesional, así como las creencias y experiencias personales en torno a dichas habilidades. Cualquier profesional operando en el ámbito internacional, con un mínimo de 2 años de experiencia en el manejo (transfronterizo) de operaciones, de cualquier tipo, calificaría para mi estudio, ya sea que hable un idioma extranjero, o no.

Si puedes colaborar, te pido, por favor, que me contactes por mail para concertar una cita conveniente para hacer la entrevista por Skype y completar el cuestionario adjunto, lo cual tomaría proxímadamente 30 min. de tu valioso tiempo. Con tu permiso, me gustaría grabar el audio usando un seudónimo.

De antemano te agradezco por tu valiosa colaboración con esta investigación, y también por recomendar a algún amigo o colega que creas que califique como participante en este estudio.

Cordiales saludos,

María Luisa Echavarría, PHDc, MA, MPA, BA, BA
University of Texas at Austin
email
Skype address
Tel

Appendix C. Foreign language (L2) profiles of participants

Self-reported Level	L2 Proficiency Level	Age & Gender	L1	Birth Country	Nationality	Job Location	YrsInt'l JobExp	Total # Yrs FL Instruction	#Yrs Instruc. K-5	#Yrs Instruc. Middle School	#Yrs Instruc. High School	Spouse L1	FL were spoken@Hom	Resided Abroad	Foreign Travel	Private Tutor
1P	G3 E	39 Male	Greek	Greece	Greek	Greece		14	10		4	4 Greek		X	X	
2 C	F5 G5 E5 P3	53 Female	Spanish	Colombia	Colombia	Rep Dom		20	18	5	3	4 Spanish	X	X	X	
3 M	E5 F2 I1 P1	46 Female	Spanish	USA	US	Ecuador		23	13		3	4 EnglishDanish	X	X	X	X
4 PS	CT5 E3 F3	49 Male	Spanish	Spain	Spanish	Spain		24	4			4 Catalán	X	X	X	
5 RM	I4 E4 F3 G.5	52 Male	Spanish	Colombia	Colombia	Colombia		20	19	5	3	4 Spanish	X	X	X	X
6 H	F2 S1	68 Female	English	Scotland	US	US		5	7		3	4 English			X	X
7 J	S4	30 Male	English	USA	US	US		6	16	5	3	4 NA			X	
8 J	DA3S4B1.5 J.5	46 Male	Danish/English	Japan	US	Ecuador		22	7		3	2 Spanish	X	X	X	
9 D	S1.5 J1 F1	49 Male	English	USA	US	US		20	3.5	1		2 English		X	X	
10 I	E3 J2 F2	50 Female	Spanish	Colombia	US	Ecuador		20	15	5		2 SpanishEnglish	X	X	X	
11 P	BI1 D5F4G4E4S2	68 Male	Dutch	Holand	Dutch	Netherlands		42	43	D6F2	D3F3G3E3B1	D5F3G5E5	Thai/Lao/Cambo		X	X
12 B	E5	59 Female	Tagalog	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines		10	18	6	3	4 Tagalog	X	X	X	
13 J	E3-4	39 Male	Spanish	Colombia	US	Colombia		11	11		3	4 Spanish				
14 S	S4 Fr2	62 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		30	15	2	3	4 NA	X	X	X	X
15 T	E4 F1	57 Male	Greek	Greece	USA/Greece	USA		2.5	8			4 Greek		X	X	X
16 B	S4 E3 F3 N3	61 Female	German	Germany	Germany	Ecuador		35	13	2	3	4 Spanish		X	X	
17 G	E4 S3 Fr1 I1	20 Male	Portuguese	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil		3	9		2	4 NA			X	
18 S	E5 F4 S2	43 Male	French	France	USA/France	USA		15	11		3	4 English			X	
19 P	E5 F2 CZ1P2	56 Female	Spanish	Chile	USA	USA		30	19	5	3	4 English	X	X	X	
20 E	F5 E5 A4L4I1	80 Male	Arabic/French	Egypt	Egypt/USA	USA		30	23	6	3	4 English		X	X	
21 M	E3 F2	46 Female	Spanish	Ecuador	Ecuador	Galapagos		20	15	6	3	4 English		MBA UT		
22 F	E5 F2.5	52 Male	Spanish	Colombia	USA	USA		25	15	3	3	4 English	X	X	X	X
23 S	E3	31 Male	Spanish	Ecuador	Ecuador	Ecuador		6	16	5	3	4 Spanish	X	X	X	X
24 RA	E3.5 F1 P1 I1	70 Male	Spanish	Colombia	Colom/USA	USA		41	9			4 Spanish	X	BA MIT	X	X
25 A	NA	59 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		15	6			4 Farsi			X	
26 E	E5 P3 F1	56 Male	Spanish	Colombia	USA/Colombia	USA		35	14	5	2	2 Spanish		X	X	X
27 T	F3 S3L5HB1A	41 Female	Engl/Afrikaans	South Africa	USA/SouthAfr	USA		8	22	6	3	4 EnglishHebrew	X	X	X	
28 N	S3 B1 Viet1	27 Male	English	USA	USA	Singapore		5	7	3	2	1 NA	X	X	X	X
29 V	Eng4Fr1	45 Female	Spanish	Mexico	USA	USA		23	13	6	3	4 English		X	X	X
30 F	E4 F4 I3.5	47 Male	Spanish	Mexico	USA	USA		20	17	6	3	4 Spanish	X	X	X	X
31 M	F1-2	56 Female	English	England	Canada	Canada		5	5		1	4 NA		X		
32 AB	E2	48 Male	Spanish	Colombia	Colombia	Mexico		7	7.5		3	3 Spanish			X	X
33 J	S1.5	29 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		8	10	3	2	English				
34 D	S3 F1	68 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		40	7	2		3 English		X	X	
35 J	S1.5	39 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		15	5		1	2 English			X	
36 C	E5 S4	62 Male	Spanish	Mexico	UK	UK		35	0			English	X	X	X	
37 B	S3 F12 F2	43 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		22	9	2		4 English		X	X	X
38 J	E3.5 S3 P2	46 Male	German	Austria	Austria	USA		24	12	4	4	4 Spanish		X	X	
39 AM	S4 F1	29 Male	English/Span	USA	USA	US		6	10	2	2	4 NA	X	X	X	X
40 L	E3.5	50 Male	Spanish	Colombia	Ecuador/Colom	Ecuador		22	3.5			2 Spanish				X
41 M	Sp<1Arab<1	34 Female	English	USA	USA	USA		8	2		2	English			X	X
42 B	E5 A4.5 G<1	57 Male	Arabic	Kuwait	USA	USA		14	11		3	4 Arabic		X	X	
43 F	E5 A4	25 Male	English/Arabic	USA	USA	Jordan		2	8	4	4	Arabic	X	X		X
44 B	S2 A12	49 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		4	2			English		X	X	X
45 M	E4 B12I1.5 F1	56 Female	Spanish	USA	USA/Colom	Bali		10	13	6	3	4 EnglishMarath	X	X	X	X
46 J	E3.5 P3.5	38 Male	Spanish	Venezuela	Venezuela	USA		15	6			3 English		X	X	X
47 L	E3.5 P2 F1 R1	41 Male	Spanish	Venezuela	Venezuela	France		10	13	6	3	4 Russian		X	X	
48 S	S3 B1 Ger<1	54 Female	English	USA	USA	Galapagos		19	6		2	2 English		X	X	X
49 P	En3	44 Male	Spanish	Spain	Spain	Spain		12	2			2 Spanish		X	X	
50 L	E4 G3 F3 I1P1	57 Female	Spanish	Venezuela	Venezuela	Austria		18	7		2	4 English		X	X	
51 A	G4 E3 I3	24 Female	French	France	Franch	Germany		2	12		3	4 NA		X	X	X
52 D	E5MC1J1S1F1	31 Female	Korean	Korea	Korean	Korea		3	12		3	3 NA	X	X	X	X
53 S	H4 M4 S1 B1I	56 Male	EnglishMarath	India	Indian	Quatar		25	7			4 Spanish	X			
54 G	E3 F3	31 Female	Spanish	Mexico	Mexico	USA		15	12	5	3	4 TagalogEnglis		X	X	X
55 *	S4	24 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		3	4			Hungarian	X	X	X	
56 *	A2 F2	60 Female	English	Australia	Australia	South Arabia		20	4			NA		X	X	
57 D		72 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		12	0			English		X		
58 R	E3 G1	44 Male	Spanish	Colombia	Colom/Ger	USA		6	13	6	3	4 Spanish	X	X	X	
59 D	S1	54 Male	English	USA	USA	USA		1	0			English		X		X
60 H	E4 I2 Fr	54 Male	Spanish	Venezuela	USA	USA		12	10	1	5	4 English		X	X	X

61 L	E4 F4 G2	27 Female	Spanish	Colombia	Colombia	South Africa	3	13			2	3	AfrikaansGerm		X	X		
62 *	S1	36 Male	Kichua	Ecuador	Ecuador	Ecuador	22	5	5				Quichua					
63 RR	E4.5 MC3	28 Male	Spanish	Colombia	Colombia	China	5	13	6	3		4	NA		X			
64 R	F3 E3 S3 G3	55 Male	DutchFlemish	Holand	Netherlands	Ecuador	15	10	3	3			Dutch		X	X	X	
65 N	E5H5G1KK1S1	52 Male	Marathi	India	USA	USA	15	19	6	3		4	English		X	X		
66 P	G2 S1 TH1 G1	61 Male	English	USA	USA	USA	20	3				2	Englisih		X	X	X	
67 L	E3	53 Male	ManChinese	Taiwan	Taiwan	China	10	10		3		3	MandChinese		X	X		
68 M	R5 E4	24 Female	Ukrainian/Russ	Ukraine	Ukrain	Ukraine	6	10	5			2	Arabic	X		X	X	X
69 W	E4	34 Female	MandChinese	China	Chinese	USA	11	15	4	3		4	English		MBAUS		X	
70 J	F4 BI2	28 Female	English	USA	USA	Burkina Faso	3	0.6				0.3	English		X	X		
71 Y	E4 TH1	52 Male	Japanese	Japan	Japanese	Thailand	20	11		3		4	Thai					
72 O	E4 F2 L3	55 Female	Thai	Thailand	Thai	Laos	28	20	7	3		4	English	X	X	X	X	X
73 D	E5 F2 G1	53 Female	Spanish	Nicaragua	Nicaragua	USA	2	17	6	3		3	English	X	X	X	X	
74 RCV	E5 F2 G2 R3	61 Male	Spanish	Ecuador	USA	Russia	35	9	6	3		3	Russian	X	X	X	X	X
*data cases (3) excluded from final participant sample																		

The second column indicates the code for the second language(s) spoken followed by the self-reported proficiency level.

