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Impact of Intercultural Competence on Communicative Success in L2 Environments

(With Reference to Missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

David Milford Radloff Lucero

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Impact of Intercultural Competence on Communicative Success in L2 Environments
(With Reference to Missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

David Milford Radloff Lucero
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Master of Arts

This study explores the impact of cultural competence on success in completing key missionary tasks. Qualitative survey results are supported by data from an intercultural effectiveness assessment and a Mandarin Chinese listening proficiency test to describe themes related to missionary communicative success and to explore correlations between intercultural effectiveness and listening proficiency. Missionary communicative tasks are clarified into themes: “obtaining referrals,” “obtaining teaching opportunities,” and “helping people make and keep commitments.” Factors perceived as associating with communicative success include “feeling and communicating love” and receiving “spiritual guidance.” The effect of training on intercultural competence is also described. The intercultural effectiveness subcategory of positive regard is shown to have significant correlation with listening proficiency and with missionaries’ perceptions of their own awareness of Chinese culture. Suggestions are made for further research and program development.

Keywords: Chinese, communicative tasks, intercultural competence, intercultural effectiveness, listening proficiency, Mandarin, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
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This work was inspired by my own experience as a missionary and especially my experiences in the Missionary Training Center, both as missionary and as teacher, for which experiences I am extremely grateful. It was particularly prompted by visiting the MTC when my mother-in-law, Gayle Acton, served a senior mission. Many have contributed along the way, including the study participants, my graduate instructors, and my chair, for whom I worked as a teaching assistant and thereby gained valuable learning regarding the integration of language and culture instruction. I also appreciate perspectives lent by MTC personnel, especially Lane Steinagel. This has been a tremendous learning experience, and I offer my thanks to them all. Lastly, I am grateful for the support and prayers of friends; of my mother, Patricia Lucero; and most especially of my wife, Kristy.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

“I feel like the concentration on culture severely detracted from learning of the language (and I pay to learn language).” –Written on a student evaluation of a language class (Bateman, 2002, p. 319).

“Missionaries feel a need to learn language, language, language; but they need to learn culture with it. And that’s a struggle.” –Spoken by a former missionary (Lucero, personal interview notes, 2014)

What does understanding culture have to do with learning a language? For years many people have assumed that learning vocabulary and grammar are sufficient for communication with native speakers (NS) of that language. The first quote above is one of many published by Bateman (2002) exemplifying such a view. Indeed, for decades language programs have separated learning language from learning culture, and even then, culture has often been treated at the informational or surface level (e.g., history, customs, food, music, etc.). However, more recent approaches to language study tend to agree more with the second quote, viewing language and culture as interconnected (for discussions of these trends see Seelye, 1993; Christensen & Warnick 2006; Kubler, 2006; Standards, 2006; Shrum & Glissan, 2010). As more organizations send people into foreign countries to work, learn or serve there has been much interest in learning foreign languages (L2), in learning foreign culture (C2), and in learning how combining them may help foreign sojourners be successful in their communicative tasks. Research in these areas explore such topics as—

• the relationship between language proficiency, cultural effectiveness/competence, and the ability to succeed abroad;
● how ‘success’ in a foreign language and foreign cultural setting is defined and measured; and

● how foreign experience, and training for such experience, correlate with language proficiency and cultural competence.

This study was prompted by the writer’s informal and casual interactions with returned missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints (Church) who learned second languages and lived in cultures foreign to their own. Church missionaries voluntarily leave home to teach religious principles to others, often financially supported by family or friends, usually living and teaching in pairs called companionships. Women typically serve in this capacity for 18 months, men for 24 months. They begin their mission experience with several weeks in a missionary training center. These returned missionaries discussed issues related to the questions above—about language, culture and success. Study participants were obtained from this population. Contexts, and some results, reflect the religious/spiritual nature of their experience.

As its missionaries and members spread across the globe, the Church makes various efforts to adapt to this widely varied linguistic and cultural environment. In the past, those efforts included culture specific training in the Church’s Missionary Training Centers—training schools where missionaries receive training in proselyting, teaching, and, where needed, language (those learning a second language typically attend for 8-9 weeks). Some years ago the practice of official culture training in the MTCs was discontinued. The prime text for missionary training has a section on language and cultural awareness which states:

“Culture and language are closely related. Understanding the culture will help explain why language is used the way it is. Strive to understand the culture of the people so that you can communicate the unique aspects of the message of the Restoration in a way that will be clear to them. One of the greatest things you can do to gain people’s trust and love
is to embrace their culture in appropriate ways. Many great missionaries have done so (see 1 Corinthians 9:20–23). Seek to have the people feel comfortable with you and your language.” (Church, 2004, p. 132)

Nevertheless, current MTC training focuses on language acquisition, with little attention to intercultural effectiveness or cultural competence. Recently, there has been renewed consideration to develop culture training for missionaries—that is, training that would prepare missionaries to be culturally sensitive and aware, with competencies geared to assist in adaptation to any new culture (Steinagel, personal communication, 2014). This study aims to help inform this consideration of reinstituting cultural training in the MTCs.

Returning to the two opening quotes, a stereotypical view of “I pay to learn language” approach is often portrayed in cinema where an exasperated English speaker is heard yelling at his translator “Don’t change it; just say it exactly as I am saying it!” (e.g., something metaphorical like “This situation stinks,” or extremely direct like “You are an idiot,” or something that would be grammatically nonsensical or culturally offensive, with laughingly disastrous results). If this view holds water, then culture study may be of little practical use. However, if the purpose of language learning is to be able to meaningfully interact with native speakers in ways that accomplish communicative tasks efficiently and effectively, and have both ‘us’ and ‘them’ understand similar meanings, and feel comfortable about the interchange, then culture—especially culture as it relates to language—may be key. This study explores how cultural competence affected the communicative success of Church missionaries from their perspective.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

A meta-analysis of second language acquisition in the past 30 years (Chen & Jung, 2018) identifies the top 11 ‘clusters’ of research in the field, none of which directly address culture. Of these 11 clusters, four include sociocultural theories of language acquisition, which focus on social interactions being key to language learning, but do not attend to intercultural effectiveness or competence as factors in language learning. Only one cluster, a smaller one, includes studies on the completion of ‘communicative tasks’, a key component of culture based language learning, as a measure of success in language acquisition; however, the effect of culture-related variables on success in completing communicative tasks does not seem to appear in the literature.

These studies supply evidence that the standard of success in language learning is still largely accuracy in form, as well as breadth and depth of language ability, with much less emphasis on clearly communicating meaning in a cultural context and successful completion of communicative tasks. This absence of culture is evidenced in the widely used Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), where culture does not become a factor until the tester starts exploring the Superior level, where appropriate use of culturally based language is assessed; at lower proficiency levels issues of culture are not addressed. The literature also shows that academia is primarily concerned with ‘language acquisition’, and non-educational institutions are largely focused on cultural adaptation (e.g., minimizing culture shock and avoiding burnout). The academic focus on language acquisition may be related to the relative ease of testing vocabulary, grammar, fluency, etc. as compared to assessing cultural understanding; additionally, the complexity of assessing culture is increased because multiple diverse cultures use the same language: e.g., the culture of Spain and Mexico have key differences, though both are Spanish speaking cultures). The non-academic institutional interest in cultural adaptation may be related
to the high costs of employee turnover in international settings.

The following sections share experts’ conceptual connections between culture learning and language learning, and empirical findings on how cultural learning relates to language learning; they also explore how cultural training and time spent in a L2/C2 environment relates to successful completion of communicative tasks. A context for applying findings to the target population, Church missionaries, will also be provided.

**Does Language + Culture = Communication?**

There is abundant evidence that language experts conceptually link both language proficiency and cultural competence together in achieving successful communication. The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (2006) state, “students . . . cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs” (p. 31), or in other words, knowing a language is “knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom” (p. 11). This reflects the views of many current researchers and writers regarding the relationship of language and culture. For example, Mitchell and Myles (2004) point out that "researchers in the language socialization tradition believe that language [L1] and culture are not separable, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other" (p. 235). Shulz (2007) suggests that such learning shapes our sense of identity and guides our behavior, including communications. Seelye (1993) proposed the following overarching goal for integrating culture and language learning:

“All students will develop the cultural understandings, attitudes, and performance skills needed to function appropriately within a segment of another society and to communicate with people socialized in that culture.” (p. 29)

Christensen and Warnick (2006) provide the following example demonstrating the need to know more than language when learning Japanese.
“Most teachers of Japanese have probably had a student approach them and say arigatoo (“thank you”) or ohayoo (“good morning”). In terms of propositional content, the meaning is easily understood. The student is likely very sincere in expressing thanks, for example; however, the form of the message is socially inappropriate in Japanese culture for a student when addressing a teacher. Knowing the Japanese form for “thank you” and simply practicing saying what one wants to say will not adequately prepare learners for the proper cultural performance in such a setting. In the cases noted here, learners should address teachers with the more respectful arigatoo gozaimasu or ohayoo gozaimasu.”

