

THE ROLE OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION WITH
DIFFERENT SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

By

CHEN GAO

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Communication

May 2011

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Approved By

Michael David Hazen, Ph.D., Advisor

Allan Loudon, Ph.D., Chair

Lisa Kiang, Ph.D.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this project would not have been possible without the guidance, knowledge, assistance, love and patience of those whom I am lucky enough to call teachers, family, and friends.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Michael Hazen, a great advisor, for working with me through my graduate study at Wake Forest University. His wisdom, knowledge, patience, guidance, and encouragement were invaluable to me. My great thanks and gratitude go to Dr. Allan Louden and Dr. Lisa Kiang for their kindness and generosity in reading, commenting, and offering helpful advice as members of my committee. Special thanks to Dr. Allan Louden who inspired me, as a mentor and friend, to pursue the academic path I have followed at Wake Forest University.

Thanks to the entire Wake Forest Department of Communication, especially Dr. Marina Krcmar, who made me a better writer, and more importantly, who set an example for me to be a rigorous scholar. I am also grateful for all the support I received from my dear friends: Aoshuang Chen, Zixuan Zhou, Juanjuan Yan, Tiara Hodges, Patty Ann Green, and Amy Rush. I really treasure your friendship and support. How could I sustain myself through these two years without you guys!

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my family. Thanks to my parents for always believing in me and supporting me. I could not have finished my graduate study without their endless love and faith in me. And thanks to my wonderful husband, Qingwei Jin, who is always well-prepared for listening to my frustrations, calming my nerves, and holding fast and supporting me with his greatest love and patience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| LIST OF TABLES | v |
| ABSTRACT | vi |
| CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 3 |
| Theoretical Framework of Intercultural Communication Competence..... | 3 |
| Methodological Issues in Researching Intercultural Communication Competence.... | 8 |
| Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication in Intercultural Context..... | 9 |
| Interpersonal communication vs. mass communication..... | 9 |
| Face-to-face vs. computer-mediated interpersonal communication..... | 10 |
| Relationships between Functions of Social Networks and Intercultural Communication Competence | 11 |
| The function of mono-cultural network..... | 12 |
| The function of bicultural network..... | 14 |
| The function of multicultural network..... | 16 |
| Hypotheses & Research Questions | 17 |
| CHAPTER TWO METHODOLOGY | 19 |
| Design | 19 |
| Procedures..... | 19 |
| Measurement..... | 20 |
| Demographics..... | 20 |
| Face-to-face interpersonal communication..... | 21 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Functions of social networks..... | 22 |
| Intercultural communication competence..... | 22 |
| CHAPTER THREE RESULTS..... | 26 |
| Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication..... | 26 |
| Functions of Social Networks..... | 27 |
| Host and Coethnic Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication..... | 29 |
| Relationships between Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication and Functions of Social Networks..... | 30 |
| Host Communication and Intercultural communication Competence..... | 32 |
| Coethnic Communication and Intercultural Communication Competence..... | 34 |
| Host Communication, Demographic Variables and Intercultural Communication Competence..... | 36 |
| Interethnic Communication and Intercultural Communication Competence..... | 38 |
| CHAPTER FOUR DISCUSSION..... | 40 |
| Findings & Summary..... | 40 |
| Face-to-face interpersonal communication..... | 40 |
| Functions of social networks | 41 |
| Face-to-face interpersonal communication and intercultural Communication competence..... | 42 |
| Limitations and Implications for Future Studies..... | 44 |
| Conclusion..... | 45 |
| REFERENCES..... | 47 |
| APPENDIX A Correlation Matrix for Major Variables..... | 53 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| APPENDIX B Demographic Questions..... | 54 |
| APPENDIX C Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication..... | 55 |
| APPENDIX D Functions of Social Networks..... | 57 |
| APPENDIX E Intercultural Communication Competence Scale..... | 58 |
| APPENDIX F Intercultural Communication Competence Scale (Adapted)..... | 61 |
| APPENDIX G Participant Email..... | 62 |
| APPENDIX H Chinese Version of the Questionnaire..... | 63 |
| CURRICULUM VITAE..... | 68 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page |
|--|------|
| I The Quantity of Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication with Each Type of Social Network | 26 |
| II The Quality of Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication with Each Type of Social Network | 27 |
| III Functions of Social Networks | 28 |
| IV Correlations between Host and Coethnic Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication | 30 |
| V Correlations between Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication and Functions of Social Networks | 31 |
| VI The Predicting Power of Host Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication and Functions Variables on Intercultural Communication Competence | 34 |
| VII Correlations between Demographic Variables, Host Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication, and Intercultural Communication Competence | 37 |

ABSTRACT

The present study examines the extent to which non-native individuals were engaged in face-to-face interpersonal communication with three types of social networks (host, coethnic, and interethnic). It also examines how non-natives used these social networks to fulfill their various needs in the host society and the relative importance of their communication activities in the development of intercultural communication competence. Data were collected from 116 Chinese graduate students studying at universities in southeastern United States and also those who newly graduated from those graduate programs and had been working in the United States. The findings suggest that host and interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication are significant and helpful to the non-natives' effective functioning in the host society and their development of intercultural communication competence. In comparison, coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication might play an insignificant or minor role in improving non-natives' intercultural communication competence. The overarching goal of the study is to help sojourners and immigrants in the success of developing intercultural communication competence.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The history of the United States is characterized by different waves of immigration (Pedraza, 2006). In recent years, approximately 11.7% (33.5 million) of the U.S. population were immigrants, up from 7.9% (20 million) in 1990 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004). What distinguishes the current wave of immigration from those in the past, however, is the dramatic shift in countries of origin. While 90% of immigrants living in the United States in early 1900s were Europeans, the current wave is marked by the huge influx of people from Latino and Asian countries, which account for more than half of today's immigrants (Lustig & Koester, 2006). This burgeoning demographic diversity makes intercultural contact inevitable, thus providing an important explanation as to why in this ever cultural-mixing society being competent in intercultural communication is necessary.

As pointed out by Lustig and Koester (2006), the ability to communicate in various intercultural contexts is an increasingly important competence in both public and private life. Since an understanding of the intercultural communication process can increase chances of smooth and competent intercultural communication, researchers from various disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and communication, have shown keen interest in exploring intercultural communication between newcomers and host cultural environment, and much has been written on this fascinating and complex process and its

outcome—intercultural communication competence (e.g. Berry & Sam, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Kim, 1989, 1991; Munz, 2007).

Being removed from their long-standing friends and family members, immigrants and sojourners begin the process of constructing new sets of relationships to meet various social needs in the host country (Kim, 2001). First, to effectively function in a society guided by different social norms, values, and communicative patterns from those in home countries, immigrants and sojourners need to fit into the host culture through extensive engagement in social communication with local people. As noted by Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler (2009), interacting with native-born individuals can help immigrants and sojourners “secure information and insight into the mindset and behaviors of the local people, thereby providing them with points of reference for a check and validation of their own behaviors” (p. 10).

Second, newcomers also have access to networks of coethnics nearby in the new environment. Many immigrants and sojourners, who initially lack of social ties with local people when they move to a new country, may draw upon resources and seek help from their own ethnic groups. Communicating with people from one’s own ethnic group can compensate for an individual’s lack of social support in a host country (Kim, 2001; Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009).

Third, in a multicultural society like the United States, immigrants and sojourners inevitably find themselves in an environment involving newcomers from diverse cultures of origin. Communicating with people from other countries other than the host country can also be conducive in the sense that newcomers can facilitate each others’ psychological adjustment and cultural learning (Kashima & Loh, 2006).

Since immigrants and sojourners are inevitably faced with the pressure to reconcile the demands of various cultural heterogeneous contexts, it is necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of how involvements in interpersonal communication in the context of different social networks relate to intercultural communication competence. Hopefully, the present study will add to the body of work aimed at helping immigrants and sojourners understand the role of social networks in intercultural communication and facilitating their success in pursuit of intercultural communication competence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section describes literature relevant to the research purpose of the present study. It is organized into five parts: (1) the theoretical framework of intercultural communication competence; (2) the methodological issues in researching intercultural communication competence; (3) the function of face-to-face interpersonal communication in the intercultural context; (4) the relationship between different social networks and intercultural communication competence; and (5) resulting research questions/hypotheses.

Theoretical Framework of Intercultural Communication Competence

Previous studies on intercultural communication competence often have not been systematically conducted, resulting in ambiguous and inconsistent findings. An important issue in literature is the disagreement on how to define intercultural communication competence. A wide array of labels has been assigned to the concept by early scholars,

such as *assimilation*, *acculturation*, *adjustment*, or *adaptation* (Kim, 1991; Koester, Wiseman & Sanders, 1993). Although consensus has been reached about the conceptual and practical significance of research on intercultural communication competence, controversy fills research literature as to how to explain intercultural communication competence theoretically (Kim, 1991; Koester, Wiseman & Sanders, 1993). In other words, the study of intercultural communication competence is often influenced by the researcher's *conceptualization* of the term itself.

Applegate and Sypher (1983) argued:

“what is needed is not a theory of intercultural, cross-cultural, or interracial communication, but as base, a coherent theory of communication whose focus of convenience encompasses accounts of the probable impact of historically emergent forms of groups life on the various forms and functions communication assumes in everyday life” (p. 63).

Building upon this idea, Spitzberg (1989) further argued:

“the progress in researching intercultural communication competence is going to derive mainly from the development of sound interpersonal communication competence theories that can then be applied to the intercultural setting. The fundamental nature of the communication process does not change given different cultural contexts; only the contextual parameters change” (p. 261).