Language codes include:

A=Arabic AK=Afrikaans AL=Albanian B=Bisa BI=Bahasa Indonesia C=Catalan CA=Cambodian CZ=Czech D=Dutch DA=Danish E=English F=French FI=Farsi FL=Flemish G=German GK=Greek GU=Gujarati H=Hindi HB=Hebrew I=Italian J=Japanese K=Korean KK=Konkani L=Latin LO=Lao MC=Mandarin Chinese MT=Marathi N=Norwegian P=Portuguese Q=Quechua R=Russian S=Spanish T=Tagalog TH=Thai V=Vietnamese Z=Zulu

Self-reported proficiency levels: 1=Elementary, 2=Intermediate 3=Advanced 4= Near Native

M=male F= Female

Numbers 1-74: Participant assigned number in the order he/she was interviewed (* data for three participants excluded from final results)

Appendix D. Field of academic study, professional line of work, industry and company type and size

Participant # First Initial	Type Organization	Industry	Company Size	Job Area	Job Rank	Undergrad Major	Post Grad (if applicable)
1PA	Private Inter/multilateral agency	Apparel/Import	15	Mgt & Mktg	Pres & Owner	BSc Chem Eng	MBA
2 C	Private	Human Rights	600	Int'l Relations	Director Program	MA Int'l Relat	MA Int'l Relat
3 M	Private	Environmental Consulting	6	Environmental Consulting	Pres & Owner	Develop Studies	MA
4PS	Private	Insurance	900/55000	Sales & Mktg	Area Director	Law & Pub Relat.	
5 RM	Private	Architecture	5	Archit. Design Fund Raising/	Pres & Owner	Architecture	MA Achitec/Restor
6 H	Non Profit	Environmental Consulting	5	Product Deve	Founder/US Director Director Business	Economics	MA Public Affairs
7 J	Private	Gaming	500	Sales & Mktg	Development	BSc Business	
8 J	Private	Environmental Consulting	6	Environmental Consulting Fund Raising/	Co-dir & Owner	Develop Stud	MA TropAgRurDe
9 D	Non Profit	Charity	3	Prod. Deve	Founder/US Director	Finance/Business	
10 I	Private	Manufacturing	20	Mgt & Sales	Director & Owner	Biology	MSc Acquacult
11P	Private	Mgt & Strategy Consulting	4000+	Mgt Consultant	Volunteer Consultant	CPA	MBA
12 B	Private	Technology	120	Sales & Mkg	Manager	Sociology	MA Urb&RegPla
13 J	Private	IT	110,000	Technical Assistant	Enter.Arch.Cons	BSc Systems Eng	Msc Comp Eng
14 S	Private	Energy Consulting Optical/Medical	1	Mgt	Sole Prop	BA Romance Lang	Lat Am Stud
15 T	Private	Technology Interpreter/Debt	150	Engineering Design	Engineer Mgr	BSc Physics	MSc Optics
16 B	Private/Gov't	Negotiator	1	Interpret/translation	Sole Proprietor	Diploma Interper.	
17 G	Private	Education	25/60	Teacher	Teacher	BA English	
18 S	Private	E-commerce/Travel	1200	Sales & Mktg	Senior Director Mktg	BA Business	
19 P	Private Inter/multilateral agency	Eco Develop Profes. Training & Coach Consulting	2000	Quality Control/ProEval	Senior Economist	BA Economics	PhD Economics MA Theology/PhDPsych
20 E	Private	Conservation	15/2000	Leadership Deve.	Consultant	BA Psych	
21 M	NGO	Conservation	28/5000	Mgt	Manager	BA Accounting	MBA
22 F	Gov't	Foreign Affairs	20000	Science & Tech.	Foreign Aff. Officer	Bsc Energy Engin	PhD Geography
23 S	Private	Recreation/Tourism	12	Logistics Guide	Tour/Mtn Guide	Diplom Advent.Guide	
24 RA	NGO	NGO/Education IT	50	Techno Access	Chairman & CEO	BA Architect	

25 A	Private	Technology/Manufacturing Oil & Gas Exploration Services	250000	Mgt	Manager	Bsc Engin	
26 E	Private		58000	SalesMkg&Mgt	Manager	BscMechEngin	
27 T	Private International/ Multilateral	Immigration Law	25	Legal Counsel	Lawyer	BA Law	MA Latin Am/ PhD Law
28 N		Int'l Development	150	Research/Training		BAInt'lDevHist	In course
29 V	Private	Technology Finance	450	Admin		BA Accounting	MA Finance
30 F	Private	Telecomm Oil & Gas Exploration Services	6	Mgt	Founder/Owner	BSc ElectronEngin	
31 M	Private		100	Geologist	Senior Geologist	BSc Geology	
32 AB	Private	Clean Energy	6	Mgt Sales Admin	Owner Pres & CEO	BSc InduEngin	
33 J	Private	E-commerce/Travel	1200	Sales & Mktg	Senior VP	BA Gov't	MBA Entrepreneurship
34 D	Private	Tax Law	28	Int'l Tax Law	Senior Partner	BA English	MA/PhD Law
35 J	Private	E-commerce/Travel Oil & Gas Exploration Services	1200	Project Mgt	Director Prog&Mgt Global Strategy CommAdviser	BACompSys&Bus	PhD Dynamics & Constr. Engineering
36 C	Private		58000	Service Consulting		BScMechEngineering	
37 B	Private	Oil & Gas Exploration Services	58000	Service consulting	Director Security	BA Int'lAffairs	MA ArmedForInst
38 J	Private	Oil & Gas Exploration Services	58000	Operations	Director HR	BScChemEnginee	MBA
39 AM	Private	Mgt & Strategy Consulting	20000	Client Services	Senior Consultant	BSc Busi & Biology	MBA & MA Int'l Stud.
40 L	Private	IT Software Develop Oil & Gas Exploration Services	40	Sales Mkg & Mgt	CEO	Bsc Mech Engin	MBA
41 M	Private		58000	Sales & Mktg	Country Sales Mgr	BA Business	
42 B	Private	Investment Mgt & Consult	6	Sales Mkg & Mgt	CEO	BSc Engineering	MBA/PhD Mgt
43 F	Private	Software	50	Sales Consultant	Mktg Manager	BA Mktg	
44 B	NGO	Int'l Disaster Relief	30000	Finance	Finance Mgr	BAAccounting	MBA Finance
45 M	Private	Furniture Exports Manufacturing Mechanical Parts	4	Sales Mktg & Mgt	Co-Owner & CEO	BA Architecture	MA Comp Sc
46 J	Private		10000	Engineering	Engineering Mgr	Bsc Mech. Engin	MBA
47 L	Private	Oil & Gas Exploration Services	58000	Human resources	Director HR Africa	BA Indust Relations	
48 S	NGO	Education Foundation Oil & Gas Exploration Services	31	School Admin	Gen Director School	BA Deve Psych	MPA
49 P	Private Inter/multilate ral agency		58000	Mgt Sales Admin	Country Mgr Sp Fr Por	BA Bus	MBA
50 L		Develop Assistance	150	Mgt	Director African Region	BA Sociology	MA Rural Soc Dev
51 A	Private	Gas Storage	140/218000	Supply Chain Mgt	Ass. to Mgr Director	NA	