(p.95)

They go on further to suggest that language and culture should not only be taught in the same time frame, but that they should be integrated at all levels of language learning. Perhaps the view that language and behavioral culture are inseparable may be summed up by Walker and Noda (2000) who state:

“The implication of this concept of performed culture for language study is that no one really learns a foreign language. Rather, we learn how to do particular things in a foreign language; and the more things we learn to do, the more expert we are in that language.”

(p. 190)

The view that language and behavioral culture should be integrated is not shared by all. Even when it is conceptually acknowledged, it is seldom implemented programmatically. This can be seen in the majority of language programs and texts that teach culture as an add-on to language and that assess cultural learning largely by testing factual knowledge, suggesting language is the significantly dominant factor in communication (for examples of this view see Chen & Jung, 2018; for summaries and critiques of this view, see Seelye, 1993; Christensen & Warnick, 2006). Smith, Paige and Steglitz, (2003) cite the Peace Corps as an example of these types of programs. The Church’s missionary training programs are another example, having
largely removed the cultural component from language learning. However, recent writings suggest a much higher role of cultural competence in successful communication, as exemplified in this statement by Chen and Starosta (2006) introducing their book on intercultural communication competence:

“As we encounter ever greater cultural and co-cultural diversity, the careful study of intercultural communication competence becomes increasingly important. Only through competent intercultural communication can persons from different cultures communicate effectively and appropriately in the upcoming global society.” (p. 373)

**Impact of Intercultural Competence on L2 Communication**

As noted above, many experts argue for the interdependency of culture, especially behavioral culture, and language. Research exploring this relationship shows that while many variables affecting language proficiency have been examined (e.g., motivation, amount of input, age, attitude, teaching methods, L1 influence, etc.), far fewer studies look at the relationship between C2 competency, L2 learning and successful L2/C2 communication. The following sections summarize studies by Majumdar, Browne, Roberts and Carpio (2004), Schouten and Meeuwesen (2006), Gareis, Merkin and Goldman (2011), Reeder, Macfadyen, Chase and Roche (2004) as examples of research that suggests intercultural competence may affect completion of communicative tasks. Studies suggesting connection between cultural competence and linguistic improvement are exemplified by Martinsen (2010), Martinsen and Alvord (2012), Baker-Smemoe, Dewey, Bown and Martinsen (2014), Larson-Hall and Dewey (2012), and Chen and Jung (2018). The concept of mutual expectations is also broached by Reeder, et al. (2004), Chu (1974), and Bodily (2013). Another area, ability to adapt to a new culture, is also noted in the literature (Forster, 2000; Kaye & Taylor, 1986; and National Foreign Trade Council and Cigna Global Benefits, 2013). While it may not be self-evident how this adaptability relates to L2/C2 communication, evidence suggests the possibility of a connection.
Communicative tasks. Intercultural effectiveness has been associated with the accomplishment of communicative tasks. A study of health care providers and patients by Majumdar, et al. (2004) suggests that increased intercultural effectiveness (especially in terms of higher levels of understanding of multiculturalism, open-mindedness, cultural awareness, and ability to communicate) in health care workers correlates with positive health outcomes for patients (in terms of functional capacity and access of resources). In other words, higher levels of intercultural effectiveness among service providers were associated with increased use of proffered services by people of differing cultural backgrounds.

Another meta-study of communication between doctors and patients regarding their health care (Schouten & Meeuwesen, 2006) found “major differences in doctor–patient communication as a consequence of patients’ ethnic backgrounds,” identifying “five key predictors of culture-related communication problems” listed as “(1) cultural differences in explanatory models of health and illness; (2) differences in cultural values; (3) cultural differences in patients’ preferences for doctor–patient relationships; (4) racism/perceptual biases; (5) linguistic barriers (p. 21).” Note that one of these problem predictors is linguistic while three directly specify cultural issues. Their “practice implication” was that “using a cultural sensitive approach in medical communication is recommended” (p. 21).

Research on how foreign college students in the United States adapt and develop friendships (Gareis, Merkin & Goldman, 2011) is also relevant to this study as open, trusting relationships are at the core of missionary communication. Their results showed that “international students rated their American friendships lower than their home- or other-culture friendships. Friendship numbers and satisfaction were significantly related to communicative adaptability, language proficiency, and loneliness.” Both language proficiency and the ability to adapt communication in a new cultural setting, an application of cultural competence, correlated with developing positive, trusting relationships.
Even such ubiquitous tasks as introducing oneself online (a task becoming more prevalent in missionary work) show evidence of the impact of culture on communication. A study (Reeder, et al, 2004) of online university students in Canada (some aboriginal-C2, some foreign-C2, some from the dominant Canadian culture-C1) showed that students from L2 and C2 backgrounds posted fewer messages and used very different methods of introducing themselves. For example, an aboriginal native Canadian (C2) identified herself primarily by membership in a national/cultural group, and in relation to her family. An Anglo Canadian learner (C1) identified herself primarily by her professional role and experience, and by her academic qualifications and achievements. The researchers conclude “It appears, then, that one important cultural ‘gap’, which may function as a predictor of online communicative success, is the gap between the communicative culture of an individual, and the communication culture of the Internet itself” which the researchers state was created by Anglo-Americans with Anglo-American cultural values embedded within it.

**Expectations and intentions.** The Reeder (2004) study of online interactions suggests a difference in expectations between culturally different interlocutors. Chu (1974) found similar differences when he compared the expectations of Chinese native speakers (NS) and L2 learners in a specific context—Church missionaries serving in Taiwan. He administered a Q-Sort exercise (involving rank-ordering statements of what would be expected of missionaries regarding six topics, one of which was language use) to missionaries from the USA who had served in Taiwan and Chinese NS from Taiwan. The results showed significant differences in expectations between the missionaries and NS in four of the six categories, including the language category. Chu’s results suggest the missionaries’ C2 cultural expectations, which differed from those of the Chinese native speakers, might result in challenges in completing communicative tasks.

An example of this type of communicative failure may be found in an unpublished study
by Bodily (2013). Bodily studied differences in compliment responses between English NS and Chinese L2 learners of English, among Church missionaries. The missionaries engaged in conversational role plays with trained facilitators who were primed to offer various types of compliments. While the conversations were guided by the facilitators, the missionaries' responses were un-programmed and authentic. The results of the study showed that, indeed, there were differences in compliment responses based on cultural background. NS of Chinese tended to deny or downgrade compliments (e.g., counter the compliment or give credit to others) while NS of English were more likely to accept and upgrade (e.g., expressing agreement or stating their own positive views of what was being commented upon).

Of particular relevance to how culture affects communication are comments made during follow up interviews with some participants. Among the missionaries interviewed,

“When asked why they responded with disagreement and/or downgraded the compliment, their replies were in harmony with Gu’s proposed self-denigrating maxim in Chinese culture (1990). That is, it was important to the [Chinese missionaries] to show modesty and humility as a means of being polite. They expressed concern in coming across as arrogant or self-important to the interviewer. Fewer expressed that they sincerely thought that their English wasn’t good.” (p. 58)

Some facilitators were also interviewed. Their comments suggest that the meaning expressed by the missionaries was not the meaning interpreted by the facilitators.

“Many mentioned that the insistence with which the missionaries denied their compliments came across a bit abrasive. Some . . . mentioned feeling guilty for giving the compliment because it prompted the missionary to degrade themselves. This is a good example of pragmatic failure [i.e., where language is understood, but not the culturally contextual meaning of the language]. The Chinese missionaries were participating in culturally-acceptable acts of politeness as they knew them. However, their attempts did
not translate as polite to the native English speaker, but instead as cold or even rude.” (p. 59)

Even when missionaries can accurately translate what they want to say into the target language, and hear responses, the communicative message can be different for both speakers, based on culture, thus bringing about failure for each to successfully communicate their intent. This study is described here in such detail because it is the best example found of the type of description of communicative tasks that the present study seeks to expand upon.

Language proficiency. Various studies have shown an impact of intercultural competence on language skills. Martinsen (2010) researched the effects of a six-week study abroad experience on language acquisition in college students. He found small but significant increases in proficiency and looked at the factors influencing those gains. The only factors significantly predicting increased language proficiency were the students’ scores on an intercultural sensitivity instrument (ICCS). Martinsen and Alvord (2012) conducted follow up analysis on additional data from the same study abroad experience and noted a significant predictive relationship between one element of intercultural sensitivity (i.e., pre-departure ‘openness towards others’) and students’ pronunciation abilities. They noted “these results actually indicate that structural aspects of students’ L2, i.e., their phonological competence, are more likely to develop when they possess greater skill and interest in dealing with other cultures” (p. 458).

A subsequent study (Baker-Smemoe et al., 2014) focusing on factors influencing increased language proficiency in study abroad students in six countries found that the strongest predictors of improved language proficiency were variables of pre-program intercultural sensitivity and social network. Larson-Hall and Dewey (2012) also looked at factors affecting improvements in language proficiency, this time among Japanese speaking (L2) Church missionaries. While their study highlighted three factors that correlated most highly with
language proficiency (‘aptitude’, ‘amount of input’ and ‘motivation’), they found that the fourth most significant factor influencing proficiency was’ attitude toward culture’. The recurrence in these studies of cultural openness/sensitivity/attitude as a variable correlating with amount of input, motivation, and social networking begs the question of whether elements of cultural ability may influence positively these other factors, which are seen as key variables in language acquisition (Chen & Jung, 2018).