Indeed, Spitzberg and Cupach (1984, 1989) have attempted to integrate the diverse literature in terms of three basic components of interpersonal communication

competence: knowledge, motivation, and skills. In general, to be viewed as competent, an individual must understand the requirements and rules for communicating competently, desire to interact with a particular individual in a specific context, and have the skills to produce appropriate and effective communication.

This runs parallel to the intercultural communication competence research in the way that early researchers studying intercultural communication also proposed different perspectives on what constitute intercultural communication competence. Typically, they tended to emphasize one dimension of intercultural communication competence, i.e. knowledge, motivation, or skills (Imahori and Lanigan, 1989). For example, Hammer, Gudykunst & Wiseman (1978) attempted to discover behavioral skills in intercultural interaction that were perceived as effective by individuals. Similarly, Martin and Hammer (1989) examined what could be regarded as appropriate behaviors in intercultural relationships. Yet, in Bennett's (1986) work, the researcher focused on the affective nature of competence and argued that intercultural sensitivity is the key to gaining intercultural communication competence. In addition, Collier (1989) emphasized one's knowledge of social conventions pertaining to what constitutes appropriate conduct, and assessed communication competence by asking respondents to identify appropriate, rule-following conducts.

More recently, particularly in meta-analyses on the studies of intercultural communication competence, scholars began to argue that intercultural communication competence is a multi-faceted concept comprising knowledge, motivation and skills, with the goals of both effectiveness and appropriateness (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Gudykunst, 1998; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Kim, 1991; Lustig & Koester, 2006; Neulip, 2003;

Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Although no unified definition of what constitutes intercultural communication competence has been reached, a common approach to explore intercultural communication competence is through constructing theoretical models incorporating various indicators to describe the level of intercultural communication competence. Among these models, Kim's conceptualization of intercultural communication competence, which has been developed on the basis of her cross-cultural adaptation theory and the later integrative cross-cultural adaptation model, is particularly relevant to the present study in several ways.

First, Kim (1989) argued that various terms used by scholars like *acculturation*, *assimilation*, *adjustment* and *integration* are just different stages of adaptation, and one's *adaptability* to cultural differences should be "placed at the heart of intercultural communication competence as metacompetence" (Kim, 1991, p. 268). Kim explained that intercultural communication competence should be grounded in the notion of the ability to manage a series of adaptive changes to cultural differences, including altering old cultural ways, learning and accommodating to some of the new cultural ways, and creatively and actively finding ways to deal with cultural differences. Intercultural communication competence, as she defined it, is "the cognitive, affective, and operational adaptability of an individual's internal system in all intercultural communication contexts" (Kim, 1991, p. 259).

Second, Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model, which is derived from her cross-cultural adaptation theory, is helpful for the present study in identifying major variables (i.e. host and coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication). In Kim's model, the cross-cultural adaptation process is viewed as a continuum, with a number of

key dimensions linked together into a complex web of relationships, which includes personal communication, social communication, environment, and predisposition. Among these factors, personal communication and social communication are two fundamental and inseparable parts of newcomers' communication activities, which in turn form the primary factors in the success of adaptation. Borrowing Ruben's definition (1975), Kim (2001) conceptualized personal communication as "private symbolization" and all the internal mental activities that occur in individuals that dispose and prepare them to act and react in certain ways in actual social situations" (p. 72). Social communication is linked to personal communication "when two or more individuals interact with one another...a phenomenon occurring as a consequence of 'public symbolization'" (p. 72). Overall, personal communication dimension is placed at the very center of Kim's model which affects all other dimensions in the adaptation process.

According to Kim, newcomers' personal communication can be manifested in their host communication competence, which refers to "the overall capacity of the stranger to receive and process information appropriately and effectively (decoding) and to design plans to initiate messages or respond to others (encoding) in accordance with the host communication system" (Kim, 2001, p. 73). There are two aspects of host communication competence: the cultural-specific aspect and the cultural-general aspect. Intercultural communication competence is roughly equal to the cultural-general aspect in the sense that compared to the cultural-specific aspect which emphasizes communication competence in a specific cultural context, the cultural-general aspect refers to one's "ability to manage various differences between communicators, cultural or otherwise, and the ability to deal with the accompanying uncertainty and stress" (Kim, 2001, p. 99).

According to Kim, host communication competence varies in level in terms of the strength of social networks with both local people in the host country and also members from one's own ethnic group. Hence, it is reasonable to argue that the strengths of both host and coethnic social networks could be vital factors affecting intercultural communication competence.

Taking all these ideas together, Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model is used as the theoretical framework guiding the present study, and intercultural communication competence is investigated using a multidimensional approach.

Methodological Issues in Researching Intercultural Communication Competence

The lack of conceptual explanatory integration in the research of intercultural communication competence leads to great problems in measurement development and validation. A number of efforts have been undertaken to develop, validate, and refine measures of intercultural communication competence (e.g. Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Hammer, 1987; Martin & Hammer, 1989).

Although Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model is used as the framework of the present study, one drawback of Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model relates to the methodological issue, i.e. the difficulty in operationalizing intercultural communication competence and hence the lack of standard criteria to measure the concept in empirical studies.

As aforementioned, in Kim's model, one's *adaptability* is central to intercultural communication competence. However, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) pointed out that although *adaptability* is often regarded as the core to models of intercultural

communication competence in many studies, due to the immature conceptualization of the term, it is difficult to measure *adaptability* in a valid way. Any comprehensive measure should undoubtedly be multidimensional in nature.

In Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model, she takes intercultural transformation as the outcome variable of the whole adaptation process, and tends to measure it from three aspects: functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity. Previous studies employing Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model adopted various indicators to assess adaptation level (e.g. Cemalcilar, Falbo & Stapleton, 2005; Wang, 2006). The choice of measures depended largely on the topic and the purpose of the study. Indeed, in Kim, Izumi, and McKay-Semmler's study (2009) of the adaptation process of educated and long-term non-native residents in the United States, researchers focused on only two aspects of intercultural transformation: functional fitness and psychological health instead of assessing all three dimensions.

Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication in Intercultural Context

Interpersonal communication vs. Mass communication

As noted by Ruben (1975), a person's communication activity often involves two closely interrelated and inseparable communication processes: interpersonal communication and mass communication. Interpersonal communication is central to one's social existence leading to the development of social relationships with others (Fogel, 1993; Kim, 2001; Palisi & Ransford, 1987). Interpersonal communication is central to Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model. According to Kim (2001), newcomers often find interpersonal communication with local people in the host country

to be stressful and unsettling. In such a situation, mass media may serve as a ready substitute which provides a relative easy way to satisfy newcomers' various needs, such as cultural learning, psychological needs, and entertainment. However, since interpersonal communication involves somewhat personalized social engagement, it is generally believed that interpersonal communication has a greater impact than mass communication on one's adaptation process (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Kim, 2005). Through personal contacts in their social networks, people interpret various attributes and actions of others and themselves. For this reason, smooth interpersonal communication between immigrants and sojourners and the host environment is an important channel for newcomers to establish social networks in the host society.

Face-to-face vs. Computer-mediated interpersonal communication

Recent literature has raised the question of the efficacy of mediated forms of interpersonal communication as an alternative to face-to-face interpersonal communication. Past research provides strong evidences of the importance of face-to-face interpersonal communication in intercultural communication. Compared to face-to-face interpersonal communication which renders opportunities for developing personal relationship with local people, computer-mediated interpersonal communication were found to be employed primarily for the purpose of maintaining contacts with family members and friends back home (Cemalcilar, Falbo & Stapleton, 2005; Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009; Kong, 2005; Madianou, 2005; Ogan & Ozakca, 2007; Wang, 2006). The most recent study relevant to the topic was conducted by Kim, Izumi, and McKay-Semmler (2009), in which the researchers found that computer-mediated

interpersonal communication with native-born Americans through e-mail, social networking sites and instant messaging played only a minor role in cross-cultural adaptation; whereas direct, face-to-face interpersonal communication with native residents positively significantly predicted the participants' intercultural adaptation. Studies such as these indicate that face-to-face interpersonal communication can be actively used by immigrants and sojourners in facilitating adaptation process, thus enhancing their intercultural communication competence.

Relationships between Functions of Social Networks and Intercultural Communication Competence

The social networks established through interpersonal communication channel play important functions in the life of immigrants. Kim (2001) stated that since a relationship is formed on the basis of "mutual interest and willingness of all persons involved," newcomers' "interpersonal communication activities are best revealed through certain identifiable patterns of personal networks—also called *interpersonal networks*, *social networks*..." (p. 123). An extension of social networks beyond one's own ethnic group will allow for a more heterogeneous range of resources (Yum, 1988).

Bochner, McLeod and Lin (1977) identified three types of social networks developed by international students: (1) mono-cultural network, referring to connections with people from their own ethnic groups, which tends to be the primary social tie held by most international students; (2) bicultural network, comprising of local people international students encounter in daily life, which tends to be the secondary social network; (3) multicultural network, involving links with people from countries other than

their own or the host society, which functions as the third social network. Previous research into social networks held by newcomers has suggested that immigrants and sojourners' interpersonal interaction with different groups of people serve separate functions in the intercultural adaptation process (Kashima & Loh, 2006).

Bochner (1982) put forward the idea that the monocultural network functions mainly to provide a setting for expressing values and engaging in practices of the culture of origin. The bicultural network can serve instrumental functions, facilitating non-natives to reach their academic and professional goals. The multicultural network has a social and recreational function. Based on this idea, in the present study, the functions of each social network are also explored to get a comprehensive picture of the extent to which non-natives are engaged in social activities with different types of social network and how non-natives fulfill different needs in the host society through these activities.