52 D	Private	Web Design Consul		1	Sales Mktg & Mgt	Owner Creative Director	BA East Asian Strategy	MA Pub Policy
53 S	Private	IT Services/Telecom Prod Social Enterprise Development		7000	Mgt	Group Gen Mgr	BA stats & Econ	PhD Economics
54 G	NGO NonProfit501 C	Labor Union Organizer		15	PubRelat/HRMgtMktg	Founder	BA Econ	M Public Policy
*55	Private	Hospital		120	Admin	Field Rep	BA Poli Sci/Int'l	
*56	Private	Hospital		8000	Nursing	Nurse Specialist	BSc Nursing	
57 D	Private	General Business Consul Oil & Gas Exploration Services		1	Attorney	Principal	BA Bus	JD Law
58 R	Private	Oil & Gas Exploration Services		58000	Bus. Development	Bus Develop Mgr	BSc Petrol Engin	
59 DD	Private	Manufacturing Computer Chips		58000	HealthSafetyEnviro	Director	BSc Mech Engin	
60 H	Private	Chips		1500	Public Relations	Exec. Director & CEO	BSc Eng	MSc Business LLM Law/ PhD/Int Ec Law
61 LE	Private	Int'l Trade		200	Public Relations	Int'l trade Project Mgr	LLB Law	
*62	Private	Agriculture		3	Manual Labor	Proprietor	NA	
63 R	Private	Int'l Trade Consulting		12	Business Deve.	Int'l Bus Negotiator	BA Int'l Bus	
64 R	Private	Hotel Mgt		18	Tourism	Owner & Mgr	NA	
65 N	Private	Legal services		18	Attorney	Partner Senior Attorney & Bus Strategy	BA Accounting	MBA/ PhD Law
66 P	Gov't	Higher Ed		87000	Admin	Senior Attorney & Bus Strategy	BSc Mech Engineering	JD Law
67 LC	Private	Manufacturing Technology		60	Mgt	General Manager	BSc Electron. Engin	
68 M	Private	Consuling/Trans. & Inter	Free Lance		Consulting	Interpreter	BA English	
69 W	Private	IT		120000	Program Mgt	Program Mgr	BA Finance	MIS Journalism/MBA
70 J	Gov't	Overseas Volunteer Corporate Business Consulting		8000	Health Extention	Volunteer	BA Fine Arts	
71 Y	Private Inter/multilateral agency	International Development		4	Sales Mkg PRRe&Mgt	Founder & Mgr Director	BA Int'l Relations	
72 O	Gov't	Education	100/21000	15000	Poli&ProjImplement	Senior Operation Officer	BA Economics	MA Economics
73 D	Gov't	Education	100/21000		Prof.DevelopReading	Senior Trainer Analyst	BA History/Comm.	MA Ed Psych
74 RCV	Private	Big Pharma		1000	Public Relations	Managing Director VP	BA Business	MBA

* Participant (data) excluded from final study/analysis

Appendix E. Transcript of participant comments

Transcript (partial) of the participants' views on language and culture abilities in business

The following are comments, transcribed word-for-word, in response to any of the 13 open-response item in the research instrument (Appendix A). **The number listed next to the comment indicates the participant's number in the study.** Other tables in this study may provide additional demographic and linguistic data that may assist the reader in putting the individual's comment in perspective.

FL=Foreign language LL=local language LC=local culture L=language C=culture

A. Language

1. Language relativity

66. A foreign language provides many insights into the foreign culture. The Thai language, for example, does not classify nouns as masculine or feminine, and I think this reflects the lack of importance that Thai society attaches to the gender of its citizens.

55. The differences in structure of the language can inform us of differences in culture. For example, in Spanish, "I forgot" vs. "*se me olvidó*". Language informs the study of culture.

2. Language code in every culture is very different.

3. Language has nuances, which is what people understand based on their preferences.

71. The intricacies, structure, and phrases of a language can shed light on certain aspects of a culture. Because language formulates our thoughts, the intricacies of a language also shed light on the thought processes of the people in that culture.

57. When you start learning a foreign language you see where languages are equal and where they differ. As a result, you begin to think about languages differently; it gives the process of speaking a new depth and makes it three-dimensional.

3. It is hard to understand the culture if you don't know the language. It is like a half blind person". Learning the structure of the language helps understand structure of culture (priorities) i.e. in Quechua, man's relationship to nature, in Brazilian Portuguese, male chauvinist attitudes.

2. Trust, respect and relationship building

71. When living and interacting with people in West Africa, it was important to know and understand the cultural significance of greetings. It is a form of respect to shake a person's hand at the beginning of an encounter and follow a pattern of exchanges that includes asking about their health, their family, if they slept well, etc. Although Americans often times begin an interaction or a meeting with a simple hello (or sometimes not even that), if I did not take the time to genuinely greet someone and inquire about how they were doing then there would be no progress made during the interaction and they interpret as a form of disrespect.

9. You might be able to negotiate one single deal acting like an 800 lb gorilla (i.e. Wal-Mart) but that does not mean they will be willing to do business with you again, unless you show respect and earn their respect in return.

71. When you have put in the effort to become fluent in someone else's language they automatically grant you a certain amount of respect, especially if their language is not a prolific one or if it is not absolutely mandatory for you to learn it. This shows that you respect and value them and their culture. Speaking their language allows you to build closer relationships with them and this carries over as mutual trust in your business interactions. Making the effort to learn their language allowed me to build stronger personal and professional relationships.

71. Always learn at least the basic greetings of a language in order to show respect. Always do enough research on a culture to understand what actions will offend them so that you can avoid these, and what actions you need to take in order to avoid offending them.

9. Someone's mother tongue is as valued as much as his or her own name. Be respectful of their identity.

10. Using the local language can be more important for social than business rapport, especially for building "*confianza*" (this means more than trust in Latin America).

21. In French Africa you cannot arrive and just speak English and assume everyone will understand. This is culturally insensitive. Must first ask if people would feel comfortable with you using English. Many times they will just not open up, close their doors and refuse to work with you because they are feeling disrespected.

22. As a diplomat, you are supposed to be building bridges, not taking them down. If you do not understand what cultural sensitivity is all about you will not be very effective and you will be alienating people and exacerbating a conflict with other countries which as a diplomat you need to minimize. Foreign languages are one fundamental tool of diplomacy: In order to sign an agreement or negotiate a treaty, you need to make the effort to speak LL. Your counterpart needs to see you are making an effort.

27. When a company sends a representative to a foreign country without any foreign language & FC abilities it can risk reinforcing negative stereotypes and not be productive in

its business, i.e. when American companies send to North Africa somebody who does not speak French it is offensive and confirms negative stereotypes.

28. Cultural sensitivity is particular crucial in professional environments operating in multi-ethnic settings. In consulting it is all about working to build relationships. Relationship building is everything.

41. This is why I feel that my own cultural abilities give me a competitive advantage. When you are sensitive to someone from a different culture & feel comfortable enough to ask questions you begin to build a strong relationship. I know when there is a personal connection. Good business relationships are built on reciprocity: the stronger the relationship the better the business relationship.

46. In order to do business, you must first gain trust and approval. It's all about people. They are the ones doing and closing the deal negotiations. The local language is extremely important.

74. When you speak the local language the playing field is leveled, you can communicate eye to eye, you don't need a translator and you gain immediate respect.

3. My current work demands that I carry out political lobbying. If I did not speak the language and understand the culture, you would not be able to build the necessary trust and relationships with people to be able to carry this out, or else the work would take greater effort and a longer time to complete.

3. Use of translators and interpreters

3. Better decisions in the environmental field take a long time and can happen only when both sides feel comfortable with each other. Translators/Interpreters must know the environmental jargon as well as the cultural-linguistics nuances well. Minor misunderstandings in terminology can derail discussion/negotiations and eventual decision-making.

4. Because of my bilingual English-Spanish language and cultural abilities, I am able to manage human resources more efficiently than professional translators because I know all the linguistic and cultural nuances of the professional jargon in my particular field of expertise (environmental preservation). Without a fluid conversation you cannot make progress.

14. There are advantages to not using foreign language translators when you can speak the LL.

22. The French, in particular, get very offended when you just speak English in business meetings. They hate it. For example, if you work in North Africa and insist on speaking English, you should at least, make an effort and try to speak French.

36. Problem when you use English rather than local language you are restricted to translators and this dilutes the personal impact of being able to convey your message effectively. This is particularly important when you are negotiating contracts.

40. Koreans have poor English abilities so we usually have to get a translator and it is very tedious. You have the longest business meetings in the world (4-5 hours).

45. I could not stay in business if I did not have the knowledge of local language (Bahasa-Indonesian). My competitors (larger companies) use translators/interpreters with a very different business model and much higher overhead costs. Because of this, I can compete on cost because I don't need interpreters.

59. For the language part, the thing here is not to speak unless you have a translator. As for the culture, follow the lead of someone who knows the culture or simply ask before making a foolish mistake.

4. Competitive advantage of language fluency

35. What is the impact of not having foreign language & C abilities? You need to have the motivation. Most people do not have it. You need the proof that they do make a difference.

71. They allowed me to build stronger personal connections with the people I was working with and allowed me to follow the proper etiquette to navigate their work force and hierarchy.

72. Because I speak the local language, they feel comfortable enough to include me by inviting me to their local festivals and ceremonies, to eat with them and ride in their car, or exercise together after work. This is something they do not usually do with other foreigners who do not speak their language.

4. In Cataluña you will have problems selling a product in Spanish to a Catalan.

4. Important to speak the local language so you learn how to properly address people, a letter or email, use local idioms in the local language.

10. If you don't speak a FL you are lacking in the global vision of culture.

10. Take Russian or Japanese, if you do business with these cultures and you speak the language, they will remember you and are likely to choose you over somebody else who does not have a cultural or linguistic connection to their culture.

19. When you speak the local language you can connect better with people; you feel more connected to the culture; they feel more connected to you and more willing to cooperate and work with you, which is necessary in order to negotiate and come to an agreement.

19. If you speak the local language fluently you get immediate personal cultural connection, get the nuances faster, you have access to local information and communication.

20. When you master a FL it create a synergy (greater than the sum of its parts); you train yourself to respect and be open/welcoming of diversity, which is what creates the synergy.

20. The primary value of language learning is that it allows you to connect with a person at a human level. By making an effort to speak someone else's language you make a significant gesture to connect with them by finding the human dimension.