**Cultural adaptation.** Outside the arena of academia, business and service organizations have experienced benefits from increased cultural competencies. A study by Forster (2000) of business representatives sent on international assignments concluded that the key factor in predicting cultural adjustment (one of their measures of success) was not age, educational level or even previous experience in the target country, but rather the key factor was intercultural competence training. While factors of training varied, all those who underwent prior training in cultural competencies were much better off in their adaptation and success than those who did not receive such training. In another study of the hotel industry, Kaye and Taylor (1986) studied aspects of culture shock. Their findings indicate “the most powerful correlative of culture shock was inter-cultural sensitivity” (p.505). Thus, they conclude that increasing intercultural sensitivity will lead to reduction in culture shock. The positive correlations found in the above studies are given a different perspective by the findings of a study by the National Foreign Trade Council and Cigna Global Health Benefits (2013). In a survey of 1500 expatriates, respondents ranked the importance of relocation services provided for their foreign assignment. Cultural training ranked 7th in importance behind such services as medical preparedness, settling-in services, and schools. However, it ranked one place higher than language training.

How are studies of cultural adaptation related to communicative success? There may be no direct link. However, if failure in performing the tasks of a foreign assignment may be related to ‘culture shock’ or failing to adjust culturally as reported by Kaye and Taylor (1986)
and by Forster (2000), and if culture shock is partially failure to reliably predict the outcomes of communicative acts as suggested by Seelye (1993), and if that failure can be mitigated through increased intercultural training, then these studies may help point out a relationship between cultural learning and L2 communicative success.

All together, these studies suggest that factors of intercultural sensitivity and effectiveness associate with language ability in various ways. They are associated with achieving communicative tasks, with development of linguistic abilities, with cultural expectations of language use and other behaviors. But, “Why does this correlation of cultural competence with language proficiency matter?” especially for missionaries and other foreign sojourners who live for an extended time ‘in-country’, if learners simply 'pick it up' as they associate with native speakers? This question will be addressed in the next section.

**Cultural Training**

**Is ‘time in country’ enough?** The popular view that visiting a foreign country is the best way to learn the culture is supported by various studies which link increased intercultural competence to ‘time in country.’ For example, Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen and Hubbard (2006), while studying students on a four-week study abroad program, determined that even that short of an experience led to significant changes in intercultural sensitivity (using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity; see Bennett, 1986) and were better able to accept and adapt to cultural differences. Similar results were found for US students on a six-week study abroad program in South America (Martinsen, 2011). Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein and Colby (2003) concluded a summary of study abroad research by concluding that study abroad promotes language learning and some aspects of culture learning. On the other hand, Paige et al. (2003) also concluded from that same study that one strong negative experience can impede language acquisition and cultural learning. Similarly, Shulz (2007), while reviewing studies on assessing cultural learning, indicates that there is an abundance of evidence showing that experience in a foreign land (even for extended periods) does not guarantee cultural adaptation or
development of cross-cultural competencies.

An additional study of international students in the US (Gareis, Merkin, & Goldman, 2011) also adds light to the issue of time in-country, as well as to communicative tasks (in this case, developing friendships) and language. The study showed that international students rated their American friendships lower than their home- or other-culture friendships, and that numbers of friends and friendship satisfaction were significantly related to communicative adaptability, language proficiency, and loneliness. Also, there was no significant correlation between friendship success and willingness to communicate or length of stay. These results, if applied to others in L2 situations such as Church missionaries, suggest that the ability of people in L2/C2 situations to develop satisfying relationships may depend more on the cultural competency of communicative adaptability and on language proficiency, than on time in country or even than on willingness to communicate. A somewhat similar study of foreign students at a Chinese university (Ngwira, Mapoma, Hong, Sariyo, & Kondowe, 2015) also showed that length of stay, along with education levels, have not been found to be factors that influence foreign students’ levels of intercultural communication and acculturation. Studies specifically of Church missionaries also indicate that being ‘in the field’ may not be sufficient to understand the culture. One study focused on missionaries from the US serving in Latin America (Bradford, 1986). Bradford’s study compared three groups of returned missionaries (one group from the US who served in Latin America, one group from Latin America who served in Latin America, a control group from the US who served in the US). Each completed an intercultural communication instrument that asked them to describe their perceptions of US cultural values and of Latin American cultural values. Using cluster group analysis, one particularly relevant finding of this study was that there was no significant difference between how both groups from the US perceived Latin American values. It did not matter whether they served in Latin America or the US, their perceptions of Latin America were (statistically) the same. This may suggest that ‘time
in country’ does not necessarily alter cultural understanding.

The study by Chu (1974) noted earlier looked at cultural understanding through the lens of expectations. Chu asked returned LDS missionaries who had served in Taiwan and Hong Kong to rank order statements regarding cultural expectations of missionaries in their respective countries of service, comparing these with responses of Chinese natives. Chu found that the overall responses in four of the six categories (tradition, language, personal manners, and personal space) showed significant differences. This suggests that even after 16 to 22 months of living and working in a foreign country, missionaries still differ significantly from natives in their perceptions of what is culturally expected of themselves, including in the language they use.

What factors improve intercultural competence? Since higher intercultural competence is positively related to various aspects of successful communication in foreign language environments (e.g., completion of communicative tasks, improved language ability), then learning how to increase that sensitivity and competence may be of value. As noted previously, individuals who experience a time in a foreign culture tend to pick up various aspects of intercultural competence (Anderson et al., 2006; Martinsen, 2011), but the link between ‘time in the field’ and increased competence remains unclear, or even equivocal (Paige et al., 2003; Shulz, 2007).

Research already cited shows that training in intercultural competencies tends to have a positive impact on individuals’ ability to adapt to and communicate in another culture. Majumdar, et al.’s (2004) study regarding the health-care industry found that workers who underwent training in cultural communication issues not only scored higher on intercultural sensitivity instruments than those who did not receive the training, but their service efforts yielded more positive results with clients than those of the control group. In Forster’s (2000) study on culture shock among business personnel on international assignments, the only factor predicting how well individuals would adapt was whether or not they had received training on
cultural adaptation. The researchers were surprised to find that, in their study, participants’ levels of language ability and their previous experiences with the culture were found to not be predictive factors of decreased culture shock or cultural adaptation. While Forster’s study does not directly address the relationship between culture learning and language learning, one intriguing fact seems relevant. Neither language ability nor previous in-country experience predicted the ability to adapt to a new culture—only explicit training on cultural adaptation was predictive. This suggests that language ability, of itself, may not correlate with cultural ability, nor may time in country; there may be mitigating factors.

Additional support for the value of explicit training on cultural issues can be found in academic settings. Research by Pedersen (2010) compared the intercultural sensitivity gains of two sets of students in a study abroad program. One group participated in a class focused on developing intercultural competencies, while the other group did not participate in such a class. There was also a control group of students who remained at their campus in their home country who were enrolled in similar language and content classes, but not the one on cultural competence. This research showed that the students in all three groups increased in intercultural sensitivity. Interestingly, the students in the control group and in the study abroad group without the extra class scored similarly, indicating that being in the country did not give students greater intercultural sensitivity than just taking language classes. However, the study abroad group that participated in the extra culture class had gains significantly higher than the gains of either of the other groups. The difference in variables was the explicit training.

Other research involving study abroad students yielded some interesting results, possibly suggesting that training on intercultural competence may yield gains beyond the time-period of the class (Engle & Engle, 2004). This study involved some students who participated in a study abroad in France for one semester, and some who participated for two semesters. During the first semester, all students participated in a class on cultural competence, and all showed gains in
language and intercultural competence during that semester. Of those who stayed for the second semester (during which there was no explicit class on culture), all again showed progress in both language and cultural areas, but the gains in intercultural competence were even stronger in the second semester than in the first. While it may be possible that these findings suggest that the students did better without an explicit class on culture, it is more likely--by applying the findings of other studies noted, and applying the principle of Occam’s Razor (i.e., when in doubt, follow the simplest path with the fewest assumptions)–that the perspectives and skills gained in the class continued to yield benefits as they continued to be used, and the benefits increased as the students gained greater skill through practice. However, a meta-analysis of research on intercultural training programs (Morris & Robie, 2001) concludes that ambivalent results on what factors mitigate intercultural training’s effect upon communicative success warrants caution in prescribing training design.

These studies encourage further research into the types of cultural instruction that might be most useful pre-foreign experience, how to maximize the cultural learning benefits of learners while ‘in country’, and what other factors may positively contribute to gaining intercultural competence, and thus L2 communicative ability.