The function of the mono-cultural network

Mono-cultural networks, or, coethnic social networks in Kim's theory, are considered to help strengthen one's ethnic social network and thus impede one's adaptation process (e.g., Kim, 2005, Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009; Shah, 1991). According to Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory (2001), the function of coethnic communication can be divided into two phases: short-term adaptation-facilitating function and long-term ethnicity-maintenance function. At the initial stage of adaptation, due to the sudden removal from social support back home and the lack of social network from the host country, newcomers might still resort to ethnic information and resources. During this period of time, coethnic communication can help newcomers develop some

sense of security in the new environment. In addition, newcomers' adaptive changes can also be enhanced by communicating with members from the same ethnic group who have already advanced in their adaptation process (Kim, 2001).

However, beyond this initial stage, coethnic communication is likely to "serve an adaptation-impeding function in the long run" (Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009, p. 10). Kim (2001) argued that heavy reliance on social support from their ethnic groups may discourage newcomers' participation in host communication. Since usually people have only limited time and energy to involve in social communication, more coethnic communication will inevitably lead to less host communication which is essential in the adaptation process. Also, newcomers' communication with similar others who are also poorly adapted may impede newcomers' adaptive changes. Depending on coethnic social networks in seeking resources and information, newcomers will have reduced pressure and motivation to face new situations, encounter new problems and actively establish social network with local people. Hence, heavy and exclusive coethnic communication will impede cross-cultural adaptation process in the long run.

The negative correlation between coethnic social network and adaptive outcomes has been constructed on the basis of researchers' assumption, which is lacking of supporting evidences from empirical studies. Although Kim pointed out a number of studies (e.g. Gal, 1978; Milroy, 1980, 1982, 1987) which offered evidences in supporting adaptation-impeding function of coethnic communication, later works showed mixed results. For example, in Kashima and Loh's study (2006), the researchers found no effects of conational ties on psychological adjustment which was contrary to their prediction of the positive relationship between conational ties and psychological

adjustment. Indeed, in Kim, Izumi, and McKay-Semmler's study (2009), employing a sample of 51 educated and non-native residents in the United States, the researchers did not find any statistically significant results to support the prediction of a negative influence of coethnic interpersonal communication on adaptation process.

The function of the bicultural network

Past research indicates that host communication—both interpersonal and mass communication—tends to facilitate the adaptation process (e.g., Kashima & Loh, 2006; Kim, 2001, 2005; Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009; Shah, 1991; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). In other words, strong social networking with local people is conducive to newcomers' adaptation process. Findings of two recent studies (Kashima & Loh, 2006; Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009), which are also the most relevant ones to the present topic, are consistent with previous literature in showing the positive relationship between host communication and adaptation.

Kashima and Loh (2006) investigated the effects of social ties on acculturation among an Asian international student sample of 100 respondents from 12 countries who were studying at Australian universities. The researchers reported that international students with more host social networks were psychologically better adjusted and had greater cultural knowledge of the host country. Similarly, findings in Kim, Izumi, and McKay-Semmler's study (2009) also showed a positive relationship between host interpersonal communication activities and two facets of intercultural transformation (functional fitness and psychological health).

Therefore, in the context of intercultural communication competence, the vital importance of host social network should also be reflected in one's acquiring of intercultural communication competence. In other words, it is plausible that active engagements in social networking with local people in the host country could enhance one's intercultural communication competence.

Moreover, in the present study, the researcher is also curious to know whether demographic variables such as length of stay, intention of working in the United States after graduation, working experience, and English language skills have significant relationships with host face-to-face interpersonal communication. Length of stay in the host society and English language skills have been proved to be significantly related to adaptation outcomes (e.g. Wang, 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). If in fact host face-to-face interpersonal communication is the mechanism by which demographic variables (length of stay, intention of working in the United States after graduation, working experience, and English language skills) influence intercultural communication competence, then when one controls for host face-to-face interpersonal communication variable and tests the residual relationship between demographic variables and intercultural communication competence, the relationship between demographic variables and intercultural communication competence should remain. If, on the other hand, the relationship between demographic variables and intercultural communication competence disappears, it may be that host face-to-face interpersonal communication is the mechanism through which length of stay, intention of working in the United States after graduation, working experience, and English language skills influence intercultural communication competence. Therefore, one research question is raised in the present

study asking about whether host face-to-face interpersonal communication mediates the relationship between demographic variables (length of stay, intention of working in the United States after graduation, working experience, and English language skills) and intercultural communication competence.

The function of the multicultural network

There are a very limited number of studies in the literature exploring how interethnic social network (multicultural network) may affect the adaptation process. Previous studies on similar topics were usually conducted with a focus on the above-mentioned two types of social networks (coethnic and host social networks) (e.g. Kim, 2001; Kim, Izumi, & McKay-Semmler, 2009); whereas empirical research on the role of interethnic social network in intercultural communication context has not been investigated as much as it should.

In Kashima and Loh's study (2006), the researchers found that an international network was a positive indicator of one's psychological adjustment to the host culture. Hence, in the context of intercultural communication competence, although the influence may not be as strong as host social communication, the development of intercultural communication competence may also be heightened through contacts with members from various cultures. Kashima and Loh (2006) investigated the issue from the perspective of acculturation theory, which did not link the functions of social network to intercultural communication competence. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake an investigation of the function of interethnic social network in the development of intercultural communication competence.

Hypotheses & Research Questions

In light of ideas presented in previous sections, this paper aims to carry out a study to test how face-to-face interpersonal communication with three types of social networks, i.e. host, coethnic, and interethnic social networks, influences intercultural communication competence. Notably, this study builds on past research in several important ways. First, rather than selecting some adaptation outcome variables identified in previous studies, this study offers a new perspective on studying adaptation process by linking Kim's integrative cross-cultural adaptation model and intercultural communication competence. Second, an examination of the relationship between coethnic communication behavior and intercultural communication competence yields further statistical data to test the influence of coethnic social network on intercultural communication competence. Third, through examining the functions of all three types of social networks in one study which incorporating an examination of the role of interethnic social network in one's development of intercultural communication competence, a more comprehensive picture of the role of social networks in developing intercultural communication competence is presented.

Specifically, the present study seeks to explore the extent to which non-native individuals are engaged in face-to-face interpersonal communication activities with three types of social networks (host, coethnic, and interethnic) and the relative importance of these activities in non-natives' development of intercultural communication competence. Thus, the following hypotheses and research questions are proposed:

Hypo 1: Host face-to-face interpersonal communication will be negatively related with coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication.

Hypo 2: Face-to-face interpersonal communication with each type of social networks (host, coethnic, and interethnic) will be positively related to its corresponding network of friends and acquaintances for help when having needs.

Hypo 3: Greater host face-to-face interpersonal communication will result in higher intercultural communication competence.

Hypo 4a: In the early stage, greater coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication will result in higher intercultural communication competence.

Hypo 4b: In the late stage, greater coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication will result in lower intercultural communication competence.

RQ1: Does host face-to-face interpersonal communication mediate the relationship between demographic variables (length of stay, intention of working in the United States after graduation, working experience, and English language skills) and intercultural communication competence?

RQ 2: How and to what extent does interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication relate to intercultural communication competence?

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Design

The present study used the survey method to assess the relationship between face-to-face interpersonal communication with different social networks and intercultural communication competence. Data were collected from Chinese graduate students studying at three universities (an elite private university, a flagship state university, and a land-grant university) in a concentrated metropolitan area in southeastern United States and also those who newly graduated from those graduate programs and had been working in the United States.

Procedures

An online survey was used to reach the targeted population. A questionnaire was posted through www.surveymonkey.com, an online survey provider. After the researcher uploaded the survey, the URL link to the questionnaire was provided to the participants via email, and the message for the research was provided in the participant email (See Appendix G for participant email). The email list of the participants was obtained from Chinese community groups around three universities in southeastern US. Individuals in the targeted population had equal access to participate. Both the English language and the Chinese language version of questionnaires were provided to the participants. The Chinese version of questionnaire was back translated into English by two translators who are native speakers of Chinese and are also competent in English. The discrepancies were

discussed and changes were made when necessary to ensure translation equivalence of the two versions.

The online survey began with an informed consent form. Participants were asked to read the consent form prior to entering the questionnaire. By selecting “yes” and moving on in the questionnaire, the participants would declare their consent to participate in the survey. The questionnaire generated demographic as well as data regarding both a variety of factors related to face-to-face interpersonal communication, social networks, and the scale assessing intercultural communication competence.

Measurement

Demographics

In the first section of the questionnaire, demographic information was collected to describe the characteristics of the sample (See Appendix B for Demographic Questions). Participants were asked to provide general information about themselves, such as gender, age, educational degree, length of stay in the United States, intention of working in the United States after graduation, and working experience.

The final sample included 116 respondents (55.2% male and 43.1% female). The age of respondents ranged from 21 to 45 ($M = 26.5$, $SD = 3.79$). The average length of stay in the United States was approximately 4 years ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 2.65$). There were 74.1% respondents studying under graduate programs (53.4% pursuing doctoral degree, 18.1% pursuing master’s degree, and 2.6% for non-degree and others). Among all respondents, 33.6% were working in the United States. Of those who were students, 47.4% expressed that they would like to look for jobs in the United States after

graduation, and 16.4% were not sure about whether they would work in the United States or not after graduation.

Participants' perceived English competence was measured in this study using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (Beginner), to 4 (Intermediate), and to 7 (Proficient). Previous research shows that a respondent's subjective assessment of their English competence is "as influential on his communication behaviors as his actual command of English" (Kim, 1977, p. 72). Therefore, self-reported English language proficiency level is relevant in predicting intercultural communication competence. In this study, the average level of participants' English language ability was 4.86.