22. When you have negotiations between two governments and are trying to find common ground in an area of disagreement or trade dispute, you are more likely to find common ground if you show you are trying to speak the LL. Your expectation of trying to make the other party speak your language is critical. They will assume you are not making an effort to understand their position. Speaking the local language breaks down barriers the to communication.

22. In my field, foreign affairs and diplomacy where foreign nationals speak to each other, one of the tools required is FL abilities and ability to pick FL quickly.

22. Once you speak FL you can better understand how people think, their cultural values and motivations and why they think and say the things they do. It allows you to sometimes predict the way they will behave and respond in the future.

23. Speaking FL fluently can make the difference between being 75% successful and 100% successful at my business.

27. Even if you speak English, knowing the local language gives you a great advantage in communication by being able to make cultural references, and even add words and local terms in the local language that might not exist in English.

27. The terminology in the local language specific in your field you must master, understanding the particular differences in nuances that might exist. In the legal field this is essential because no two countries have he same exact legal meaning of terms and these must thus be defined before any two parties will sign contract.

27. There has to be a meeting of the minds. If you don't understand the language it is a huge problem.

28. The advantages to speaking the local language, other than English, relates to knowing the culture well enough to be able to phrase things in the right way to be better understood locally.

28. When you switch to local language from English, the words carry more weight and the advice given is more relevant.

37. People feel honored that an American has taken the time and made the effort to learn their language. Most Iranians don't come across an American who is fluent in Farsi and that makes me unique. Americans are not like many Europeans that are fluent in multiple languages.

41. There are tangible benefits to being bilingual in places like Brazil and Russia where it's harder to find dual language contracts with English and there can be important differences in interpretation.

44. USAID knows that to understand what is culturally acceptable, using a translator on the ground is not the best way. You need somebody who speaks the LL.

45. Competitive advantage: One reason I have not had problems with importing from Indonesia to Colombia is because I have not had to depend on local Bahasa Indonesian-to-English-to-Spanish translators, which are disastrous. This way, my business does not have to depend on unreliable people. My competitors who lack the three language abilities are forced to do.

46. My first year in Brazil was very difficult. I thought that English and Spanish would be sufficient to develop the local engineers but not getting positive results. I realized I had to change strategy and learn the LL. Once I got serious about learning Portuguese things began to turn around. By speaking the language I became part of the team, something that was not happening when I only spoke English and Spanish. They took me into their group circle of friends.

55. My FL abilities qualified me for the job and help me get the job. I could not do it without it.

63. The advantage of being fluent in Chinese is enormous.

65. In the legal field I spend a lot of time explaining the different legal system, traditions and terminology using the client's native language. It is important to learn the local legal terminology even if it is not the same, or equivalent in English, so you can explain the cultural/legal similarities or differences. This is preferably done in the client's local language.

5. FL beliefs (Advanced proficiency users)

22. The Language gives you insight into a culture and how it works, its social norms and how they perceive you. It's very important to learn the language, as much as it is to understand the way of thinking, social norms, how the society functions, dress, food, etc.

27. Languages are tools but you need substance first i.e. law, business, foreign affairs.

28. Fluency in local language supersedes all cultural understanding.

33. Picking up colloquial expressions and local language nuances really enhance ability to do business in the FL.

33. The ability to learn FLs is important and mostly undervalued.

38. The preferred language of business is always the language of the customer, especially for socializing. It is essential for developing business relationships. i.e. Brazil.

42. A language is an expression of the culture. To understand the language you need to understand the culture and vice versa. Language gives you away culturally and educationally. FL abilities could be a communication barrier you may not be able to overcome.

43. Speaking local language makes communication easier. Still, if you have an accent, they might prefer to buy from a local without an accent.

44. In the Peace Corps when you speak the local language you are embraced by the community, and you can feel fully integrated into it. People get very excited when you speak their language, even if not with advanced proficiency.

44. Certain, cultural insights are not possible without learning to speak the language. When you don't speak the local language you don't understand the best way to get things done because you think the US way.

45. In negotiations language is the basis of communication. Language is part of the culture and reflects it very closely. The local language opens the channels of communication, especially between two cultures that are very different.

46. When you use English rather than local language it takes time, delays until you learn about the local needs and wants. It takes time to build trust when you use English and not LL.

46. People say they like learning a FL but stop there. When you learn a new FL endless possibilities open up. Language is just 10% of everything you could be learning in a foreign country once you can communicate in the LL.

47. Once you are fluent in local language it opens your mind and changes the way of doing business. It enriches the decision-making process.

51. Cultural sensitivity is very important, especially nowadays when many companies are multicultural and it is important to know how to manage persons of different cultures to avoid problems.

53. You might speak the local language fluently, and this might help in communication, but this does not mean they will consider you a local. In other instances, i. e. in Japan, it might lead to the opposite if they know you speak Japanese they might not discuss between them in Japanese and they entire negotiation becomes stilted and lead to a hindrance. They can be flattered by your speaking their language, and this can help the process.

61. When you speak the local language with customers and associates you can relate at a personal level. Business is not a money transaction but an exchange, a relationship, which has to be developed. If you don't do that you are not just wasting money, but value for your company, and your competitors will thrive.

74. Yes, once you speak local language fluently you are taking the situation (meeting/gathering) to another level, which makes it easier to get from point A to point B. More empathy is created. Having worked in emerging markets I feel that organizations are made stronger by being able to communicate.

15. Fluency in FL very much affects the cultural aspects of doing business. 'They are not as much buying your business as they are 'buying you'.

67. When you speak a FL fluently you also learn the culture, customs and way of thinking which are different from yours. This helps you avoid problems/complexities of doing business.

9. Foreign language beliefs of less proficient users:

38. When you know a few words in FL people really appreciate and give you good feedback. If you are at a low proficiency mediocre level, then people are not as understanding and might prefer you don't use it for business since they might get offended (i.e. musical languages like Portuguese or French). You have to be culturally sensitive that they might be offended and best to stick to English, a language you speak well.

49. English is accepted by everybody and never experienced that anybody ever gets offended by not speaking the local language.

49. Really never been in any situation where I needed cultural sensitivity (European always worked in Europe). The difference in culture never really affected me.

49. I deal with people of all nationalities in the petroleum industry and never had problems with cultural issues that interfered with communication.

59. I don't have any personal experience because I can't speak fluently, I do believe it will put me in a much better position to interact on a more personal level. People would rather do business with a friend than a stranger.

59. Although I have no proof, I am concerned about being misled or lied too. Not being able to speak the language leaves you with relying on a translator and in some instances the translator is not capable of translating your message or misinterprets what you are saying. By knowing the language, you have a better chance of communicating your message, and the potential bonus that the person recognizes your attempt to learn their language. I'm not sure this is consistent for all people.

59. I would definitely learn the language and buy a book on traveling in the countries where you intend to do business. At a minimum, take a trip with a coworker who has experience doing business in the country

10. English use in business

73. Speaking English rather than local language is more than a language issue. When consultants don't share the local culture, know the way to relate to people or communicate ideas, all these have an impact on communication. They do not relate to language per se, but rather to culture.

73. When you don't speak the local language, but English, it is very detrimental to communication because it isolates you from the local culture and may be perceived as imposing of cultural superiority and lack of respect for the local culture.

74. By using English you are viewed as a person who is just "passing through" and as a result you can say much without really meaning it because the perception is that the person will not be in country long.

74. The individual who speaks the local language is viewed differently and thus treated differently. Take for example two people that speak the local language and see how fast a relationship is built ...then take a US national trying to force the local to speak English and see how the interaction dynamics changes. There is a difference. A level of 'candid conversation' is never achieved. Business is about relationships and this is where, comparatively, the US is loosing out globally.

66. In my experience, being proficient in a foreign language is not essential to conduct business in other countries. English is the language of business worldwide, so you truly can flourish in conducting international business, despite lacking proficiency in the local language.

66. On the other hand, having some knowledge of the local language is definitely an advantage. Studying the local language provides valuable insights into the culture and generates significant goodwill with the local population.

71. Insisting on speaking English instead of the local language of the country it automatically gives you a sense of egotism and ethnocentrism.

66. I know of no instances where using English rather than local language is detrimental can be detrimental to effective business communication.

20. Communication advantages in speaking the local language not instead of English but rather, in support of English.

21. In French Africa you cannot arrive and just speak English and assume everyone will understand. This is culturally insensitive. Must first ask if people would feel comfortable with you using English. Many times they will just not open up, close their doors and refuse to work with you because they are feeling disrespected.

26. When the English competency of the party is not good and you use English it can be detrimental to business communication. Because you don't get full understanding and you get limited information. In the oil services industry it is critical to have good level of understanding and imperative that you meet your client at their level. They are the audience and you must be sure they understand using the terms that are relevant. As a company it is our obligation to speak the language of our customer.

41. Experiences in China where using English rather than local language is a barrier to communications. Upper level Chinese managers tend to have good English abilities but medium level do not and feel pressured not to admit their lack of understanding because this can check their chances for promotion. You need to break into this silence and check for understanding when presenting in English.

71. In reality most of business people involved in international business must speak English. Learning foreign language in short time would not help much to communicate with locals. Learning their history, culture, customs, religion and politics prior to go into international business would much help doing business smoothly.

59. Those who speak English as a second language tend not to be offended or dismayed when you don't speak their language. Again, I would say all things being equal between two suppliers you are more apt to do business with the person with you have a personal relationship.

11. Recommendations

64. Just do it! Making mistakes does not matter!

71. The best way to learn a language is to immerse yourself in the culture of that language and to practice, not in the classroom, but in real world interactions with people.