Complexities

The cited literature suggests that integrating culture and language learning will have positive effects on L2 learners’ ability to communicate in their L2, especially when combined with time in the L2 culture. However, further research suggests greater complexities in the process. One such complexity is the nature of cultural adaptation, which includes stages that may look like regression (Bennet, 1986). The study referred to earlier (Anderson, et al., 2006) of a short-term study abroad experience resulted in some participants having a less-positive view of the target culture. This was interpreted by the researchers as a step forward in Bennett’s (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. However, it illustrates the complexity of the
relationship. Similarly, two-sided views were found in Drewelow’s (2013) study of US college students learning French, where increased understanding led to both positive and negative (and somewhat humorous) perceptions.

“Three [language] themes emerged: the French language (1) is not so difficult to learn, (2) reflects cultural practices, and (3) is an inefficient and annoying language (p.163) . . . Three main [cultural] themes emerged: (1) the French people are not rude, snooty, or arrogant . . . (2) they are not so different from us . . . ; and (3) they are not all from Paris.” (p. 165)

Another complexity emerges related to timing. Engle and Engle’s (2004) previously cited research on a two-semester study abroad showed that students’ intercultural competence increased during the first semester (associated by the researchers with a concurrent intercultural sensitivity and ability class), yet, it increased even more the second semester (after the class ended). At the same time, language proficiency increased both semesters, but in contrast to the cultural learning, the language improvements slowed down during the second semester. The authors concluded that while culture and language may be related, the relationship is not clear. These findings have similarities to a finding by Larson-Hall and Dewey (2012) who found that LDS missionary language proficiency increased dramatically the first 11 months in the field, but leveled off after that. However, the Engles’ cultural finding seems in contrast to Martinsen’s (2011) finding that while students on a six-week study abroad increased in intercultural sensitivity overall, the relationship was curvilinear, leveling off after a while, and even decreasing for some participants. Is this another manifestation of progression appearing as regression (as noted by Anderson, et al., 2006)? Or an indication that, as Drewelow (2013) concluded from her study, cultural learning requires guidance (or training) for learners to gain the most positive results? Another timing issue to be considered is one noted in a study by Martinsen and Alvord (2012). In revisiting Martinsen’s earlier study (2010) that showed
intercultural sensitivity as a predictor of increased language proficiency, they note that only pre-test scores on intercultural sensitivity predicted the increase, not increases in sensitivity that occurred while on the study abroad experience. These varied findings invite further research into the inter-relationships of cultural learning and language learning (e.g., what parts of culture correlate with what parts of language proficiency?), and on how the timing of each (before or during foreign experiences?) may impact the other.

One last complexity may be inferred by comparing the above findings with those of Dewey and Clifford (2012). Their study of returned Church missionaries found that while their overall language proficiency after 16-22 months in the field, as measured by OPI scores, exceeded those of college students who had studied for four to five years, the missionaries still had many ‘fossilized’ grammar errors. It is not a far stretch to imagine that these same missionaries also have a stronger sense of the target culture than their college educated counterparts, but that they also may have many ‘fossilized’ behavioral errors related to their L2 and C2.

Summary

The literature cited establishes the foundation for this study. There is an ongoing debate about how intercultural competence and language proficiency interrelate, and which should be emphasized in instruction. Theoretically, there is much support for the notion that both elements are important for L2 communication, especially in a C2 environment. However, language instruction programs and research still largely focus on language proficiency. At the same time, language practitioners in business and in academic study abroad programs are giving more attention to the cultural component; and, empirically, studies show that increased cultural competence correlates with increased language ability and, perhaps more importantly, with increased success in achieving L2 communicative tasks.

As to what helps increase cultural competence, there is no consensus, but there is
significant indication that increased cultural training is a significant factor in improving cultural ability, more significant than increased time in the L2/C2 environment or even than language learning. Thus far, studies on cultural training, cultural effectiveness, and communicative tasks seem to focus on formal training programs either before or in the early stages of immersion in the L2/C2 environment.

This study seeks to explore more deeply and intentionally whether these same concepts of correlation between cultural competence and language proficiency, and those between training and communicative success, are evidenced in the L2/C2 experiences of Church missionaries.

Context for Study

This study was prompted by conversations with returned Church missionaries which suggested that culture training had been largely removed from the missionary training curriculum. Prior to the mid-1980s, missionaries serving in foreign lands received culture specific training for their areas of service. This training followed the separate and not equal philosophy popular in language education at the time, comprising only one evening culture session per week, in English. In the mid-1980s the Church shortened the length of standard missionary service for men from 24 to 18 months. That change prompted a reduced training time in the missionary training centers. Shortly thereafter, culture training was discontinued, possibly to devote more time to religious, proselyting, and language training. When mission lengths were restored to 24 months the MTC training times resumed the previous longer timeframes, but the culture classes were not resumed. Culture is currently not formally addressed in the MTC curriculum, although elements of culture are taught informally through anecdote and example by MTC teachers and by native speakers who volunteer to listen to the trainees teach.

One report that helps frame this study as it relates to the missionary work of the Church (though it does not directly address the issue of culture) describes the history of the Church’s
efforts in preparing missionaries for foreign language service (Henrichsen, 1999). This historical study identified a pattern of development in approaches to prepare missionaries in foreign languages. The pattern moves from early efforts where missionaries were pretty much on their own, through a stage where geographic areas developed local training for missionaries in the field (usually under the direction of the local mission leaders) and another stage where efforts began to be centralized by connecting them to Church colleges, arriving at having a ‘school for missionaries’ created in its own right (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Historical pattern of missionary training

Henrichsen’s (1999) study also identified a process used to continue to develop programs after the fourth stage of development was reached (Figure 2).

1. Emphasis on Self-Preparation
2. Special Programs Developed and Implemented Locally
3. Adjunct Programs at Church-operated Universities
4. Dedicated, Independent, Church Supported Institution(s)*

*Note: A subsequent development is the building of additional, smaller MTCs (see https://www.lds.org/locations/missionary-training-centers) in various countries throughout the world.

Figure 2. Process of missionary development and implementation

These findings are relevant to this literature research as they give precedent and process for the cultural training considerations that this review is seeking to inform.
Chapter 3

Research Design and Methods

Research Questions

This study explores the impact of intercultural competence on missionary success, i.e., successful completion of key communicative tasks, and how that competence is gained. The premise of the study, based on the literature, was that intercultural competencies affect missionary success and that training affects intercultural competencies. The first challenge was to determine what constitutes ‘success.’ Is it ‘convert baptisms’? Is it ‘language proficiency’?

A review of literature confirmed that only looking at language proficiency was inadequate because there is nothing to suggest that high language proficiency is a standard of success for missionaries or any other organizational representative in a foreign land (although the high emphasis on language training in missionary training may suggest a belief in that correlation). Choosing “number of convert baptisms” as a measure of success was problematic in several ways. First, baptismal rates vary widely from mission to mission and land to land so that only local comparisons would make sense; and in a similar vein, baptism rates are influenced by many variables, many of which are spiritual, and isolating each variable’s influence is beyond the scope of this study. Second, baptismal data was not available for this study.

The literature, both theoretical and researched, suggests that completion of communicative tasks is a good measure of success in cross-cultural encounters. The Church does not publicly stipulate measures of success for missionary work; thus, the words of the returned missionaries themselves helped identify communicative tasks relevant to their success.

The specific research questions for this study are:

1. What impact does intercultural competence have on successful completion of missionary communicative tasks?
2. What factors likely contribute to increased intercultural effectiveness in Church missionaries?

3. Does missionary L2 listening proficiency correlate with their intercultural effectiveness?

Definitions

This study adopts ‘successful completion of communicative tasks’ as a key measure of success in L2/C2 environments and explores how L2 proficiency and intercultural effectiveness correlate with achieving that success, particularly in relation to missionaries of the Church.

Missionary success: Successful completion of key missionary communicative tasks. This definition was derived from the literature (see Chapter 2, Impact of Culture on L2 Communication, Communicative tasks) and from interviews with returned missionaries (see Chapter 4, Research Design, Preliminary work).

Communicative task: A task whose solution requires the use of verbal and/or non-verbal actions to achieve a specific goal in a specific communicative situation (Al-Mahrooqi, & Denman, 2018, p. 183-184). Determining what communicative tasks are important for missionary success is part of the purpose of this study. In a much fuller discussion of the communicative language approach and its benefits in language learning, Savignon (1991) links this approach to the Language for Special Purposes (LSP) movement. Missionary training seems to be an application of LSP.

Intercultural competence/intercultural effectiveness: Intercultural competence “is the ability to think and act in inter-culturally appropriate ways” (Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003, p. 422). Portalla and Chen (2010) define it using terms related to communicative tasks as “an individual’s ability to achieve their communication goal while effectively and appropriately utilizing communication behaviors to negotiate between the different identities present within a culturally diverse environment” (p. 21). Chen and Starosta (2006) define intercultural
effectiveness as a sub construct within intercultural competence.