Face-to-face interpersonal communication

Both the quantity and the quality of face-to-face interpersonal communication with each category of social networks (host, coethnic, and interethnic) were measured (See Appendix C for Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication Questions). Overall, the scale demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .78$). Specifically, the quantity of face-to-face interpersonal communication was measured by two items (e.g. In a typical week, how often do you have face-to-face interpersonal communication with Americans in general?). Responses were assessed using a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (indicating the smallest quantity; e.g. "Less than once a week") to 5 (indicating the largest quantity; e.g. "Almost every day"). The quality of face-to-face interpersonal communication was measured by three items (e.g. Are you satisfied with your face-to-face interpersonal communication with Americans?). Responses were assessed using a 5-

point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (indicating the lowest level of quality; e.g. “Very Unsatisfied”) to 5 (indicating the highest level of quality; e.g. “Very satisfied”).

Functions of social networks

Four questions were designed to examine the nature of how participants used their social networks when they were trying to fulfill different needs in the host society (See Appendix D for Functions of Social Networks Questions). Needs were divided into four categories: 1) practical needs, such as food, drinks, shelter, buying things, using the transportation system, etc.; 2) identity needs, which refer to when people were trying to express their personal identity and reassure their value and self-worth; 3) social needs, like having fun, relieving stress, affection, to be diverted from other activities, etc.; and 4) functional needs, referring to when people were trying to fulfill daily tasks in work or school setting. Participants were asked to respond to a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Highly Unlikely) to 7 (Highly Likely). Sample questions were like: “If you were trying to fulfill your everyday needs for food, drinks, shelter, buying things, using the transportation system, etc. (practical needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?”, and “When you were trying to fulfill daily tasks in work or school setting (functional needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?”. Overall, the scale demonstrated good reliability with $\alpha = .86$.

Intercultural communication competence

The present study measured intercultural communication competence using a revised version of Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale created by Rubin and

Martin (1984), who defined interpersonal communication competence as “an impression or judgment formed about a person’s ability to manage interpersonal relationships in communication settings” (p.33). This scale tends to measure the entire construct of interpersonal communication competence, tapping various facets identified in the existing literature on interpersonal communication competence research. The scale was originally a thirty-item instrument used to measure ten dimensions of interpersonal communication competence. The following list shows the original ten dimensions of interpersonal competence that are included in the scale (Rubin & Martin, 1984):

- Self-disclosure: the ability to open up or reveal to others personality elements through communication
- Empathy: feeling with the other; affect for or an emotional reaction to another’s internal state and results in understanding the other’s perspective
- Social relaxation: a lack of anxiety or apprehension in everyday social interactions: a feeling of comfort, low apprehension, and ability to handle another’s negative reactions or criticism without undue stress
- Assertiveness: standing up for one’s rights without denying the rights of the other
- Interaction management: the ability to handle ritualistic procedures in everyday conversation
- Altercentrism: interest in others, attentiveness to what they say and how they say it, perceptiveness not only of what is said but also what is not said, responsiveness to their thoughts, and adaptation during conversation
- Expressiveness: the ability to communicate feelings through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors

- Supportiveness: confirming communication, being descriptive (not evaluative), provisional (not certain), spontaneous (not strategic), oriented towards solving a problem (not controlling), empathic (not remote), and egalitarian (not superior)
- Immediacy: show others emotional and physical availability
- Environmental control: demonstrating one's ability to achieve predetermined goals and satisfy needs

The Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale has been shown in previous studies to be quite robust in regards to reliability and validity (for a full discussion of the background and information regarding validity and reliability for the Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale see Elizabeth, 2009).

In the present study, the original scale has been revised to fit into intercultural context and to serve for the purpose of the study. Participants were first asked to respond to all the thirty revised items on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (Almost Never) to 5 (Almost Always). Sample items included: "I am comfortable with cultural differences that come up in social situations", "My friends from other cultures can tell when I am happy or sad", and "I accomplish my communication goals in intercultural interactions."

Based upon the data collected, a factor analysis using principal axis factoring and varimax and oblique rotation had been conducted on the 30 items in order to identify the key components of intercultural communication competence and to validate the factor structure for this sample. According to the results, there were six factors that had eigenvalues above 1. However, since the factor loadings and the items under the last two factors were not sufficient, finally four factors including seventeen items were retained. The four factors generated from factor solution accounted for 49.50% of the total

variance after rotation. Responses to items that loaded on each factor were summed and averaged to create the intercultural communication competence scale (See Appendix F for the adapted scale for intercultural communication competence).

Specifically, Factor 1 included 5 items which described the openness about self-thinking and feelings in intercultural communication (e.g. “People from other cultures know what I am thinking”). The dimension was reliable (alpha = .89). Factor 2 included 4 items describing how sensitive people are in intercultural dialogues (e.g. “In conversations with someone from another culture, I perceive not only what the person says but what the person does not say”). The dimension was reliable (alpha = .70). Factor 3 included 3 items and it described the expressive difficulties and successes in intercultural communication (e.g. “I accomplish my communication goals in intercultural interactions”). The dimension was reliable (alpha = .72). Factor 4 included 5 items which described the degree of comfort in intercultural communication (e.g. “I feel relaxed in small group gatherings with people from other cultures around”). The dimension was reliable (alpha = .75).

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

The purpose of the present study is to examine the influence of face-to-face interpersonal communication with different social networks on the development of intercultural communication competence. To fulfill the task, several hypotheses and research questions were proposed based on a literature review. In this chapter, the results of the study are presented.

Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication

Both the quantity and the quality of face-to-face interpersonal communication with each category of social networks (host, coethnic, and interethnic) were measured (See Table I & Table II for results).

Table I

The Quantity of Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication for Three Types of Social Network

| Social Network | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|-----------|
| American friends and acquaintances | 3.19 | 1.14 |
| Chinese friends and acquaintances | 4.22 | .79 |
| Friends and acquaintances of other ethnic backgrounds | 2.31 | 1.13 |

Note. N = 116

Table II

The Quality of Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication with Each Type of Social Network

| Social Network | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|-----------|
| American friends and acquaintances | 3.45 | .81 |
| Chinese friends and acquaintances | 4.32 | .69 |
| Friends and acquaintances of other ethnic backgrounds | 3.47 | .67 |

Note. N = 115

Functions of Social Networks

Four questions were designed to examine the nature of how participants used their social networks when they were trying to fulfill different needs in the host society (See Table III for a general comparison of the likelihood of the participants' turning to each type of social networks for help when they were trying to fulfill each of the four needs). Needs were divided into four categories: 1) practical needs, such as food, drinks, shelter, buying things, using the transportation system, etc.; 2) identity needs, which refer to when people were trying to express their personal identity and reassure their value and self-worth; 3) social needs, like having fun, relieving stress, affection, to be diverted from other activities, etc.; and 4) functional needs, referring to when people were trying to fulfill daily tasks in work or school setting.

Table III

Functions of Social Network

| Needs | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Practical Needs | | |
| Host network | 4.57 | 1.79 |
| Coethnic network | 6.53 | 1.14 |
| Interethnic network | 4.03 | 1.74 |
| Identity Needs | | |
| Host network | 4.59 | 1.63 |
| Coethnic network | 6.13 | 1.18 |
| Interethnic network | 4.39 | 1.60 |
| Social Needs | | |
| Host network | 4.64 | 1.63 |
| Coethnic network | 6.56 | .72 |
| Interethnic network | 4.47 | 1.64 |
| Functional Needs | | |
| Host network | 5.53 | 1.46 |
| Coethnic network | 6.35 | .92 |
| Interethnic network | 5.11 | 1.59 |

Note. N = 116

Participants were asked to respond to a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Highly Unlikely) to 7 (Highly Likely). Sample questions were like: “If you were trying to fulfill your everyday needs for food, drinks, shelter, buying things, using the transportation systems, etc. (practical needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?”, and “When you were trying to fulfill daily tasks in work or school setting (functional needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?”. Overall, the scale demonstrated good reliability with $\alpha = .86$

Host and Coethnic Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication

Hypothesis 1: Host face-to-face interpersonal communication will be negatively related with coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between host face-to-face interpersonal communication and coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication, in terms of both the quantity and the quality (See Table IV for results).

According to the results, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. It was supported in that both the quantity and the quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication were found to be significantly negatively related to the quantity of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication. This suggested that participants who were more actively engaged in face-to-face interpersonal communication with Americans were likely to be less active in their interactions with co-ethnics nearby. However, Hypothesis 1 was not supported in that a significant positive correlation was found between the quality of host

face-to-face interpersonal communication and that of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication, which indicated that the perceived high quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication did not necessarily lead to a low quality level of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication.

Table IV

Correlations between Host and Coethnic Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication

| Category | Host-quantity | Host-Quality | Coethnic-Quantity |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Host-quality | .52* | | |
| Coethnic-quantity | -.27* | -.26* | |
| Coethnic-quality | .13* | .30* | .34* |

Note. * $p < .01$.

Relationships between Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication and Functions of Social Networks

Hypothesis 2: Face-to-face interpersonal communication with each type of social networks (host, coethnic, and interethnic) will be positively related to its corresponding network of friends and acquaintances for help when having needs.

A computation of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was performed in order to examine the relationships between face-to-face interpersonal communication variables (FTF-host, -coethnic, -interethnic) and functions variables (Function-host, -coethnic, -interethnic).

The results showed that each type of face-to-face interpersonal communication (both quantity and quality) had a significant positive correlation with its the corresponding functions variable (See Table V). Specifically, host face-to-face interpersonal communication had a significant positive correlation with the likelihood of turning to American network of friends and acquaintances for help when having needs ($R = .51, p < .01$). Coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication had a significant positive correlation with the likelihood of turning to Chinese network of friends and acquaintances for help when having needs ($R = .50, p < .01$). Interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication had a significant positive correlation with the likelihood of turning to network of friends and acquaintances from other ethnic backgrounds for help when having needs ($R = .33, p < .01$). The results indicated that the greater face-to-face interpersonal communication with a certain type of social network might lead to a higher level of likelihood of turning to that type of social network for help, or vice versa. Since the data in the present study used one-time collection, more studies are needed to establish the causal relationship.