9. You could not show respect “synthetically” for another language or culture it has to be sincerely felt and believed. Otherwise it’s a veneer, what is called “ass-kissing” which does not work and people can read into it.

23. Needing to communicate once I was living abroad made it much easier to learn the FL than in school.

44. Important to understand after a few years of living in India the values of the culture: commitment to family and friends is very important, to appreciate the simplicity and chaos of life in India. (I changed my perception overtime and learned different perspective on life, to adapt and enjoy it).

57. Important not to pretend you speak FL better than you actually. Do not try to use FL words until you feel very comfortable that you are pronouncing correctly or you might offend people and mess up the deal pretty quickly.

B. Culture

1. Definitions of cultural sensitivity

33. Cultural sensitivity means localization, which allows for local processes.

73. Cultural sensitivity means having an open mind to different premises that guide thinking and behavior and therefore communication when interacting with local community. Having an attitude towards bringing about change means giving up your established premises and accommodating to a different rhythm and ways of reaching consent and interpreting the local culture.

73. Cultural sensitivity has a huge impact because it means paying attention to and understanding the historical assumptions, which have shaped a people’s culture.

20. Communicating in the FC is equivalent to learning emotional intelligence: you learn it by hearing what is not spoken.

28. Cultural sensitivity means being able to read the message: “what works for you does not work for us”.

33. In my industry cultural sensitivity takes the name of “localization”: taking into account/adjusting company policies to the specific needs, elements and practices, which

allow for the local processes. i.e. we don't market using first names but Mr. & Mr. X. (Last name). Not to be rude.

60. Cultural sensitivity is perhaps the most important thing. You learn it via experience, not from books.

2. Culture relativity

66. When I worked as a lawyer in Europe, I learned just how differently attorneys in various European countries approach the practice of law. In order to understand the opinions they provide, you really need to understand how they approach and interpret the law in general, based on their local culture.

73. Respect for the local culture means that even just because you have science and research behind you to back your point of view does not mean you have the right to impose your point of view. You are not the only one with a monopoly on the truth.

61. Language and culture learning are totally intertwined. The way of speaking reflects a way of thinking. People at the end of the day live the way they think. When I speak German I think differently than when I speak English or Spanish. This has been a complete eye opener. I could not imagine my career without it insight.

61. Every place has its secret key or code and you must learn and figure it out.

3. Language vs. culture learning

72. Learning the culture is more complicated, and takes time and maturity. Learning a FL is more straightforward. Kids can learn languages very easily, but understanding another culture takes time and adult maturity.

22. FL & FC learning go hand in hand it's a *sine qua non* but I'm not sure which encompasses the other. The most important insight into a culture is the language. I assume the culture is the umbrella and the language falls under.

53. You can understand the culture without learning the language but cannot learn the language without understanding the culture.

4. Cultural norms examples

66. I have experienced cultural training in several places around the world and think it definitely is crucial. It's very important in Thailand, for example, not to place your feet in certain positions or touch a Thai's head, since doing so would be very insulting in the local culture.

72. In Lao, Thailand and Vietnam and in most of Asian cultures it is considered disrespectful to point with your toes at something (most dirty part of body) or to touch someone's head (most respectful part of body), specially if this is a older person: sign of greatest disrespect and insulting.

8. In Latin America there is a huge value placed on loyalty while in US people are more inclined to judge and discard a relationship more quickly with a cold assessment of results. In Latin America on the other hand, people tend to put up without results for a while due to loyalty. This can be a very important value, but also problematic.

8. Humor is very cultural. My personal tendency to sarcasm coming from a Danish-American perspective found great difference in Ecuador where people do not value it and are very literal and take things at face value, so they take offence to sarcasm. Humor can be very dangerous when applied wrongly. Because humor can take very different forms in different cultures and your own cultural version of humor could really backfire when it is not understood by a different culture.

68. In Russia it's common to put friendship first and money or work second. Cannot come up to someone, unless, you have already been introduced by somebody else. (They will call security).

68. People are not as open about sharing personal issues in the US while in Russia and other Slavic countries people develop much closer relationships than in the US. In the US they keep their private life to themselves even after years of working closely. This is not considered normal in Russia.

68. *Banya*. The way to have a business meeting in Russia is in a '*banya*' (steam room/sauna), as a way to get together, have fun and drink Vodka. It is unlike the formality of American business meetings. Political correctness and legal liability at work means you cannot joke and relax at work or tell sexual jokes. In Russia, people are more 'real', even when depressed, because they show it. In the USA people pretend or fake they are happy all time. Russians don't smile much, especially with strangers. In the US you pretend you know, while in Russia you ask what's wrong and its no problem to seem ignorant.

19. In Caribbean countries, when you greet, it's important to ask about the welfare of the family.

20. It is important to be aware of local mores and taboos. In the Middle East you don't throw food away; to shake a woman's hand, a male waits for her to first extend it to him; you keep greater body distance; a house is a home, not an investment.

27. With Koreans you must learn about their cultural idiosyncrasies and formal business etiquette, in order not to offend them, or breach contract, etc. To understand Korean business etiquette, it is key to understand the history of Korea and the impact of

Confucianism on Korean business practice. It's painstaking to build relationships and important to follow their business etiquette.

38. Understand that in certain countries friendliness/*simpatía* is very important and key for business negotiations (Brazil, Spanish Latin America).

42. You must be culturally sensitive when selling in other countries or cultures, i.e. hard-selling to the Japanese, or selling products that are not ethical in other countries like selling ham & cheese to the Arabs, or alcohol, short skirts and hair products in South Arabia.

43. It's important to know local social norms and taboos. In the Middle East, for example, during the month of Ramadan it is difficult to close any deals, social drinking is not acceptable, you don't call people after working hours to do business.

47. In Africa tribal issues and family loyalty are very important; this is difficult for US, Europeans and Latin Americans to understand. Cultural sensitivity means you understand this important fact and adapt to it.

52. People in Korea are very protective of their professional network. Not like US where everybody offers to put you in touch with colleagues to assist you.

55. You must be aware of the differences in the way people relate and what is acceptable culturally in the way you approach people, i.e. Native American peoples vs. African American, the way to approach new people, cold-calling might be perceived as too aggressive and intimidating to the former and maybe not the latter. Acculturation differences apply.

60. Try to view culture from other people's perspective, not your own, i.e. Traffic rules not followed everywhere; in Brazil they work until 9pm. In France the business dinner is very important while US not.

5. Negotiation styles

27. South Koreans consider the signing of the written contract to be the beginning of the relationship. It is like a memory of understanding after which comes whom does what and what consequences are and the real negotiations begin. By contrast, in the West it is completely different and the other way around since you do all the negotiating and sorting out before you sign a contract. If you don't understand this key cultural difference, which underpins business negotiations, you will go to Seoul, spend a fortune entertaining CEO and come home with a contract and discover this was just a point of departure.

53. When you do business in many different parts of the world you have to go into business negotiations with the awareness that in certain cultures business decision-making takes longer in certain countries than others, i.e. Asian countries (Japan, Thailand) they take time

and nothing happens quickly. Difficult for Americans to understand that in certain countries it is rude to say No (this does not mean they are agreeing to anything). Some cultures are less direct and you must understand this.

57. Differences in negotiation styles. Pakistanis are very aggressive and expect a lot and believe in the need to “to put your boot on” right away. Mexicans, take their time and begin by building a relationship until they feel comfortable and feel they can trust you. Only then they begin negotiations.

54. Style of communication and structure differences are very important. With American and Europeans there is more emphasis on substance in negotiations, and much less on form. By contrast with Asian cultures there is more emphasis on form. In Central African countries style is very important. In South East Asian countries both are important but you get things done. The way you provide feedback is key. Things like how you address people based on their status in their community, age, etc. is very important. In many cultures you have to be careful how you word hard data in a report (economic data) so it is not offensive or harsh and make things more positive.

71. There are many local customs that are a serious concern to local locals. In Loa it is forbidden for a female to touch Buddhist monk whereas this is not a problem in Japan. There are no excuses for foreigners for some customs and any misconduct by company’s staff will affect its business.

60. In Japan you never say NO. It is considered rude. The Japanese prefer to say “It’s difficult”, which really means “No way”. The Chinese are more direct. The French very political: they never answer directly because they always want a way out. Germans, like Americans are very direct.

60. Cultural differences in negotiation styles. In Asia & US and Europe (UK & Germany) there is a structure. In France and other Southern European countries there is not much structure, agenda or timeframe: the important thing is to talk. There the key difference depends on whom you work with. With Germany and Americans you can move fast. The French and Japanese never make quick decisions, they want to take their time to make decisions.

60. In Arab world no women accepted in negotiations. In Asia they accept women with decision power.

63. The Chinese are not very flexible, so if you understand the way they think in their negotiations you will more able to find an inflexion point and be better at having them change their minds. Especially since you don’t always know what they think since they don’t like to say no.

69. In Asia, especially India there is less respect for women professionals taking decision roles and issues of cast, which many American professional women do not working in this capacity. Because I have a multicultural background, I am more equipped to be more flexible to cultural differences and not take offense easily.

6. High vs. low context cultures

2. There are low vs. high context communication cultures. In Mexico there is a saying: "*Observar mucho, oír mucho, y hablar poco*" (observe a lot, listen a great deal, and speak little). There is a non-confrontational style based on the belief that "*el que se enoja, pierde*" ("He who gets mad, loses"). This is an indirect communication style. The language is not direct, but used to hide behind it. Examples: "*tú me entiendes?*" ("Know what I mean?")