“Intercultural competency is comprised of three dimensions, including intercultural awareness (cognitive aspect), intercultural sensitivity (affective aspect), and intercultural effectiveness (the behavioral aspect).” (Chen & Starosta, 2006, p. 356)

In the literature some ambiguity exists regarding these terms. Regarding this ambiguity, Chen and Starosta state (2006):

“The confusion between the terms effectiveness and competence must be resolved if we are to arrive at a clear conception of communicative competence. Many scholars use the word effectiveness instead of competence (e.g., Hammer, et al., 1978; Ruben, 1988). Others use effectiveness and competence interchangeably.” (p. 371)

This study follows the strategy of those who use the terms interchangeably.

Also, in this study the terms intercultural competence and intercultural effectiveness refer to both culture-general and culture-specific competencies—i.e., competencies that can be applied in many cultures (e.g., awareness, adaptability, etc.) and those that apply to specific cultures (e.g., food etiquette, compliment styles, etc.).

*Listening proficiency:* This study uses the construct of listening proficiency to represent general language proficiency. This use is supported both by the results of the preliminary work and the study’s qualitative survey which involve oral communication, with little if any relating to written language, and research precedence in the literature. While listening is only one of the four elements within the overall construct of language proficiency, it is one of the two most relevant to missionary work (the other being speaking). An MTC training specialist recently commented, “As we learn more about the responsibilities of language-learning missionaries, we are realizing that listening skills are at least as valuable as speaking skills, maybe even more” (Lucero, private email to author, 2019). Thus, a measure of listening would be most relevant. Relative to the validity of using a listening test to represent overall language proficiency and
completion of communicative tasks, Cox and Clifford (2014), in a study specifically relating to the listening test used for this study state:

“The listening proficiency scales have been in use for a number of years as a practical way to describe overall language ability levels .... In a listening proficiency assessment ... the listener must be able to consistently comprehend speech of the specified type for the purpose for which it was created. Stated another way, listeners must successfully accomplish those comprehension tasks that are aligned with the speaker’s purpose.” (p. 385)

Research Design

The study utilizes a mixed methods approach, combining data from a researcher designed qualitative survey with two standardized measures: one a qualitative assessment of listening proficiency and one quantitative assessment of intercultural effectiveness. The survey supplied self-report data to help answer the first two research questions. The intercultural effectiveness survey informed both the second and third research questions. The listening assessment addressed the third research question.

Preliminary work. As noted earlier, for this study ‘success’ is defined as the ability to successfully complete communicative tasks. The decision to focus on communicative tasks was guided by the literature noted earlier and by a preliminary study initiated for this purpose comprised of interviews of nine recently returned missionaries (Appendix A). Key themes from these interviews influenced the further clarification of the ‘communicative tasks’ as they apply to missionaries—e.g., obtaining referrals for people to teach from local native speakers, taking advantage of teaching opportunities, and helping those taught to make and keep commitments—thus, helping clarify the approach to answering the first research question regarding how intercultural effectiveness affects communicative success. These themes were used to develop questions for the qualitative survey. Additional themes from this preliminary study suggested
directions to look for factors correlating with intercultural effectiveness—i.e., feeling and communicating love, obtaining spiritual guidance (‘guidance by the Spirit’), and receiving training—which relate to the second research question regarding factors contributing to intercultural effectiveness. These themes were also included in the qualitative survey. (The experience with these interviews, which included both Mandarin and Spanish L2 speaking returned missionaries, helped narrow the scope of the subsequent research study to just Mandarin L2 speakers—including both would have been too broad.)

**Instrumentation and procedures.** The three instruments used are as follows.

**Qualitative survey.** The qualitative survey (Appendix B) was created by the researcher for this study and administered through Qualtrics via Brigham Young University (BYU) email in August-September 2015. This instrument was developed for this study because the researcher wanted to delve deeper into missionaries’ perceptions of how their own intercultural competence affected their experience. No existing instrument seemed appropriate. Participant email addresses were solicited from students in Mandarin classes. Forty-two survey invitations were sent out; 34 surveys were started with 28 completed; this is a 67% return and completion rate.

**Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES).** The Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES, Appendix E) is adapted from the longer Global Competencies Inventory (GCI) and—

“is a less complex version of the GCI, developed to address the need for an assessment tool that can be used in contexts such as those found in many educational settings, where economy and ease of administration are critical program elements. . . . The IES measures competencies associated with three critical factors of intercultural effectiveness: Continuous Learning, Interpersonal Engagement, and Hardiness . . . with . . . two competencies that are measured within each factor.” (Portalla & Chen, 2010, p. 6-7)

A validation study of the IES by Portalla and Chen (2010) showed the following.
“Individuals who scored high in the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale were behaviorally flexible and able to distinguish between appropriate behaviors and adapt to specific situations. More specifically, the results indicated that individuals who scored high in IES tend to demonstrate the following characteristics as well.

First, they are more sensitive to intercultural interaction. . . .

Second, they are less anxious in intercultural interaction. . . .

Third, they know how to show respect to their counterparts in intercultural interaction. . .

Fourth, they are able to display message skills in intercultural interaction.” (p. 28)

Rights to administer the test were obtained from the Intercultural Communications Institute via the Kozai Group, and they administered the instrument via email, November-December 2015. This instrument was chosen because it addresses elements of intercultural effectiveness regardless of what specific culture the individual encounters, has been used broadly for research, and was within the researcher’s budget.

*Adaptive Listening Test (ALT).* The Adaptive Listening Test–Mandarin was developed by the BYU Center for Language Studies and has been validated as correlating with the OPI Speaking/Listening assessment. A study by Cox and Clifford (2014) designed to determine the validity of the test states—

“The items posited to represent the construct did indeed align with levels of the proficiency scale. The results of this study support the difficulty hierarchy posited by the ACTFL, ILR, and related listening proficiency guidelines.” (p. 399)

The Center for Language Studies gave their permission to use the ALT. Use of this instrument is preferred as it gives the Center for Language Studies data on instrument use, and it is free to the study. It was administered in a testing facility in the BYU Joseph F. Smith Building in seven sessions in March 2015.
Approvals. The research proposal was reviewed by the thesis committee chair and the Institutional Review Board between March and April 2015 and received approval. Rights to use instruments are as described above in the individual instrument sections.

Recruitment. Permission was obtained from instructors for CHIN 201, 202, and 301 to recruit volunteers during class. Participants were offered the incentive and asked for email addresses.

Sample. The total sample consisted of 41 returned missionaries who are native English speakers that spoke Mandarin on their missions and who were attending BYU following their missions. Of the total, 49% were female and 51% were male. This was a convenience sample recruited as volunteers from intermediate and advanced Mandarin classes (CHIN 201, 202, 301). An incentive ($5 gift certificate to the campus food court) was offered. Not all 41 participants completed all instruments. A breakdown of their participation is included in Table 1, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>#Male</th>
<th>#Female</th>
<th>Total#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Survey (Survey)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Listening Test-Mandarin (ALT)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Both Survey and IES</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Survey and ALT</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both IES and ALT</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All three (Survey, IES and ALT)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

Other demographics were only recorded for those taking the survey. Given the similar pool from which all participants were recruited and the significant overlap between those
completing multiple instruments, the researcher assumes these percentages are reflective of the whole sample.

Of those who completed the survey, 64% served in Taiwan and 36% in other areas where Mandarin is not predominant (Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, USA); a large majority of female participants (86%) served in Taiwan; a majority of male participants (62%) served outside of Taiwan. Of those serving outside of Taiwan, 54% spent 60-100% of the time “communicating in Chinese”, 27% spent 40-60% of the time “communicating in Chinese”, 18% spent less than 40% of the time “communicating in Chinese.” The length of time between returning from the mission and taking the test ranged from 0 to more than 25 months (59% had been home less than a year; 22% had been home over 2 years). All were between the ages of 20 and 24, with the mode being 22 (38%).

**Analysis.** A form of content analysis technique (Bengtsson, 2016) was used to analyze data from the pilot study and text portions of the qualitative Survey. The survey’s textual data was reviewed by four individuals (the researcher and three college student employees) independently to determine themes. The themes were compared, with the researcher making final decisions on how to consolidate them and express them.

The BYU Center for Collaborative Research and Statistical Consulting assisted with understanding how to statistically analyze the data. The main desire was to compare results from the three instruments. As the data was a mix of qualitative (i.e., categorical) data in the survey and the ALT, and quantitative data in the IES, the range of appropriate statistical measures was limited. Additionally, the number of participants, especially when subdivided into categories, is small. The recommended statistical test for comparison was the chi square test (\(\chi^2\)). This test “is used to analyze data that are reported in categories. . . . [and] is based on a comparison of expected frequencies and actual, obtained frequencies” (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, p. 238). It tests how likely it is that observed frequencies, or distributions of results, are due to
chance. It is a measure of ‘goodness of fit’, or how the observed data fits what would be expected if the variables involved are truly independent.
Chapter 4

Results

The results of this study provide useful information on the effect of intercultural competence on Church missionaries’ communicative success in L2/C2 environments. The qualitative survey results describe missionaries’ perceptions of this impact, providing themes and rich context (addressing research question 1); the survey and IES results provide factors that likely contribute to missionaries’ intercultural effectiveness (addressing research question 2); and the comparison of the IES results and ALT results provide evidence that missionaries’ L2 listening proficiency correlates with their intercultural effectiveness (addressing research question 3).