It is also interesting to note that host face-to-face interpersonal communication also had a significant positive correlation with the likelihood of turning to the interethnic social network for help when having needs ($R = .44, p < .01$). In addition, host face-to-face interpersonal communication also significantly positively related to interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication, with $R = .46, p < .01$. However, it was found that coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication had no correlation with the likelihood of turning to either American network or network of friends and acquaintances from other ethnic backgrounds for help when having needs.

Table V

Correlations between Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication and Functions of Social Networks

| Category | Function-Host | Function-coethnic | Function-interethnic | FTF-host | FTF-Coethnic |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------|
| Function-coethnic | .38** | | | | |
| Function-nterethnic | .66** | .26** | | | |
| FTF-host | .51** | -.02 | .44** | | |
| FTF-coethnic | .05 | .50** | .00 | -.06 | |
| FTF-interethnic | .16 | -.12 | .33** | .46** | -.03 |

Note. N = 115. ** $p < .01$.

Host Communication and Intercultural Communication Competence

Hypothesis 3: Host face-to-face interpersonal communication will result in higher intercultural communication competence.

Hypothesis 3 was supported by the largely positive and statistically significant causal relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. A standard multiple regression analysis was performed with both the quantity and the quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication as independent variables and intercultural communication competence as the dependent variable. The result revealed that host face-to-face interpersonal communication significantly positively predicted intercultural communication competence ($R = .70$, $R^2 = .49$, $F(2, 100) = 47.54$, $p < .001$).

In terms of individual relationships between the independent variables and intercultural communication competence, the quantity of host face-to-face interpersonal communication ($\beta = .37, p < .001$), and the quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication ($\beta = .43, p < .001$) each was significantly positively related to intercultural communication competence. Together, they contributed 48.7% in shared variability.

It also revealed that the perceived quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication appeared to be more strongly related to intercultural communication competence than was the quantity of host face-to-face interpersonal communication. The perceived quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication contributed 38.8% in shared variability with the dependent variable. The result clearly indicated that participants who reported higher scores in host face-to-face interpersonal communication, especially in the quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication would have higher intercultural communication competence. However, when considering the effect on each of the four factors in intercultural communication competence, it was found that this conclusion was not true for Factor 2 (how sensitive people are in intercultural dialogues) in that the quantity of host face-to-face interpersonal communication demonstrated a stronger correlation with Factor 2 than did the quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication, with $\beta = .41, p < .001$ and $\beta = .20, p < .05$, respectively.

Since there was a significant positive correlation between each type of face-to-face interpersonal communication and its corresponding use pattern variable ($R = .51, p < .01$). A multiple regression analysis was also performed using both host face-to-face interpersonal communication and the likelihood of turning to host social network for help

as independent variables and test their predicting power of intercultural communication competence (See Table VI).

Table VI

The Predicting Power of Host Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication and Functions Variables on Intercultural Communication Competence

| | B | SEb | B |
|---------------|------|-----|-------|
| <i>Step 1</i> | | | |
| Constant | 1.80 | .17 | |
| FTF-host | .49 | .05 | .69** |
| <i>Step 2</i> | | | |
| Constant | 1.48 | .20 | |
| FTF-host | .39 | .06 | .56** |
| Function-host | .13 | .04 | .25* |

Note. $R^2 = .48$ for Step 1; $R^2 = .53$ for Step 2 ($ps < .005$). * $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$.

Coethnic Communication and Intercultural Communication Competence

Hypo 4a: In the early stage, greater coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication will result in higher intercultural communication competence.

Hypo 4b: In the late stage, greater coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication will result in lower intercultural communication competence.

Hypothesis 4a and 4b were not supported in this study. To test these two hypotheses, the early/late stage was operationalized in two ways. In the first analysis, the early/late stage was operationalized as the length of stay in the United States. The length of stay in the United States was categorized into short and long length of stay, and the

data set was split into two groups, using length of stay as the coding variable. A regression analysis was conducted in order to compare the differences between the group with short length of stay and that with long length of stay on effects of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication on intercultural communication competence. However, no significant results were found.

In the second analysis, the early/late stage was operationalized as working experience (i.e. whether the participant was working in the United States or not), and a same procedure was used to test whether there was any difference between the working and non-working group on the effects of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication on intercultural communication competence. However, no significant results were found as well.

Actually, when a standard multiple regression analysis was performed between the two coethnic variables (coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication and likelihood of turning to coethnic network of friends and acquaintances for help when fulfilling needs) and intercultural communication competence, no significant result were found. However, it was noticeable that a negative correlation between the quantity of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication and intercultural communication was found ($R = -.19$, $p = \text{NS}$), though this correlation was not significant and not strong enough.

Host Communication, Demographic Variables and Intercultural Communication Competence

RQ1: Does host face-to-face interpersonal communication mediate the relationship between demographic variables (length of stay, intention of working in the United States after graduation, working experience, and English language skills) and intercultural communication competence?

The relationships between the outcome variable (intercultural communication competence) and predictors, which included demographic variables (length of stay, intention of working in the United States after graduation, working experience, and English language skills) and host face-to-face interpersonal communication, were first assessed using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results presented in Table VII shows that length of stay, working experience, and English language skills as well as host face-to-face interpersonal communication are significantly positively related to intercultural communication competence; whereas intention of working in the United States after graduation does not correlate with intercultural communication competence. In addition, length of stay, working experience, English language skills, and host face-to-face interpersonal communication are also positively correlated with one another.

Partial correlation was conducted to test statistical mediation and to find out the size of the unique portion of variance that is explained by length of stay, working experience, and English language skills. Specifically, a partial correlation was conducted between demographic variables (length of stay, working experience, and English language skills, and intercultural communication competence while controlling the effect of host face-to-face interpersonal communication. The result showed that when host face-

to-face interpersonal communication was controlled, the relationship between length of stay and English language skills, and intercultural communication competence diminished. Specifically, none of the three: length of stay ($R = .15, p = \text{NS}$), working experience ($R = .15, p = \text{NS}$), and English language skills ($R = .18, p = \text{NS}$) were significantly related to intercultural communication competence when controlling host face-to-face interpersonal communication, despite the relationships shown in Table VII. Therefore, host face-to-face interpersonal communication fully mediated the relationship between demographic variables (length of stay, working experience, and English language skills) and intercultural communication competence, and this mediation effect existed for any of the four factors in intercultural communication competence.

Table VII

Correlations between Demographic Variables, Host Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication, and Intercultural Communication Competence

| | ICC | Length of stay | Intention of working | Working experience | English language skills |
|-------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Length of stay | .26* | | | | |
| Intention of working | .08 | .12 | | | |
| Working experience | .20* | .46** | .19 | | |
| English language skills | .48** | .24* | .19 | .19* | |
| FTF-host | .69** | .26* | .21 | .35** | .44** |

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Interethnic Communication and Intercultural Communication Competence

Research Question 2: How and to what extent does interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication relate to intercultural communication competence?

The relationship between intercultural communication competence and both the quantity and the quality of interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication was assessed using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. According to the results, both the quantity and the quality of interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication positively significantly related to intercultural communication competence, with $R = .35$, $p < .01$ and $R = .30$, $p < .01$, respectively. When considering the correlation between each of the four factors in intercultural communication competence and interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication, it was found that the correlation between Factor 3 (expressive difficulties and successes in intercultural communication) and the quantity of interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication disappeared, and the correlation between Factor 2 (how sensitive people are in intercultural dialogues) and the quality of interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication disappeared as well. Generally speaking, the results indicated that more social engagements with people from other ethnic groups might also help enhance the development of intercultural communication competence.

To obtain a better understanding of how interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication relates to intercultural communication competence, the relationship between the likelihood of turning to interethnic network of friends and acquaintances for help when fulfilling needs and intercultural communication competence was also examined. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was performed, and noticeably, the result showed that the two variable had significant positive correlation (R

= .42, $p < .01$). Considering the correlation between each individual factor in intercultural communication competence and the likelihood of turning to interethnic network of friends and acquaintances, a relatively higher correlation was found between Factor 1 (openness about self-thinking and feelings in intercultural communication) and the likelihood of turning to interethnic network of friends and acquaintances ($R = .48, p < .01$), and the correlation between Factor 3 (expressive difficulties and successes in intercultural communication) and the likelihood of turning to interethnic network of friends and acquaintances was relatively lower ($R = .27, p < .01$).

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

The present study seeks to examine how face-to-face interpersonal communication with different social networks influences the development of intercultural communication competence. The participants represent Chinese students studying in US universities graduate programs and also those newly graduated from those programs and are currently working in the US. This chapter discusses the findings and their implications in detail. Indications for future studies are also explored.

Findings & Summary

Face-to-face interpersonal communication

According to the descriptive information presented in the previous chapter, it was found that among the relatively well-educated Chinese students and new graduates who comprised the present sample, there is a preponderance of direct social engagement with Americans through face-to-face interpersonal communication. On average, the participants demonstrate a high level of perceived quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication. In other words, overall participants are satisfied with and feel comfortable when interacting with Americans, and generally regard their face-to-face interpersonal communication with local people as being effective.

In the present study, the quantity of host face-to-face interpersonal communication was found to be negatively related to the quantity of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication. This result is consistent with the prediction in Kim's theory

of a negative relationship between host interpersonal communication activities and ethnic interpersonal communication activities. In other words, people who are more active in host interpersonal communication will be less active in coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication. However, the perceived high quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication does not necessarily lead to a lower level of perceived quality of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication.