8. It's important to understand and adapt yourself to the different ways people relate and communicate with each other. For example, there are different styles of communicating in US vs. Latin America where there is a lot of preamble before starting business, which takes time, while in the US there is no problem in getting more quickly right to the point., rather then spending time building a relationship.

16. In Ecuador using the term liar is considered taboo and greatly offensive. In German (a culture with more direct communication) you can use the term without problems.

61. You must be aware of cultural differences in business etiquette. In Asian countries form is very important (greetings, bowing, accepting and giving a business card, hierarchy), while in Germany, where people are more direct and to the point, they want to get things done fast. They might appear rude to outsiders, but they don't mean to.

69. Form is very important in some cultures, i.e. Asian cultures. Very different form American and European.

7. Social Status & Authority (Power Distance)

71. Culture awareness assists me knowing whom I need to consult with and pay respect to in order to get things done, and whose toes not to step on.

15. It is important to know the business culture of country, i.e. Japan, titles "san", bowing all the time as sign of respect, accepting a business card with both hands and studying it carefully in front of presenter, following always the chain of command (beginning with equal an up the ladder), seating at table according to hierarchy.

48. Issue of social status differences within a culture and how you deal with it is something different in every culture. Americans have a belief that we are all at the same level and all should be treated equally. This is difficult to understand in other places.

59. Situation or task affected by cultural issues: Ensuring the highest-level person in the room is shown more respect. If you don't, you could be punished. The punishment could vary from not meeting with you later, not meeting with you at all, or even disregarding your attempts to make contact.

61. You must be aware of cultural differences in business etiquette. In Asian countries form is very important (greetings, bowing, accepting and giving a business card, hierarchy), while in Germany, where people are more direct and to the point, they want to get things done fast. They might appear rude to outsiders, but they don't mean to.

8. Individualism vs. collectivism

41. In Latin America people work more in groups at work than alone at their desks. The culture is more collaborative while in the US people prefer email and group discussions are considered more stressful thus conflict is avoided rather than promoted. If it is avoided, it takes longer to be productive.

69. In large groups many Asians do not speak up, even if it is to ask what they don't understand. Standing up from the group is perceived as immature and wanting to show-off while in America there is no problem speaking up or asking questions.

9. Time orientation

19. Be sensitive to the sense of time and pace of work. Do not be rigid or get offended by people who see these differently. For example, in Caribbean countries being late or not showing up is not a serious offense.

71. In West Africa people have a much more fluid sense of urgency, "it will get done when it gets done." To show up an hour late for a meeting to them was not a sign of disrespect to anyone else or to the group. They are used to spending time waiting for things to get going and do not have a sense of urgency to finish things up in order to move on to the next task. I had to adjust my expectations and learn to not take their tardiness as a sign of disrespect. I also tried to put some constraints on the extent of their tardiness so that, as a group, we were able to accomplish some tasks and make progress. I think we were able to come to a compromise.

23. North Americans have a hard time adjusting to a change in schedule, to people being late or behind schedule.

26. Timeliness is not necessary a cultural norm in all countries. You must be aware of differences in concept of time, dress code, etc. Must adapt to local and be offended by different cultural values. i.e. In Mexico people are rarely on time while in Brazil they tend to be timely like in the US.

46. In the legal profession, cultural sensitivity is required to understand differences in way people view contracts (long vs. short term). In some countries they do not want to commit long term. CS is critical.

48. The concept of disrespect is a relative cultural term. When you are late in arriving at a meeting there are different etiquette rules; In the US it's OK to announce yourself by greeting the audience or speaker while in others places it is the rule to best sneak in or out and not make any noise. What is disrespectful depends on the person's cultural assessment.

51. You have to understand cultural differences: Germans begin work at 7am but leave later. The French prefer starting work later and staying till 19:30pm.

59. A simple one here is what time you have dinner. In the US it is common to eat between 6:00-8:00PM. In the Latin American countries it is usually at least 8:00 PM and in some countries as late as 11:00 PM before eating.

59. Situation or task affected by cultural issues: a) Deciding on what time to eat.

61. Important to be aware of cultural differences, i.e. work and lunch hours. When my sale volume plummeted I realized I had been calling customers in Spain during their 12-4 pm lunch hour and nobody was available.

10. Religion

72. In Malaysia, a Muslim country, you don't schedule meetings on a Friday, a day when most men attend Mosque. If you do, your meeting might be postponed for weeks as a sign of them not appreciating your offensive gesture.

11. Proxemics

68. Personal space is a cultural difference. Russians are not used to American personal space, which is much closer.

20. In the Middle East you keep greater body distance while speaking to people.

45. In Indonesia there are differences even between islands. The Javanese psyche is different from the Balinese. If you are too forward and show emotions in Java it can be insulting, while in Bali it's the opposite. With the former you should be more detached in negotiations, otherwise you are viewed as 'invading their personal space'.

12. Paralanguage, gestures

71. In West Africa it is considered impolite to offer someone your left hand in a handshake, to eat with your left hand, or to hand someone something (money, an object, etc.) with your

left hand. If you were not aware of this cultural norm, you could quite easily offend multiple people in the course of a single day.

1. Knowing the local cultural meaning of gestures and body language is better than not knowing. However, in last 20 yrs of globalization it is not as crucial as before.

3. Body gestures, tone, eyes, local phrases and expressions. All are cultural aspects of language.

9. Importance of knowing local customs, i.e. Bowing low enough as sign of respect (Japan), or sticking chop sticks upright into rice (sign that somebody has died).

10. Importance of business etiquette (Dos & don'ts) when you go out to eat, knowing appropriate table manners, taking shoes off, etc.

10. Foreign language learning gives you a vision into the culture. You cannot get that deeply into the culture without first learning the language. I find that when I switch to speaking Japanese I begin bowing to people, and as soon as I switch to French I begin to greet people by kissing them on both cheeks

22. In Middle East it is a tremendous offence to raise your foot when you cross your legs and show the sole of your feet to the person sitting in front of you. You must know this in order not to commit the ultimate offense.

36. Classic examples of cultural issues that affect business are differences in acceptable body language (using left hand to eat or greet in the Arab world, showing the soles of your feet in Middle East and Asia, using animated hand gestures to speak in Japan, while in Italy the lack of hand gestures could be perceived as non authentic).

41. Importance of mirroring when you are in a different culture. In the Middle East people are very expressive with their gestures and body language while in Latin America and Europe are less over-enthusiastic. In the US personal body space is very different and you would probably appear too loud if from the Middle East. It matters that you send the right cultural message across.

46. Important to be careful of choice of words, aware of local business protocol, gestures. I have learned I have to be careful not to hurt/insult people and make them feel inferior.

56. The culture is there and you have to adapt to it quickly, but the language comes later. If you don't speak the language you should learn the gestures.

56. In Saudi Arabia men cannot look at women in the eye because this is considered flirting.

59. I always try to ensure I follow the country's practices. For example, the touching of cheeks while simulating a kiss is a common greeting to members of the opposite sex. This is a little uneasy for an American who normally has to know someone for some time before getting that.

61. You must be aware of cultural differences in business etiquette. In Asian form is very important (greetings, bowing, accepting and giving a business card, hierarchy) than in Germany where people are more direct and to the point and want to get things done fast (they might appear rude to outsiders but they don't mean to).

13. Pragmatics

2. In the Dominican Republic, for example, when people don't want to talk about complex or sensitive subjects, or not wish to give details of an uncomfortable topic, they say "*Ya tú sabes...*" "*tú me entiendes...*" in this way '*se disfrazan los argumentos con muletillas, con un albur*' (you dress your meaning) by way of a filler, pun or *double entendre*.

3. In Peru people often say yes to you, but unless the tone is also yes, they might really be saying No. The culture really does not like saying no, even if that is what they mean. If you don't know both the language and the culture you would have a difficult time reading the real level of commitment your party is expressing in his/her "yes".

14. Important to understand American are more informal in their business communications and relationships than Latin Americans. You should understand the importance of the use of *usted* vs. *tú* form of address.

16. Learning the local language is not sufficient, it must be complemented by learning the LC. I know cases of German Embassy employees in Ecuador whom could not get any information because they did not know how to ask.

59. Many times I have used the 'confirm and clarify' technique to ensure my message was clearly understood only to find out later it was not. This is very frustrating, because people think they know the meaning of the word(s) and misinterpret the meaning of the conversation.

10. Understanding when informal language is appropriate and when not. Phone conversations can be impacted by cultural reasons: knowing how to start, end and say goodbye is very important. One thing is email, another is letters and official documents. It is key to know the different forms of address that are culturally appropriate.

14. Symbols

45. Dress code is important to know and follow. In certain cultures white dress signifies the color of death (India). In china you don't give white flowers since they are a symbol of

death. In India the keeping of handkerchief in the pocket is very unsanitary while in China spitting in the street is acceptable.

74. When I went to Hong Kong there were new offices. The first thing I did was to consult with local monks and karma experts to make sure our offices were properly aligned (*Feng Shui*). Many renovations were needed with changes in furniture and design office, but, by doing so, the organization recognized my cultural sensitivity and was able to strengthen my organization and in record time produce outstanding results. By working together with local people we were able to achieve this.

15. Competitive advantage of culture knowlege

1. Today, anybody can do business with anybody anywhere in the world. Having C abilities is only one more competitive advantage, but not as crucial as it was before.