The Qualitative Survey

The qualitative survey (Appendix B) used in this study provided response data (Appendix C) which has been organized into themes, following principles of content analysis. Likert scale survey questions were converted to percentages based on answer choices. The open-ended questions were analyzed for themes by the researcher and checked against the themes independently arrived at by three other reviewers. Discrepancies were discussed and the researcher made final decisions on key themes.

The themes derived from missionary responses help describe how culture correlates with feeling and communicating love for people, receiving spiritual guidance (or being ‘guided by the Spirit’; for a brief explanation of this phrase see p. 29 of this study), gaining teaching opportunities, and helping people make and keep commitments. Additional themes pointed out missionary perceptions of language-culture interconnectedness and of intercultural training, and the prominence of culture-specific issues (those related specifically to the Chinese culture) in communicative issues, as compared with general intercultural effectiveness. In this chapter, words capitalized and in italics are the answer choices in the survey’s Likert scales emphasized
for the theme (e.g., Extremely Important, Often, Never).

**Feeling and communicating love.** The strongest theme from the survey is that increased intercultural understanding leads to increased love for the people in the mission area. One hundred percent of respondents said understanding culture was *Extremely Important* or *Very Important* to ‘develop a feeling of love for local people’ (Q28). Some simply connected culture with love and appreciation: e.g., one participant responded that understanding (through his own previous learning) about local religions helped the missionary understand and love those taught; another said, “In general I liked what I learned of the Chinese culture and [it] really made me love the members and investigators that I had. It’s a different way of life, but unique with a lot of positive aspects to it.” One final quote summarizes the concept: “Culture is a part of who someone is. You can’t love someone and not understand their culture.”

Eighty-eight % of respondents said they *Often* had experiences where ‘understanding of culture helped you appreciate and love someone’ (8% said *Sometimes*; 4% said *Never*). This was punctuated for one respondent in this comment: “We had one convert who was addicted to tea and smoking. But he was willing to give up the art of tea making for the gospel.” The implication here seems to be that just giving up tea making was not what impressed the missionary; it was understanding how tea fit in the culture that made the difference.

**Spiritual guidance or guidance of the Spirit.** This theme, though difficult to measure, is central to missionary work, as emphasized in the oft cited scripture, “If ye receive not the Spirit, ye shall not teach” (Church, 1989). Regarding missionaries’ perception of the connection between cultural competence and obtaining spiritual guidance, there are mixed results. Seventy-nine percent of respondents said understanding culture is *Extremely Important* or *Very Important* to “feel and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” On the other hand, none said that “negative feelings about . . . culture got in the way of . . . feeling or following spiritual guidance” *Often*; only 25% said that it *Sometimes* happened. However, the association participants made between
intercultural effectiveness and feeling love for people, and the association preliminary interview participants expressed suggesting that feeling love for the people correlates with receiving spiritual guidance, suggests some correlation, even if indirect. These results suggest further research using factor analysis to clarify how these variables correlate.

**Communicative tasks.** The survey helped clarify which communicative tasks are perceived as important to missionary work and where intercultural competence may most strongly affect their successful completion. The strongest response themes in the area of communicative tasks were ‘obtaining member referrals’ (i.e., obtaining from local Church members names and/or introductions to people the missionaries could possibly teach), ‘gaining teaching opportunities’ (i.e., turning communicative interactions with people into positive teaching/learning experiences), and ‘helping people make and keep commitments.’ Another theme of ‘effectively communicating’ includes many other communicative tasks.

**Obtaining member referrals.** Sixty-five percent of respondents said understanding culture affected obtaining referrals *Sometimes* or *Often* (Q28). One hundred percent said cultural understanding was *Extremely Important* or *Very Important* for working cooperatively with members (Q31).

**Gaining teaching opportunities.** Eighty-five percent of respondents said they *Sometimes* or *Often* gained teaching opportunities based on their handling of cultural situations. As one missionary noted, “Sometimes it was through simple resolving of cultural misunderstandings pertaining to something, but at others some missionaries were able to respect things (relating to temples, ancestor worship, or families) in such a way to garner a locals’ interest.” Fifty-six percent said they *Sometimes* or *Often* ‘lost teaching opportunities’ based on lack of cultural understanding; 88% said that understanding culture is *Very Important* or *Extremely Important* to help ‘gain teaching opportunities’ (Q31). As one respondent noted, “I got return appointments several times by explaining how family history works in with Chinese culture.”
Effectively communicating. Ninety-six percent of respondents said understanding culture is Extremely *Important* or *Very Important* to “effectively communicate in the language” (Q31). In missionary context, this communication often involved teaching and explaining. This is reflected in these respondent comments (Q28): “I tried to explain the *baibai* thing [revering ancestors] without a native member a couple of times. Bad idea;” another said, “At times missionaries just couldn't ultimately help people get past a cultural point (for a variety of reasons (language, understanding etc.).” Respondents talked about needing to “be really careful” around certain cultural practices, and how understanding culture could help them explain sensitive doctrines and commandments without offending anyone. As one respondent stated, “I think that conveying feelings of disrespect and guilt towards culture is a fatal mistake and is almost impossible to recover from in the near future.” On the positive side, one missionary related an experience of a woman who promised her dying mother she would never “go Christian.” The missionary said, “We could understand [culturally] what they were trying to express and could use the gospel to help them.”

Helping people make and keep commitments. Thirty-eight percent of respondents said cultural mistakes *Sometimes* or *Often* hindered commitments; 76% said cultural successes *Sometimes* or *Often* helped people make commitments; and 88% said cultural understanding is *Extremely Important* or *Very Important* to “help more people enter the waters of baptism” (Q31), a key missionary commitment. Cultural factors in general are also linked to people not making commitments and not being baptized: e.g., 83% said “a cultural concern got in the way of someone being baptized.” One respondent noted “It seemed that right before people got baptized, a cultural concern almost always came up as part of the challenge in the way of someone getting baptized” (Q28). Respondent comments related this to ancestor ‘worship’, family disapproval, focus on materialism, tea, and disapproval by a political party. At the same time, some
missionaries commented or gave examples regarding how understanding these cultural issues allows for more opportunities to work with and resolve them so that commitments can be made.

The above survey results describe missionaries’ perceptions of the impact their own intercultural competence had on their success in completing communicative tasks (answering research question 1). Missionaries link this competence to increased teaching opportunities and increased commitments by people being taught. Lack of intercultural competence is linked with decreased member referrals, serious communication mistakes, and losing teaching opportunities. The link between intercultural competence and communicative tasks appears similar to the results found by Majumdar, et al (2004) where increased intercultural sensitivity and ability among health care providers correlated with increased access to service by health care users—a core task for that group.

The above themes resulting from the survey also link completion of communicative tasks in L2/C2 environments with the factors ‘feeling and communicating love’ and ‘obtaining spiritual guidance.’

**Language-culture interconnectedness.** It was interesting to note instances where language and culture interconnected in responses in ways supportive of the ‘performed culture’ concept put forward by Christensen and Warnick (2006). For instance, participants were asked how both language mistakes and cultural mistakes caused communication problems (Q28). Both questions elicited comments about offending people and misunderstanding intentions. Many of these overlaps came in the area of pragmatics, where missionaries were not sure how to use the language to communicate their intent, for example, “how to politely interrupt.” In another instance, a participant talked of often hearing a phrase for which he knew the proper semantic use, but not its cultural pragmatics: “Missionaries sometimes don’t have very thick skin. Will think a ‘buyung’ [i.e., ‘that is not necessary’; spoken to discourage a person from doing something] is against them personally. One respondent differentiated language proficiency from
intercultural competence in communication. Commenting on how cultural mistakes caused serious miscommunication, one participant responded “Happened to me a few times. Partially because the language was tied to the culture. And not because I couldn't speak the language, I had good Chinese, but often missionaries don't understand what they are really implying and don't know to be polite.” As an example of when missionaries understood words but misread meaning, one participant gave the following response to the question asking participants to identify their biggest cultural challenges:

“The fact that no one would actually reject us, if people weren't interested they would make up excuses or not give straight answers. I wish I had understood more that Chinese people often are not direct at all and understood more how to read between the lines when people told me that something just ‘wasn't convenient’ that it actually meant it just wasn't going to happen.” (Q28)

Or, as another said, “I got really frustrated when people wouldn't tell us straight up that they weren't going to show up for an appointment or keep a commitment.” Another participant implied that there are patterns to these types of communications: “People all seemed to think basically the same way and you could anticipate reactions fairly accurately. People often used the same couple phrases in the same exact situation in the exact same way.” These responses appear to coincide with the pedagogical literature assertions (Seely, 1993; Christensen & Warnick; 2006, Standards, 2006) that cultural learning and language learning are inextricably connected.