Moreover, it was also found that the length of stay had a negative correlation with the amount of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication. This indicates that for participants who live a longer time in the United States they may have more time and opportunities to adapt to the host society; therefore, their host face-to-face interpersonal communication would be largely increased. This can be particular true in the present study which adopted a sample of non-natives studying and working actively in the United States. It is assumed that this group of people should have more social engagements with local people in their daily lives in order to accomplish various tasks in academic and professional settings. Since an individual's energy and time spending on social engagements should have a somewhat definite level, when one has more communication with local people, they may have less time to engage in coethnic communication activities.

Functions of social networks

As mentioned in the literature review, Bochner (1982) put forward the idea that the coethnic social network functions mainly to provide a setting for expressing values and engaging in practices of the culture of origin. The host social network serves

instrumental functions, facilitating non-natives to reach their academic and professional goals. The interethnic social network has a social and recreational function. However, in the present study, the participants' uses of each social network when fulfilling needs demonstrate similar patterns. On average, whichever need (practical, identity, social, functional) they were trying to fulfill, Chinese network of friends and acquaintance was their priority, followed by American network, and then network of friends and acquaintances from other ethnic backgrounds.

Face-to-face interpersonal communication and intercultural communication competence

In the present study, host face-to-face interpersonal communication was found to be a positive and important predictor of intercultural communication competence. This finding is consistent with the previous literature that face-to-face interpersonal communication can be actively used by immigrants and sojourners in facilitating adaptation process (Kim, 2001, 2009; Ward & Kennedy, 1993; Ward & Searle, 1991;). As explained in Kim's theory, host social engagements are closely linked to "host communication competence" (Kim, 2001, p. 97). In other words, smooth interpersonal communication between immigrants and sojourners and the host environment is an important channel for newcomers to establish social networks in the host society, thus enhancing the development of intercultural communication competence.

The vital importance of host face-to-face interpersonal communication is also reflected in its being the mediator between three demographic variables (length of stay, working experience, and English language competence) and intercultural communication competence. This finding is important, because from previous studies we only know that

these demographic variables together with host face-to-face interpersonal communication influence adaptation outcomes; however, the present study demonstrated that the influences of these demographic variables on intercultural communication competence can be through the mechanism of host face-to-face interpersonal communication.

It is also worth mentioning that the perceived quality could be more important than the quantity of host face-to-face interpersonal communication in one's development of intercultural communication competence. This result suggests that high level of perceived quality of host face-to-face interpersonal communication is also a conducive factor in developing intercultural communication competence. In other words, for those who are satisfied with their interactions with local people, and perceive these interactions as being effective and comfortable, they are more likely to be successful in developing intercultural communication competence.

Furthermore, in terms of the role of coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication in the development of intercultural communication competence, the findings in the present study are somewhat unclear with regard to Kim's prediction of the negative relationship between coethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication and intercultural adaptation outcome variables. Although there are indications of such a negative relationship in the form of negative correlation coefficients, these coefficients are statistically insignificant, possibly due to the small size and the homogeneity of the sample. In future studies, researchers can use a relatively larger sample and make further assessments of this prediction. Tentatively, future studies may lend more evidences that non-natives' communicative involvements with coethnics, in the form of face-to-face

interpersonal communication play a minor role in developing intercultural communication competence.

Lastly, this study focused in particular on social network that participants developed with people from other countries other than the host country. The results suggested that the greater interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication correlates with higher intercultural communication competence. Hence, social network with people from other ethnic backgrounds seem to be important for the development of intercultural communication competence among immigrants and sojourners. It is also interesting to notice that the perceived quality of interethnic face-to-face interpersonal communication was higher than that of host face-to-face interpersonal communication. This finding is consistent with Kashima and Loh's study (2006), which argues that communicating with people from other countries other than the host country can help newcomers facilitate each others' psychological adjustment and cultural learning.

Limitations and Implications for Future Studies

The present study involved several limitations. The first limitation relates to the data collection procedure. Online questionnaire used in the present study in the data collection procedure may have posed problems. Overall, there were 169 responses collected; however, among these responses only 116 are usable ones. The high drop-out rate can be an indication of respondents' feeling impatient and less obligated to complete the web survey.

Second, although both quality and quantity aspects of face-to-face interpersonal communication behaviors were tested, more items should be encompassed in each of the

two aspects in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of people's face-to-face interpersonal communication in intercultural context. Therefore, in future studies, it would be both interesting and valuable to conduct further examinations on face-to-face interpersonal communication with different social networks non-natives employ.

Third, the present study used only the quantitative approach which may not offer a wholistic picture of reality, especially considering the complexity of intercultural adaption process. Therefore, it is possible for future studies to integrate qualitative approach of data collection and analysis like interviews in order to garner more detailed insight into patterns of face-to-face interpersonal communication activities and its relationships to non-natives' intercultural communication competence.

Conclusion

By and large, the present study examined the extent to which non-native individuals were engaged in face-to-face interpersonal communication with three types of social networks (host, coethnic, and interethnic). It also examined how non-natives used these social networks to fulfill their various needs in the host society and the relative importance of their communication activities in the development of intercultural communication competence.

Generally speaking, this study reaffirms the vital importance for non-natives to be actively engaged in the social processes of the host society in attaining success in developing intercultural communication competence. In addition, this study also demonstrates that communicating with people from other countries other than the host country can also help newcomers facilitate each others' adaptation process. The

relationships linking face-to-face interpersonal communication, social networks non-natives develop in the host country, and intercultural communication competence have been demonstrated in the present study. Further research should replicate these findings which are potentially useful for those concerned with the success and well-being of non-natives who study and work around the world.

REFERENCES

- Abe, H., & Wiseman, R. L. (1983). A cross-cultural confirmation of the dimensions of intercultural communication effectiveness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 7*, 53-67.
- Applegate, J. L., & Sypher, H.E. (1983). A constructivist outline for intercultural communication. In W.B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Intercultural Communication Theory: Current Perspectives*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 10*(2), 179–196.
- Berry, J. W., & Sam, D. L. (1997). Acculturation and adaptation. In J. W. Berry, Y. H. Poorintga, & J. Pandey (Eds.). *Handbook of Cross Cultural Psychology* (2nd, Ed.), 3, (pp. 291-326). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bochner, S. (1982). The social psychology of cross-cultural relations. In S. Bochner (Ed.). *Cultures in Contact: Studies in Cross-Cultural Interaction* (pp. 5–44). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Bochner, S., McLeod, B., & Lin, A. (1977). Friendship patterns of overseas students. A functional model. *International Journal of Psychology, 12*, 277–297.
- Cemalcilar, Z., Falbo, T., & Stapleton, L. (2005). Cyber communication: A new opportunity for international students' adaptation? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 29*(1), 91-110.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1996). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. In Burlison, B. (Ed.). *Communication Yearbook, 19*, (pp. 353-383). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Collier, M. J. (1989). Cultural and intercultural communication competence: Current

- approaches and directions for future research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 287-302.
- Craig, S., & Douglas, S. (2005). *International marketing research* (3rd. ed.). London: Wiley.
- Graham, E. G. (2009). Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale. In R.B. Rubin, A. Rubin, E. G. Graham, E. Perse, & D. Seibold, (Eds.). *Communication Research measures II: A Sourcebook*, (pp. 176-180). NY: Routledge.
- Fogel, A. (1993). *Developing through relationships: Origins of communication, self, and culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gal, S. (1987). Variation and change in patterns of speaking: Language shift in Austria. In D. Sankoff (Ed.), *Linguistic Variation: Models and Methods*, (pp. 227-238). NY: Academic Press.
- Gudykunst, W. B. (1998). *Bridging differences*. (3rd. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Hammer, M. R. (1984). Dimensions of intercultural effectiveness: Culture specific or culture general? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 8, 1–10.
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (2003). *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication* (4th. ed.). NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Hammer, M. R. (1987). Behavioral dimensions of intercultural effectiveness: A replication and extension. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 11, 65–88.
- Hammer, M. R., Gudykunst, W. B., & Wiseman, R. L. (1978). Dimensions of intercultural effectiveness: An exploratory study. *International Journal of*

Intercultural Relations, 2, 382-392.

- Imahori, T. T., & Lanigan, M. L. (1989). Relational model of intercultural communication competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 269-286.
- Kashima, E. S., & Loh, E. (2006) International students' acculturation: Effects of international, conational and local ties and need for closure. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30, 471-485.
- Kim, Y. Y. (1977). Communication patterns of foreign immigrants in the process of acculturation. *Human Communication Research*, 2, 127-224.
- Kim, Y. Y. (1989). Intercultural Adaptation. In M. K. Asante & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication*, (pp. 275-294). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kim, Y. Y. (1991). Intercultural communication competence. In S. Ting-Toomey & F. Korzenny (Eds.). *Cross-Cultural Interpersonal Communication*, 15, (pp. 259-275). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2001). *Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kim, Y. Y. (2005). Adapting to a new culture. In W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.). *Theorizing about intercultural communication*, 375-400. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kim, Y. Y., Izumi, S., & McKay-Semmler, K. (2009, November). *The role of direct- and mediated interpersonal communication in cross-cultural adaptation: A study of educated and long term non-native residents in the United States*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Communication Association, Chicago.

- Koester, J., Wiseman, R. L., & Sanders, J. A. (1993). Multiple perspectives of intercultural communication competence. In R. L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.) *Intercultural Communication Competence, 17*, (pp. 3-15). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kong, Y. (2005, May). *Acculturation in the age of new media*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, New York.
- Larsen, L. J. (2003). The foreign-born population in the United States: 2003. U.S. Bureau of the Census, August, 2004.
- Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2006). Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures (5th. ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Madianou, M. (2005, May). New communication technologies and the mediation of transnational relationships. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, New York.
- Martin, J. N., & Hammer, M. R. (1989). Behavioral categories of intercultural communication competence: Everyday communicator's perceptions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 13*, 303-332.
- Milroy, L. (1980). *Language and social networks*. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Milroy, L. (1982). Social network and linguistic focusing. In S. Romaine (Eds.), *Sociolinguistic Variation in Speech Communities*, (pp. 141-152). London: Edward Arnold.
- Milroy, L. (1987). *Language and social networks* (2nd. ed.). Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- Munz, E., (2007, May). Phases of sojourner adaptation and the implication for

intercultural communication competence. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, California.