4. My desire to learn Quechua comes from my desire to better understand the culture and the values of its people. I believe learning the language would really help my work effectiveness.

72. I have experienced instances where colleagues were no longer welcomed back to the country because they were perceived as rude: being pedantic, or perceived as talking down to people.

72. I have a competitive advantage over colleagues, because I know I am treated differently from my colleagues, i.e. I get invited more often to events and activities, I am treated almost like one of them.

8. If you cannot build relationships it will obviously have an impact on your bottom line.

9. "You can live with the what if you understand the why".

15. FL & FC abilities make me more open-minded by knowing different ways of looking at the world.

17. FL & FC abilities make me more flexible and more apt to work with a larger range of people.

19. Having FL & FC abilities open more doors. When you are bilingual English-Spanish you can work in US, anywhere in L.A. and Caribbean.

26. When you speak the local language you complement the business relationship, which you might have successfully carried out using a FL. By speaking the local language you are opening yourself to the whole environment around you, get more out of the whole local situation, allow people to communicate and share with you in a wider scope in areas which

could affect your business. When you speak the local language you can catch what is going on around you, read the local newspaper. You have multiple channels of communication while if you only speak English you are operating on a more limited 'mono channel' of communication.

29. FL & FC abilities have helped me accept differences in people better. It has helped me become broader in my approach towards life and work. Sometimes you don't know what you have until either you lose it or you are exposed to people that don't have it. When at work it has helped a lot as I have been able to translate and convey the right message between parties.

46. Today speaking the local language is no longer a competitive advantage but rather, what helps you close the deal. In today's globalized business world it is what allows you to remain competitive. To do what others cannot. Learning FL & FC are business assets.

63. When you learn how people like to eat their food, how they like to drink their tea, what music they like to listen to, you have an advantage in business. If you know how your customer thinks, you have more access to them. When you study Chinese characters you are learning about the way Chinese culture thinks. Language and culture learning go hand in hand.

74. The answer lies in that US expats are now the minority worldwide. This is because there is a belief that most Americans lack the abilities on a comparative basis. Thus, there has been a realization that they affect negatively the bottom line of the company.

16. Language vs. culture competitive advantage

71. Not having the foreign language abilities and cultural awareness will only negatively affect business relationships and the implementation of business plans. Most often, they will be unsuccessful because they had failed to take certain cultural practices and values into account.

72. Lack of C abilities can be more detrimental to a company than lack of FL abilities. Negotiations can come to an immediate halt or worse, the work of many years and many individuals can be undone by lack of cultural abilities.

73. You learn the FC by exposure to FL Learning. FL means cultural learning. Proficiency in FL is not sufficient; there is a gap. If you don't develop knowledge FC you run the risk of being stigmatized. Linguistic proficiency does not equip you to operate in a FC; you need a 'shared framework'. I was at great disadvantage until I had one.

26. Understanding a FL is just the mechanics of communication. Understanding the FC means understanding the make-up of the people in a broader sense: the mental processes, why and how they think. Understanding medium the mechanics of the communication is

one thing, understanding the culture allows you to understand the social of the community, how they might react, allow to anticipate, extrapolate, and read people better, i.e. attending local theatre, understanding people on the streets, going to parties in the LL, etc.

26. As a manager without the local language and without local culture awareness your decision-making will not be based on having full information, and they might not be the best you can make. You might be reacting to issues or people due to misinterpretation of local language or LC, which would make you consider the wrong information, provide the wrong information, or make the wrong decision.

27. If you learn the language without learning the culture people will not always understand what you mean and you will most likely use inappropriate words in inappropriate contexts. Culture impacts pronunciation and dialects. The culture (philosophy, traditions, etc.) influences the L and must be understood.

53. Foreign language knowledge is good and important but nothing is as important as cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Languages are very well and good and they can help you gain the cultural knowledge, they might also be counterproductive at times, as said before. Nothing is as important as cultural knowledge, which is a tremendously huge advantage, difficult to quantify.

53. Culture is more important than language. I've done business in 13 countries in Asian I don't think I needed to learn 13 Asian languages to succeed in business. Some of these languages take at least for four years. English is the language of international business. Cultural knowledge and sensitivity is what matters in this instance.

60. On a scale of 1-10, underestimating the culture is a No. 9, speaking English is No. 6.

61. Language and culture abilities are no longer luxury assets or competitive advantages, they are essential tools of business in today's globalized business world.

17. Compensatory strategies

71. Not being afraid to ask for help is essential. Having a sense of humility, a sense of humor, and a large reserve of patience also come in handy.

3. When you feel you don't have adequate FL or FC abilities in a situation, you sit back and observe, learn, ask questions or use interpreters (L & C) or translators (L).

41. Take the time to create a good local impression. Don't be too abrupt. Once you set a bad impression things can go negatively quite quickly.

53. To compensate for a deficiency, you talk less and listen more. Try to pick up nuances (behavioral). To compensate for not knowing the language you compensate with the cultural

aspects and vice versus. Go with the flow and see how things are going, use to compensate by opening your mind, you are curious and use one to compensate for lack of other. People either become too aggressive or clam-up, both are useless and counter productive.

18. Beliefs about culture

1. When you have problems and you don't know the culture it is not easy to predict the other party's reaction. However, due to norms and standards that exist today for commercial trade, it is not a problem.

36. Lack of cultural abilities is greatly dependent on the type of person you select to work in a different culture. I believe that this is more inherent in the character of the person and needs careful selection if being sent to work in a different culture. I am strong believer that we need to pick the right person for the given situation and always put inter-personal abilities as one of the main criteria for selection.

36. I believe that these (FL & FC abilities) are all important in being successful at doing business. In general my experience has been that in going to work or doing business in another language and culture, you need to do some background work to show your interest in the culture but more important is for them to feel that you respect what they are. When in Rome do as the Romans do.

39. Cultural issues affect the effectiveness of a company and the perception of the company and success of project, especially when you are competing with other firms.

45. After living in six countries I have come to understand how even the smallest details of cultural behavior can put people off and be insulting. At work any mistake can really break a negotiations.

46. When you show an interest in local culture and way of life people open up and are willing to share activities & information. You show you are not there just to do business but have to have an exchange between people.

47. Having someone without FL & FC abilities could be catastrophic. It could generate a lot of misunderstandings and false expectations for the company.

48. There is a saying in education that goes "kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care". I think in international transactions when you are communicating across cultures it's the same thing. People will view you as an outsider until they know you are sincere and culturally sensitive. Then they can view you as a 'foreign caring insider'.

56. Important to show that you are trying to encompass their culture. Knowing the culture helps you understand why people do what they do in other cultures.

57. Once you learn a FL they are static while culture is fluent and changes constantly over time.

74. Overall, I think Americans lack cultural sensitivity because their ‘nucleus’ is limited and have difficulty relating to people of different cultures and ages.... They tend to talk and not listen, to expound of what has been done on a personally (especially) rather than what can be jointly built. Much is gained by creating relationships and here is where the typical American falters. Having cultural sensitivity is not only talking about business.

19. Recommendations

67. Studying the culture, customs, history, religion and politics prior to traveling to a FC would much help in doing int’l business smoothly.

2. Whenever I encounter a new and unfamiliar place, I try to follow the United Nation’s Motto: “Arrive, observe, listen”.

73. Refrain from applying the conclusions from your culture anywhere but in your culture. Question the every beliefs of your own culture. Try to learn as much as possible about the history of the place you are visiting so you find the historical origins of ways of perceiving things. Have a reflexive mind and an attitude of revising your own personal assumptions.

9. Whenever you go into another culture to sell something, be mindful of people’s WIFM (“What’s in it for me”). It has to be a win-win for both parties or people will not “buy-in” the project or deal.

15. Recommend spending time abroad to learn, to become open-minded and learn that they are different ways of doing things. You should be more inclusive of other ways.

15. Don’t recommend going in doing things the American way. They will only resent you. Arrogance does not work. You need to hire locally in order to operate locally.

21. International development and environmental workers often arrive in new countries assuming that what worked in one country will also work in another without understanding that there are subtle yet powerful economic, social and cultural differences which must be taken into consideration and understood.

26. Do not export your own culture. Learn the local culture and become bi-cultural. Try hard to understand the local culture and try to blend in.

31. With FL & FC knowledge you are able to come into another country and meet people at their level and be reasonably polite. Otherwise, if you come in as an imperialist imposing your language and culture, they will shut you down and not cooperate.

32. Be open and learn to accept that people think in different ways than you do, and yours is not the only way.

36. Do your homework before you go international. Some great icebreakers – historical facts, size of country, population, political climate, economic climate, security, competitors, market dynamics, good understanding of the customers you will be doing business with e.g. size in terms of annual report facts, number of employees, structure, key players, others.

- Be flexible and treat people with respect.
- Show an interest in their customs.
- Ask their advice on local knowledge.
- Participate in some of their social activities
- Listen but never discuss local issues such as politics, religion, etc.

37. When lacking sufficient FL & FC abilities you find yourself constantly compensating for it. I have hired people with L abilities, which are not the best for job, which in turn, brings advantages and disadvantages. The issue is always trying to find a balance between technical expertise required for job and language abilities. The people who have both at a high level are very much in demand and are very expensive to hire.

38. As a foreigner I might be able to get away with asking questions which a local would never be able to (taboo) and I might take advantage that as a foreigner I would be forgiven for my indiscretion (rudeness). Nevertheless, you have to be careful not to abuse this privilege and use it carefully to your advantage.