**General and specific cultural competencies.** While most intercultural challenges elicited from survey responses seemed to stem from culture-specific elements (e.g., revering ancestors, tea culture, deferring to family wishes), others seemed to have a more culture-general issue at their root (e.g., lack of sensitivity, awareness, curiosity, resilience, etc.) as depicted by this comment that links problems not to a specific cultural value, but to ignoring intercultural
issues, or lack of intercultural sensitivity. “At times missionaries’ lack of cultural understanding offended or angered locals. Often because missionaries just seemed to ignore the culture in certain circumstances” (Q28). An additional and important aspect of general cultural competence that appeared in the themes was the connection with ‘feeling and communicating love.’ This theme in some ways is similar to the construct of *positive regard*, a sub-construct within intercultural effectiveness.

**Training.** Some themes emerged regarding what type of intercultural training would be most useful when first arriving in the mission field (Q25, Q26):

- *semantics and pragmatics* (where culture and language meet), especially etiquette at meals, issues of ‘saving face’, and showing respect;
- *deeper cultural elements* such as religion and tradition, filial piety and revering ancestors; and
- *the power of culture-based language* (i.e., Chinese sayings as a means of opening minds/hearts and of persuasion).

Regarding the power of Chinese culture-based language, one respondent shared the following example.

“An investigator told me that he had always been brought up to believe that there wasn't anything after this life, so he didn't really care about us teaching him the plan of salvation, then he asked what I thought of that attitude. I told him that was *shǔ mù cùn guāng* ['a mouse can only see an inch,’ or, shortsighted], he was so amazed that I knew that the Spirit really hit him and then we put him on date and he got baptized a few weeks later.” (Q28)

This participant associated culturally appropriate use of language with both feeling the Spirit and helping someone make and keep a key commitment. Another respondent offered—
“I wish someone had explained to me the power that *chengyu*’s [Chinese sayings] and other proverbs can have. In language study I would try to find Chinese sayings to go along with what we were teaching investigators. If I had known earlier to say *búyàù shǒuzhū dàitù* [i.e., ‘don’t wait by the stump for the hare’ or, don’t wait for success to come to you] to an investigator who wasn't putting forth any effort to get an answer, or to say *tiānxìa wùnánshì, zhǐpà yǒuxīnrén* [i.e., ‘nothing in this world is difficult; it’s only the fear in people's hearts’] to someone complaining about how difficult it was to get work off or travel all the way to church on Sunday, I could have been more effective earlier. So many missionaries don't understand the importance or power of the hundreds of sayings like these, and that is a pity.” (Q26)

One response sums up and puts an exclamation on this theme: “Chinese idioms worked great!” (Q28).

The survey (Q25) asked how helpful various factors were in helping missionaries gain intercultural sensitivity prior to their missions. The answers ranged on a 5-point scale from *Not Very Helpful* (assigned a value of 1) to *Very Helpful* (assigned a value of 5). The answers with the highest mean scores (all above 4, or *Helpful*) are ‘family/friends from another culture’ and ‘living in a ‘cultural’ environment for a time (e.g., foreign residence, ethnic community)’. However, not all missionaries had these experiences: 46% of respondents did not live in a foreign place; 65% did not have family from another culture; 50% did not live in a cultural community; 31% did not have friends from another culture; 19% had none of these. If you remove ‘friends from another culture’, the number of those not experiencing any of the contributing factors grows from 19% to 27%.

High school language and “other” classes were more pervasive (96% and 88% had these experiences, respectively), but their mean ratings were between *Not Very Helpful* and
Moderately Helpful (2.52 and 2.61 respectively). College classes and MTC experiences (i.e., teachers, Teaching Resource Center (TRC) opportunities, and conversations with native speakers over Skype) all scored slightly above Moderately Helpful (between 3.0 and 3.5); however, 42% did not take a college language class. While all missionaries do have an MTC experience, almost 1/3 of respondents (31%) said they had not had MTC teaching opportunities with native speakers via Skype. This points to an inconsistency in training and is magnified in importance because of the high value the participants placed on learning culture from native speakers.

Because MTC experiences were the most pervasive experiences and were rated Moderately Helpful, it is not surprising that the most cited source of pre-mission cultural learning in the open answers was the MTC.

When asked what cultural learning was helpful when they first arrived in their foreign mission (Q25, open responses), of 28 discrete mentions of items mentioned, the two biggest response themes were food, with nine mentions (e.g., use of chopsticks, questions related to food, accepting invitations to eat) and showing respect, with six mentions (e.g., bluntness, saving face, how to treat elderly). Looked at from another perspective, thirteen dealt in some way with language (often language and behavior combined), five mentioned only behaviors (most related to chopsticks), four referred to religion/history/cultural beliefs. When asked what they wished they had learned before their missions, from the 27 responses the themes were religion/history (nine mentions) and etiquette/respect (six mentions). Interestingly, the second strongest theme, with 8 mentions, was that they did not wish for anything more than they had received.

In the mission field, the best help for learning culture came from native companions (87% said it was Very Important or Important) and local members (88% said it was Very Important or Important), with non-native companions also being seen as helpful at times (23% said this was Very Important or Important, 58% said it was Moderately Important). Another contributor to intercultural competency, culture training in the mission, was considered helpful,
when it existed. Thirty-eight percent of respondents did not have such programs or said that they were of little or no positive effect at all; 12% saw them as Very Important or Extremely Important; 42% answered Moderately Important.

This training related theme reported above, with its many parts, suggests and describes how returned missionaries perceive training contributes to missionary intercultural effectiveness.

**Summary.** In summary, survey responses provide descriptions of how missionaries perceive their intercultural competence affects their communicative success (see research question 1). Specifically, they suggest that intercultural competence is perceived as strongly affecting their ability to successfully achieve communicative tasks such as obtaining referrals for people to teach from local native speakers, taking advantage of teaching opportunities, and helping people make and keep commitments. Responses also show that missionaries perceive increased intercultural competence is connected to feeling and communicating love for the people, and possibly to receiving spiritual guidance, which are factors associated with missionary communicative success. The responses also suggest missionaries may see increased love for those being taught as contributing to their intercultural effectiveness (see research question 2). While most of the responses suggest culture-specific abilities are very important, they also suggest that culture-general abilities may also be helpful. Missionaries’ desire to learn culture to help them succeed is pervasive; and all respondents desired more intercultural understanding and suggested that interaction with native speakers is the best way to gain this understanding (see research question 2). A majority desired more cultural training in the MTC; however, a significant minority (almost 1/3) said the MTC training was enough (suggesting missionaries would learn what needed in-country). Additionally, survey responses showed that language and culture are intertwined in the minds of missionaries and in their contribution to missionary communicative success, leaving open the possibility that improved language might contribute to intercultural effectiveness, or vice-versa (see research questions 2 and 3).
The Standardized Measures

Two standardized tests were administered: a qualitative assessment of Chinese listening proficiency (ALT) and a quantitative assessment of intercultural effectiveness (IES). The raw scores for both the listening test (Appendix D) and the intercultural effectiveness assessment (Appendix F) in themselves are not significant to the study. It is the comparison of these results with each other and with the survey that yields relevant data. These standardized measures each had a small number of participants (n): for the ALT n = 30; for IES n = 28; for those who took both assessments n = 17. To find any significance with the available number of data points the recommended process was running chi² analysis based on contingency tables (i.e., tables that show the frequency with which high and low scores for both tests correlate, Table 1).

The listening and intercultural effectiveness scores were each divided into two categories: **High** and **Low**. For the listening test, participants who achieved an Advanced rating were placed in the **High** category; those who achieved a Novice or Intermediate rating were consigned to the **Low** category. The division for the IES was based on the mean (average) score for the sample, with those scoring above the mean placed in the **High** category and those below the mean placed in the **Low** category, except in two cases where the sample plots were skewed and the median (midpoint) score was recommended as a division point instead of the mean. The null hypothesis for each comparison was that there would be a proportional distribution; i.e., there would be no correlation between intercultural effectiveness and listening proficiency. The **High** and **Low** groups for the ALT were compared with the **High** and **Low** groups of the IES overall scores, and with the **High** and **Low** groups for each of the subcategories of the IES (i.e., Self-Awareness, Exploration, Global Awareness, Relationship Interest, Positive Regard, Emotional Resilience, Continuous Learning, Interpersonal Engagement, and Hardiness).

Chi² results (Table 2) support the null hypothesis and show no correlation between listening proficiency and overall intercultural effectiveness. However, there was correlation
(significant at .05 level; i.e., there is less than a 5 in a hundred chance that the result is random, or, in other words, a greater than 95% chance that the two factors in question correlate) between language proficiency and one of the nine intercultural effectiveness subscales (positive regard). This subscale of positive regard “refers to the predisposition to view other cultures and people from those cultures from a positive perspective” (Mendenhall, Stevens, Bird, Oddou, & Osland, 2012, p. 11), and it may warrant further research to determine if positive regard relates with the theme ‘feeling and communicating love’ which was the strongest response theme in the qualitative survey. This significant correlation, when seen in connection with Martinsen and Alvord’s (2012) finding that certain elements of intercultural effectiveness predict pronunciation ability, suggests that increases in certain aspects of intercultural effectiveness (an element of culture-general competence) could contribute to increased listening proficiency. Additionally, three other subscales had scores with significance between 0.1 and 0.5 (i.e., there is between a 50% - 90% chance they are not random) and may warrant further research with larger numbers of participants.