Neulip, J. W. (2003). *Intercultural communication: A contextual approach*. (2nd. ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Ogan, C., & Ozakca, M. (2007, May). *A bridge across the Bosphorous: Returned migrants, their Internet and media use, and social capital*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, San Francisco.

Palisi, B., & Ransford, H. (1987). Friendship as a voluntary relationship: Evidence from national surveys. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 4, 243-259.

Pedraza, S. (2006). Assimilation or transnationalism: Conceptual models of the immigrant experience in America. In R. Mahalingam (Ed.), *Cultural psychology of immigrants*, (pp. 33-54). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ruben, B. D. (1975). Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and mass communication processes in individual and multi-person systems. In B. D. Ruben & J. Y. Kim (Eds), *General systems theory and human communication*, (pp. 164 -190). Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden.

Rubin, R. B., & Martin, M. M. (1984). Development of a measure of interpersonal communication competence. *Communication Research Reports*. 11 (1), 33-44.

Shah, H. (1991). Communication and cross-cultural adaptation patterns among Asian Indians. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 15(3), 311-321.

Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (1984). *Interpersonal communication competence*.

Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (1989). *Handbook of interpersonal competence research*. NY: Springer-Verlag.

Spitzberg, B. H. (1989). Issues in the development of a theory of interpersonal competence in the intercultural context. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 241-268.

Spitzberg, B. H., & Changnon, G. (2009). Conceptualizing intercultural competence. In D. K. Deardoff (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, (pp. 2-52). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wang, Y. (2006). Internet use among Chinese students and its implication for cross-cultural adaptation. (Doctoral Dissertation). Kent State University, Kent. Available from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No. 3239990)

Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993). Where's the "culture" in cross-cultural transition? Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 24, 221-249.

Yum, J. (1988). Locus of control and communication patterns of immigrants. In: Y. Y. Kim and W. B. Gudykunst, (Eds.), *Cross-cultural adaptation: Current approaches* (pp. 191- 211). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX A Correlation Matrix for Major Variables

| | ICC | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Host-quantity | Coethnic-quantity | Interethnic-quantity | Host-quality | Coethnic-quality | Interethnic-quality | Function-host | Function-coethnic | Function-interethnic |
|----------------------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| ICC | 1 | .889** | .763** | .808** | .838** | .594** | -.191 | .348** | .623** | .052 | .296** | .541** | .067 | .418** |
| Factor 1 | .889** | 1 | .590** | .632** | .615** | .525** | -.191* | .320** | .523** | .031 | .221* | .565** | .046 | .476** |
| Factor 2 | .763** | .590** | 1 | .547** | .493** | .513** | -.106 | .274** | .414** | .078 | .161 | .393** | .142 | .331** |
| Factor 3 | .808** | .632** | .547** | 1 | .636** | .463** | .085 | .144 | .561** | .096 | .315** | .459** | .105 | .269** |
| Factor 4 | .838** | .615** | .493** | .636** | 1 | .474** | -.237* | .322** | .555** | .011 | .326** | .368** | -.009 | .274** |
| Host-quantity | .594** | .525** | .513** | .463** | .474** | 1 | -.271** | .311** | .520** | .128 | .288** | .491** | .001 | .477** |
| Coethnic-quantity | -.191 | -.191* | -.106 | -.085 | -.237* | -.271** | 1 | -.179 | -.260** | .343** | -.127 | -.084 | .423** | -.076 |
| Interethnic-quantity | .348** | .320** | .274** | .144 | .322** | .311** | -.179 | 1 | .285** | -.097 | .357** | .164 | -.162 | .318** |
| Host-quality | .623** | .523** | .414** | .561** | .555** | .520** | -.260** | .285** | 1 | .303** | .662** | .377** | -.045 | .260** |
| Coethnic-quality | .052 | .031 | .078 | .096 | .011 | .128 | .343** | -.097 | .303** | 1 | .400** | .164 | .391** | .067 |
| Interethnic-quality | .296** | .221* | .161 | .315** | .326** | .288** | -.127 | 1 | .400** | .400** | 1 | .179 | .001 | .243* |
| Function-host | .541** | .565** | .393** | .459** | .368** | .491** | -.084 | .164 | .377** | .164 | .129 | 1 | .377** | .660** |
| Function-coethnic | .067 | .046 | .142 | .105 | -.009 | .001 | .423** | -.162 | -.045 | .391** | .001 | .377** | 1 | .260** |
| Function-interethnic | .418** | .476** | .331** | .269** | .274** | .477** | -.076 | .318** | .260** | .067 | .243* | .660** | .260** | 1 |

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

APPENDIX B Demographic Questions

The following items ask about your basic information.

1. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

2. How old are you?

3. In general, how long have you been in the United States?

4. Are you currently studying in the United States?

1. Yes
2. No (Proceed to Question 7)

5. If you are currently in school, what degree are you seeking?

(e.g. Master, PhD, Non-degree)

6. If you are currently in school, are you going to look for a job in the United States after graduation?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

7. Are you currently working in the United States?

1. Yes
2. No

8. How would you describe your English speaking skills on a 1 to 7 point scale?

(1—Beginner, 4—Intermediate, 7—Proficient)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX C Face-to-Face Interpersonal Communication

The following questions ask about the quantity of your face-to-face interpersonal communication with three types of social networks.

13. In a typical week, what percentage of your face-to-face interpersonal communication would be with Americans/Chinese/People of other ethnic backgrounds (not including Americans) in general?

1. Less than 20%
2. 21-40%%
3. 41-60%
4. 61-80%
5. Above 80%

14. In a typical week, how often do you have face-to-face interpersonal communication with Americans/Chinese/People of other ethnic backgrounds (not including Americans) in general?

1. Almost everyday
2. A few times per week
3. Twice a week
4. Once a week
5. Less than once a week

In the following questions about your perceived quality of face-to-face interpersonal communication with each type of social networks, please use the following definitions:

- Satisfaction: the degree of contentment you feel about various aspects of communication
- Effectiveness: the degree to which your communication objectives are achieved
- Comfortableness: the degree to which you feel relaxed and at ease during communication

15. Are you satisfied with your face-to-face interpersonal communication with Americans/Chinese/People of other ethnic backgrounds (not including Americans)?

1. Very dissatisfied
2. Dissatisfied
3. Neutral
4. Satisfied
5. Very satisfied

16. Do you perceive your face-to-face interpersonal communication with Americans/Chinese/People of other ethnic backgrounds (not including Americans) as effective?

1. Very ineffective
2. Ineffective

- 3. Not sure
- 4. Effective
- 5. Very Effective

17. Do you feel comfortable when having face-to-face interpersonal communication with Americans/Chinese/People of other ethnic backgrounds (not including Americans)?

- 1. Very uncomfortable
- 2. Uncomfortable
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Comfortable
- 5. Very comfortable

APPENDIX D Functions of Social Networks

Below are questions regarding how you use different social networks, please use the following definition when responding to these questions:

- Identifying a person as American, Chinese or other ethnicity, should be thought of as the best summary label for a person’s mix of their birthplace, native culture, identity, and present culture.

9. If you were trying to fulfill your everyday needs for food, drinks, shelter, buying things, using the transportation system, etc. (practical needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?

10. When you were trying to express your personal identity and reassure your value and self worth (identity needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?

11. When you were trying to fulfill needs like having fun, relieving stress, affection, to be diverted from other activities, etc. (social needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?

12. When you were trying to fulfill daily tasks in work or school setting (functional needs), how likely would you be to turn to the following groups of people for help?

| | HIGHLY LIKELY | LIKELY | MAYBE | NOT SURE | PROBABLY NOT | NOT LIKELY | HIGHLY UNLIKELY |
|---|---------------|--------|-------|----------|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| American network of friends and acquaintances | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Chinese network of friends and acquaintances | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Your network of friends and acquaintances of other ethnic backgrounds (Not including Americans) | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

APPENDIX E Intercultural Communication Competence

Here are some statements about how people interact with other people. For each statement, circle the response that best reflects YOUR communication with others. Be honest in your responses and reflect on your communication behavior very carefully.

Note: People from another culture/other cultures refer to people from culture(s) other than one's own.

| | ALMOST ALWAYS | OFTEN | SOME-TIMES | SELDOM | ALMOST NEVER |
|---|---------------|-------|------------|--------|--------------|
| 1. I allow people from another culture to see who I really am. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. People from other cultures know what I am thinking. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. When interacting with people from another culture, I reveal how I feel to them. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. When interacting with people from another culture, I can put myself in other's shoes. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I don't know exactly what people from other cultures are feeling. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. People from other cultures think that I understand them. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. I am comfortable with cultural differences that come up in social situations. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I feel relaxed in small group gatherings with people from other cultures around. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. I feel insecure in groups of strangers who come from another culture. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. When I've been wronged by someone from another culture, I confront the person who wronged me. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. When meeting people from another culture, I have trouble standing up for myself. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. I stand up for my rights when interacting with someone from another culture. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. My conversations are pretty one-sided when talking to someone from another culture. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. When interacting with people from another culture, I let them know that I understand what they say. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. My mind wanders during conversations with people from another culture. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. My conversations with people from another culture are characterized by smooth shifts from one topic to the next. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. When interacting with people from another culture, I take charge of conversations I'm in by negotiating what topics we talk about. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. In conversations with someone from another culture, I perceive not only what the person says but what the person does not say. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. My friends from other cultures can tell when I am happy or sad. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. It's difficult to find the right words to express myself in intercultural interactions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. I express myself well verbally when talking to someone from another culture. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. My communication with people from other cultures is usually descriptive, not evaluative. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. I communicate with people from other cultures as though they're equals. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. When communicating with people from other cultures, they would describe me as warm. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 25. My friends from other cultures truly believe that I care about them. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 26. When interacting with people from other cultures, I try to look others in the eye when I speak with them. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27. I tell people from other cultures when I feel close to them. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 28. I accomplish my communication goals in intercultural interactions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 29. When communicating with someone from another culture, I can persuade the person to accept my position. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 30. When communicating with people from other cultures, I have trouble convincing others to do what I want them to do. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

APPENDIX F Intercultural Communication Competence Scale (Adapted)

Factor 1

(The openness about self-thinking and feelings in intercultural communication)

People from other cultures know what I am thinking.