41. Understand that your way is not always the only way. Don't assume "it's my way or the highway". Rather, adjust your pace to that of the culture you are working in. Stay open and curious.

42. Recommend you 'Localize yourself' as quickly as possible. If you can try to learn local language & culture, otherwise you will not be able to pitch the product in effective way.

47. I was responsible for all of Africa (at an oil services company). I learned that you never put a foreigner in front of company locally. You need a local, especially at the front desk. This has its limitations and advantages. Each time you arrive at a new place you must rely on locals who have the knowledge to guide you on what is acceptable and what is not. Independent of if you speak the local language, find someone to tutor you in the local culture.

47. Being an ex-pat is not easy, but the rewards are great. I have demonstrated ability to adapt to life in different cultures and countries, i.e. Europe, Latin America, Africa, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

53. My advice would be: “don’t go with any stereotyped notions about people. Take the person as a person. Apply the cultural aspects about that culture and try and put into perspective the person and the particular context. Appearances can be deceptive, take people for what they are. Above all, don’t be arrogant, be humble, learn from other people and you can succeed. Understand some cultures are individualistic, others communitarian, some make fast decisions, other take a long time to reach a group consensus.”

Appendix F: Language learner & communication strategies

1. Learn the basics: greeting, say please, thank you, God-willing, etc. (1)
2. Communicate at your FL knowledge level (1)
3. Identify key word(s) or grammar verb case/s (1)
4. Give increased care & clarity to communication (3)
5. Be patient, slow down, take your time (6)
5. Check your audience for understanding (1)
6. DO NOT ignore your inability to understand & communicate and act aloof (2)
7. Ask lots of questions (6)
8. Use lots of gestures/body language, if necessary (3)
9. Use lots of circumlocution/keep plugging away (3)
10. Use a mix of languages together with English (1)
11. Resort to drawing pictures (1)
12. Compensate with superior technical abilities in order to gain respect; learn the basic field terminology, be technically competent (3)
13. Rely more on written communication, i.e. PPP in English (3)
14. Use Google translate (4)
15. Consult with other fluent/bilingual/native local language speaker /acquaintance/colleague or invite them to meeting(s) (10)
16. Have an embarrassed look, use humility (1)
17. Don't take life so serious/use humor, even if self-deprecating (2)
18. Overcompensate by showing genuine interest/effort in learning L&C (1)

19. Compensate for weak foreign language or culture skills by using one over the other (1)

Glossary

ACTFL: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Bilingualism/multilingualism: is the act of using two, or more, languages.

Business etiquette: is a code of behavior that delineates expectations for social behavior according to contemporary conventional norms within a society, social class, or group.

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: it is the European Union' official guideline for describing language learners' proficiency in foreign languages.

Cross-cultural communications: often used interchangeably with intercultural communications, is an academic field that studies how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate among themselves and across cultures.

Culture: a nebulous term with uncertain boundaries and no easy definition. Among many definitions of culture that exist, the current study will use the one by British Anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1871). Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Cultural awareness: is the ability to look outside of ourselves and recognize the values and customs of any culture, including your own, and pin point the many ways these may differ.

Cultural Competence: often used interchangeably with cultural abilities and refers to the ability to interact effectively with individuals from different cultures, ethnic or social

backgrounds. It typically comprises four areas of competency: (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) Attitude towards cultural differences, (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) Cross-cultural abilities. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Cultural Sensitivity: means being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior. This implies a belief that attention to the cultural context is important (Stafford, Bowman, Eking, Hanna, & Lopoies-DeFede, 1997).

Cultural abilities: often used interchangeably with cultural competence refers to the ability to interact effectively with individuals from different cultures, ethnic or social backgrounds. It typically comprises four areas of competency: (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) Attitude towards cultural differences, (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) Cross-cultural abilities. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Cultural relativism: The principle, first articulated in 1887 by Anthropologist Franz Boas, which informs us that culture, or civilization, is not an absolute concept, but rather, it is very much relative, and thus our ideas and beliefs are true only as far as our own culture applies.

Cultural Quotient (CQ): A relatively new term (Earley & Ang, 2003), used by business and government to refer to the measurement of 'cultural intelligence', namely, the

ability to recognize and understand the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of a group of people as well as to use that knowledge in achieving specific goals.

Communicative Competence (CC): A term coined by Hymes (1966) which refers to "communicative form and function in integral relation to each other", and is widely used in SLA and linguistics to refer to the theoretical concept developed by Canale & Swain (1980).

Communication Strategies: strategies that second language learners use to overcome problems in order to convey their intended meaning (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997), and may include paraphrasing, substitution, coining new words, switching to the first language, and asking for clarification (Ellis, 2008). With the exception of switching languages, the same strategies are employed by native speakers as well.

Gesture: A form of non-verbal communication used to convey a distinct message, with or without the accompaniment of verbal speech. It may include facial expressions, movement of the hand or body postures.

Global business professional: an individual with significant work experience and expertise in dealing with communication and negotiation of transactions across cultures and national borders.

Globalization: The process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities (Al-Rodhan, R.F. Nayef and Gérard Stoudmann, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, 2006).

Cross-border trade/transaction: generally refers to the flow of goods and services across international borders.

Emic and etic: two different approaches from the field of Anthropology that refer to two types of behavior human data. The emic approach investigates how local people think

while the etic approach switches to the focus to the categories and interpretations used by the anthropologist doing the observation.

High and Low Context Cultures: refers to the cultural style of everyday communication that emphasizes certain types of messages over others. In high context cultures the choice of words is so important that fewer words are needed, leaving most unsaid. In low context cultures you must be more explicit (literal), yet the value of a single words carry less weight.

Hybridity: The integration of cultural bodies, signs, and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures (Bhabha, 1994).

Intercultural: is what happens when two, or more, culturally different groups come together, interact and communicate. Often used interchangeably with cross-cultural, yet the meaning is quite different. Cross cultural stresses the contrast or differences between cultures while intercultural focuses on what happens when different cultures come together, interact and communicated.

Intercultural Competence

Also known as Cross Cultural Competence (3Cs), Intercultural Competence is defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures. The United States Army Research Institute defines Intercultural Competence as “a set of cognitive, behavioral, and affective/motivational components that enable individuals to adapt effectively in intercultural environments”.

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

IDI is a statistically based assessment that measures an individual's intercultural competence by way of answering a 50-item multiple-choice instrument, used by many business schools and international corporations around the world.

Expatriate: (expat for short) is a person temporarily or permanently residing in a country and culture other than that of the person's upbringing.

FL: Foreign language. Sometimes used interchangeably with Second Language.

Intercultural Communication: is a form of global communication. It is used to describe the wide range of communication problems that naturally appear within an organization made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Intercultural communication is sometimes used synonymously with cross-cultural communications. It seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate and perceive the world around them (Wikipedia.org).

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence refers to the construct developed by Michael Byram that measures the appropriateness and effectiveness of intercultural communication encompassing five specific types of knowledge (mental/critical awareness), abilities (interpreting and relating/discovery and interaction) and attitudes.

IBC: International Business Communications is the academic field within Communications that studies cross-cultural communications in business.

Language or linguistic proficiency: is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language. There is a lack of consistency in what constitutes proficiency. Fluency and language competency are often mistaken for equivalent terms. According to ACTFL performance, or competency, refers to three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational.

Language Learning Strategies: Foreign or second language (L2) learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques second language learners use, very often consciously, to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2 (Oxford, 1990b). They are different from Communication Strategies, which can also be used by all language users, not just second language learners.

L1: First language, native language or mother tongue.

L2: Second Language. Often used interchangeably with Foreign Language.

Lingua franca: any of various languages used as a common or commercial tongue among peoples of diverse speech (Merriam Webster).

Linguistic relativity: Also known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, which posits that the structure of the language itself influences the worldview of its speakers, i.e. that language affects the cognition of the speaker.

Thick Description: in Anthropology it is a methodology for doing ethnographic research, developed by Clifford Geertz, where a human behavior is explained together with the context in such a way that it gives meaning to outsiders of the culture being observed.

Third Place or Third Space: Coming from Post-colonial and Critical theory, these alternative conceptual spaces are where complex and evolving individual identities and culture affiliation lives. They are not to be found at either end of reductive binary/dual paradigms, i.e. neither native nor non-native speaker, colonialist or colonized, individualist or collectivist, East or West, Black or White. The third place is where the intersubjectivity and voice of the *hybrid* multilingual subject lives.

SLA: the scholarly field devoted to study the processes leading to the acquisition of any one of the four language skills in a second language.

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Curriculum Vita

María Luisa Echavarría received a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from the University of Reading, England in Sociology and Italian Studies, a B.A. in Economics from Florida Atlantic University, a Master of Public Administration from George Washington University, and an M.A. in Spanish Language and Culture from the Universidad de Salamanca, Spain. She also completed intensive summer training for teachers of Italian at the Università di Siena and the Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Italy, and for teachers of French at the IS-Aix-En-Provence, France.

María Luisa worked on Wall Street for nearly a decade in international banking, including serving as Assistant Vice President at European American Bank. Her responsibilities for client relationships throughout Europe and Latin America, and the related extensive foreign travel, required the application of her academic training in economics, finance and government and the use of her proficiency in five foreign languages.

During the past decade she has worked in academia, teaching college level Italian, Spanish and Spanish for Business at St. Edward's University in Austin, and Spanish at the University of Texas at Austin. She currently teaches Spanish for Healthcare Professionals, a language course with an important cultural component, at UT's School of Nursing.

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This dissertation was typed by the author.