I allow people from another culture to see who I really am.

My friends from other cultures truly believe that I care about them.

When interacting with people from another culture, I reveal how I feel to them.

When communicating with people from other cultures, they would describe me as warm.

Factor 2

(How sensitive people are in intercultural dialogues)

In conversations with someone from another culture, I perceive not only what the person says but what the person does not say.

I communicate with people from other cultures as though they're equals.

My communication with people from other cultures I usually descriptive, not evaluative.

My friends from other cultures can tell when I am happy or sad.

Factor 3

(Expressive difficulties and successes in intercultural communication)

I accomplish my communication goals in intercultural interactions.

It's difficult to find the right words to express myself in intercultural interactions.

When meeting people from another culture, I have trouble standing up for myself.

Factor 4

(The degree of comfort in intercultural communication)

I feel relaxed in small group gatherings with people from other cultures around.

I am comfortable with cultural differences that come up in social situations.

I don't know exactly what people from other cultures are feeling.

I feel insecure in groups of strangers who come from another culture.

My mind wanders during conversations with people from another culture.

APPENDIX G Participant Email

Dear friend,

How are you?

My name is Chen Gao, a second year graduate student at Wake Forest University. Currently, I am conducting my master's thesis, which is a survey research on the role of face-to-face interpersonal communication with different social networks on the development of intercultural communication competence. You are invited to participate in my survey research and to complete an anonymous online questionnaire, which will take you approximately 20 minutes.

This survey is completely voluntary! If you would like to participate, please click the link here to access to the questionnaire: [surveymonkey URL goes here].

Thank you in advance for your time and effort in completing the survey!

Sincerely,
Chen

APPENDIX H Chinese Version of the Questionnaire

下列是有关您基本信息的问题：

1. 您的性别是什么？

1. 男
2. 女

2. 您的年龄多大？

3. 您来美国大概多久了？

4. 您目前是否在美国上学？

1. 是
2. 否（请转到第7个问题）

5. 如果您目前正在上学，请问您正在攻读什么学位？
（例如：硕士，博士，非学历教育）

6. 如果您目前正在上学，您打算毕业以后在美国找工作吗？

1. 是
2. 否
3. 不确定

7. 您现在是否在美国工作？

1. 是
2. 否

8. 您会如何描述自己的英语口语水平（1—7）？

1—初级（无法正常交流），4—中级（可以表达自己的意思），7—精通（运用自如）

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

下面各项是关于您在社交中如何与以下三组人进行交流的问题，在回答这些问题时，您可能会用到这个定义：

- 当您在界定一个人是否为美国人，中国人或其他国家的人时，应该综合考虑这个人的出生地、本土文化、自我认知和他/她所表现出来的文化取向等方面来做出结论。

9. 当您需要满足您的日常生活需求，如食物、饮用品、住宿、买东西、交通等时，您向下面所列的每一组人寻求帮助的可能性分别有多大？

10. 当您有自我认知需求，比如需要表达自己的身份、自我定位、确定自我价值时，您与下列每一组人接触的可能性分别有多大？

11. 当您有社交需求，如获得乐趣，缓解压力，情感需要，或转移自己的注意力时，您与下列每一组人接触的可能性分别有多大？

12. 当您需要完成平时的学习或工作任务时，您向下面所列的每一组人寻求帮助的可能性分别有多大？

| | 非常有可能 | 有很大可能性 | 也许会 | 不确定 | 也许不会 | 可能性不大 | 基本不可能 |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|
| 美国人 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 中国人 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 其他国家的人 (不包括美国人) | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

下列各项询问关于您在社交中与以下三组人面对面交流的比例：

13. 在普通的一周内，您与美国人/中国人/来自其他国家的人（不包括美国人）进行面对面交流的比例大概是多少？

1. 少于 20%
2. 21-40%
3. 41-60%
4. 61-80%
5. 多于 80%

14. 在普通的一周内，您是否经常与美国人/中国人/来自其他国家的人（不包括美国人）进行面对面交流？

1. 几乎每天
2. 每周几次
3. 每周两次
4. 每周一次
5. 少于每周一次

下列各项询问关于您在社交中与以下三组人交流时的感受。在回答这些问题时，您可能会用到这些的定义：

- 满意度：您对交流时各个方面感到满足的程度
- 效果：您的沟通目标实现的程度
- 舒适度：您在与他人交流时的舒服自如程度

15. 您对于自己和美国人/中国人/来自其他国家的人（不包括美国人）进行面对面交流时的情况感到满意吗？

1. 很不满意
2. 不满意
3. 保持中立
4. 满意
5. 非常满意

16. 您是否认为自己能够很有效地与美国人/中国人/来自其他国家的人（不包括美国人）进行面对面交流？

1. 基本无效
2. 不太有效
3. 不确定
4. 有效
5. 非常有效

17. 当与美国人/中国人/来自其他国家的人（不包括美国人）进行面对面交流时，您是否感到舒适自如？

1. 很不舒服
2. 不太舒服
3. 保持中立
4. 舒服
5. 非常舒服

下面是一些关于人们如何与来自其他文化背景的人进行交流的陈述。对于下面的每一条陈述，请仔细回忆您的交流行为，并选择最能反映您与他人实际交流情况的答案。

注：“来自其他文化背景的人”指所有与自己不同文化的人。

| | 总是 | 时常 | 有时 | 很少 | 从未 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. 我会在来自其他文化背景的人面前展示真实的自我。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. 来自其他文化背景的人能够了解我在想什么。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. 在与来自其他文化背景的人进行交流时，我会流露出我对他们的看法。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我会设身处地从他们的角度看问题。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. 我不能准确地了解来自其他文化背景的人的感受。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. 在与来自其他文化背景的人进行交流时，他们认为我能够理解他们。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. 对于社交场合中出现的文化差异，我不会感到不舒服。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. 当小型聚会中有来自其他文化背景的人出席时，我不会觉得紧张。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. 当我处在一群与自己文化背景不同的陌生人中间时，我会觉得没有安全感。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，如果受到对方的无礼对待时，我会与他们针锋相对。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我不能很好地表明自己的立场。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我能够维护自己的权利。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. 当我和来自其他文化背景的人交谈时，我会占主导地位，而对方参与比较少。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 14. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我会让他们知道我理解他们所表达的内容。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我会心不在焉。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我可以从一个话题很自然地转换到另一个话题。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我会通过引导话题来把握谈话。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我既可以领悟对方所说的话，也可以察觉出对方的潜台词。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 19. 我那些来自其他文化背景的朋友能够辨别出我是开心还是难过。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. 在跨文化交流中，我无法找出合适的词来表达自己。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. 在与其他文化背景的人交流时，我能够很好地用口语表达自己。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. 当我和来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我会使用客观描述，而不是主观评论。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. 在跨文化交流中，我会平等对待来自不同文化背景的人。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 24. 当我和来自其他文化背景的人我交流时，他们会觉得我是个热情的人。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 25. 我的来自其他文化背景的朋友认为我是在乎他们的。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 26. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我会看着他们的眼睛讲话。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 27. 当我觉得与某些来自其他文化背景的人很亲近时，我会告诉他们我的感受。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 28. 在跨文化交流中，我能够达到我交流的目的。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 29. 在与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我能够说服对方，让对方接受我的立场。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 30. 当我与来自其他文化背景的人交流时，我无法说服对方做我想让他们做的事。 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

CURRICULUM VITAE

Education Background

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Aug. 2009– present | Wake Forest University, USA <i>M.A.</i> in Communication Studies |
| Sep.2004– Apr.2007 | Northwestern Polytechnical University, P. R. China <i>M.A.</i> in English Linguistics |
| Sep.2000– Jul.2004 | Northwestern Polytechnical University, P. R. China <i>B.A.</i> in English |

Research Interest

Intercultural Communication
Interpersonal Relationships and Social Networks
Health Communication

Honors and Awards

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 2009 – 2011 | Tuition Scholarship, Wake Forest University |
| Nov. 2010 | Alumni Student Travel Award, Wake Forest University |
| Apr. 2007 | Outstanding <i>M.A.</i> Thesis, NWPU |
| Oct. 2006 | Excellent Student Award & 1st Class Scholarship, NWPU |
| Oct. 2005 | Excellent Student Award for social activities, NWPU |
| Oct. 2005 | Excellent Student Award & 2nd Class Scholarship, NWPU |
| Jul. 2004 | Excellent Undergraduate Student Award, NWPU |
| Jul. 2004 | Outstanding <i>B.A.</i> Thesis, NWPU |
| 2001– 2003 | Excellent Student Leader Award, NWPU |

Publications

Gao, C. (2010). The Bridge Role of China's English-Language Media in Shaping the National Image. Presented at National Communication Association Annual Convention. San Francisco, CA.

Professional Societies

National Communication Association