Table 2, below, shows data relating to the correlation of scores from the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) and the Adjusted Listening Test-Mandarin (ALT). The far left column shows subscales within the IES. The center column has the contingency tables showing the distribution of participant responses between High and Low categories for each factor (e.g., in the row for Overall Intercultural Effectiveness there were 8 participants who scored High in both assessments and 6 who scored Low in both assessments). The right column shows chi² scores, with higher scores indicating a higher likelihood of correlation.
The High and Low groups for both listening proficiency (ALT) and intercultural effectiveness (IES) were also compared with High and Low groups from the survey Q33, which asked for self-reports on the respondents’ level of intercultural awareness and sensitivity following their mission, both for foreign culture in general and for Chinese culture specifically. A total of 17 participants answered survey question 33 (Q33) and the ALT; also, 17 responded to the survey and the IES, however, two of these did not answer Q33. The results are shown in

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercultural Effectiveness (IES)</th>
<th>Contingency Tables</th>
<th>Chi² (critical value = 3.84)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Intercultural Effectiveness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Self-Awareness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Exploration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Global Mindedness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Relationship Interest*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Positive Regard *</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Emotional Resilience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a-Continuous Learning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b-Interpersonal Engagement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c-Hardiness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. *used median to derive table and chi² because of outlier scores/skewed curve, **p < .05.
Table 3, below. The left column lists the survey question, the other columns alternate between the contingency tables and chi$^2$ scores for the intercultural effectiveness (IES) overall score, the score for the IES subcategory of positive regard, and the language level (ALT).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Q33: General intercultural awareness</th>
<th>Contingency tables: IES</th>
<th>Chi$^2$: Q33 &amp; IES</th>
<th>Contingency tables: IES positive regard</th>
<th>Chi$^2$: Q33 &amp; IES positive regard</th>
<th>Contingency tables: ALT</th>
<th>Chi$^2$: Survey Q33 &amp; ALT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Q33: Chinese cultural awareness</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>High Low</td>
<td>0.146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p > .01$ (critical value = 6.64)

The contingency tables and chi$^2$ show that participant perception of their intercultural competence (Q33) does not correlate with listening proficiency. This result seems to coincide with the non-correlation found between listening proficiency and general intercultural effectiveness as measured by the IES overall score. Interestingly, the only subscale from the IES that correlates at a significant level with answers to Q33 is positive regard—the same subscale that correlates with listening proficiency, and the same one that on the surface most relates to the strongest theme in the qualitative survey, i.e., feelings of love. These combined results suggest that, regarding missionary L2 communicative success, as the poet Virgil stated, “Love conquers all”. Interestingly, the correlation is only significant with perceived culture specific competency and not with culture general competency. This indicates that a missionary’s positive regard
correlates more with understanding the culture of the people with which the missionary is
engaging than with foreign people in general. This suggests that proximity or engagement might
mitigate this factor and opens the question of whether increased culture specific understanding or
competence might lead to increased positive regard. Additionally, analysis of survey questions
Q22 and Q33 does indicate that participants increased in perceived general intercultural
competence an average of 1.08 levels (e.g., moving from Average to High or from High to Very
High) and in perceived specific Chinese cultural competence an average of 1.61 levels. Most of
this increase can be inferred from the survey responses to come from association with native
speakers in the foreign mission.
Chapter 5

Discussion and Limitations

The results of this study support existing literature that connects intercultural competence with communicative success, especially for Church missionaries residing in L2/C2 environments. Key findings include (1) themes that help clarify returned missionaries’ perceptions of how intercultural competence affected their communicative success, (2) a correlation between participants’ listening proficiency and the construct of positive regard, a sub-category of intercultural effectiveness, and (3) a correlation between positive regard and participants’ perception of their own awareness of Chinese culture (i.e., culture-specific competence). The ethnographic nature of the study limits generalization to larger populations.

Discussion and Conclusions

Research question 1. What impact does intercultural competence have on successful completion of missionary tasks?

Connection with literature. This study utilized missionary self-reports of their own experience to explore the impact of intercultural competence on missionary success. Missionaries perceive that cultural understanding and abilities strongly affect their ability to successfully complete key communicative tasks. While intercultural competence has been linked to successful completion of job specific communicative tasks (Gareis, Merkin & Goldman, 2011; Schouten & Meeuwesen, 2006; and Majumdar, et al., 2004), to the general communicative task of building friend relationships (Reeder, et al., 2004), and to the general communicative tasks of giving and receiving compliments using a Church missionary population (Bodily, 2013), this study provides greater context and detail to how returned Church missionaries perceive their own intercultural communicative experience.

Clarification on communicative tasks. The qualitative survey in this study provides descriptive themes to help clarify what this linkage between cultural competence and
communicative tasks looks like from the inside. Participant responses help identify key communicative tasks for missionaries—i.e., obtaining referrals of people to teach from local native speakers, positively utilizing teaching opportunities, and helping people make and keep commitments—which can be used for development of further research and of assessments for training programs.

**Love, spiritual guidance, and language-culture interconnection.** Additional themes help describe the missionary experience by linking intercultural competence with feeling and communicating love for those they teach (the latter being a key communicative task for missionaries) and, to a lesser degree, with receiving spiritual guidance. They also associate intercultural competence with other general communicative tasks (e.g., setting appointments, dinner etiquette, etc.). The survey results also show that missionaries see language and culture as largely interconnected, in some cases inseparable when describing their communicative experiences. This last connection supports much of the literature that suggests language and cultural teaching should be integrated (examples of such literature is Seelye, 1993, Christensen & Warnick 2006, Kubler, 2006, Shrum & Glissan, 2010, as well as the revised Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, 2006). As one author stated, referring to these standards (Cutshall, 2012), “In the best language education happening today, the study of another language is synonymous with the study of another culture. The two are inextricably linked” (p. 32). This linkage is especially true of the L2 and C2 focused on in this study—i.e., Chinese language and culture—as noted by Morris (1970) who tied the language and culture together in a way particularly relevant to this study, likening them to religion:

“The relation between culture and language in China is as close as that of the people and the earth. Language is a cult, worshipped for its own intrinsic value and place in society. It lives with the people and determines much of life like lands and crops. It would be, by inference, one of Paul Tillich’s "ultimate issues and values" from which and with which
religion for them deals, and the two must coexist.” (p. 173)

The participant statements in this study that identify the MTC as a moderately helpful source of intercultural learning, even when the MTC curriculum does not include explicit culture training, suggest that culture learning may be inherently, though perhaps minimally, present in the MTC language training.

**Research question 2.** What factors likely contribute to increased intercultural effectiveness in Church missionaries?

Results from this study provide insights into the following factors that may contribute to intercultural effectiveness in Church missionaries: feeling and communicating love, obtaining spiritual guidance, interacting with native speaker Church members, and receiving cultural training.

**Feeling and communicating love.** Missionaries link ‘feeling and communicating love’ for people being taught with intercultural communicative success. Feeling and communicating love bears some similarity to the construct of *positive regard* used in the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale, a proven factor in increasing intercultural effectiveness. (Portalla & Chen, 2010). While causality is not established in this study, one reasonable correlation is that higher *positive regard*, or love, leads to increased effort to understand the L2 culture, which leads to greater appreciation or *positive regard* or love for the people in that L2 environment, which leads to greater effort to learn the culture, and so forth. It may also be true that you can start with increased cultural understanding (gained through training or experience), which may lead to decreased stereotyping and increased *positive regard* for people in that culture, following the maxim, “To know them is to love them.” Causality is not established, and both factors may be the result of some other cause, yet the context of the qualitative survey text responses also suggest that missionaries perceive some type of causal relationship between their intercultural effectiveness and feeling/communicating love.
**Positive regard.** The IES validation study cited (Portalla & Chen, 2010) shows that positive regard is a component factor of overall intercultural effectiveness. The relevant result from this study is that positive regard correlates significantly with missionaries’ perceptions of their own C2 awareness. Interestingly, missionaries’ perceptions of their own general awareness of foreign cultures does not correlate with positive regard, but their awareness of the specific culture where they lived and worked does correlate. This may be a result of coming to know the people within a specific culture and developing a positive regard for them. It may also simply be that missionaries are not willing to generalize their awareness of Chinese culture to a general intercultural awareness. The most interesting part of this is that positive regard correlates with awareness of Chinese culture, with listening proficiency (as discussed in the next section) and seems very similar to the theme of ‘feeling and communicating love’, which was the strongest theme coming from the survey. Determining which way these factors correlate will be useful in developing training programs that foster missionary communicative success.

**Spiritual guidance.** Study results also show that returned missionaries associate spiritual guidance (or feeling the Spirit) with increased intercultural effectiveness. Again, causality is not determined. However, results also show that missionaries tend to not associate lack of intercultural competence with not feeling the Spirit. In other words, increased intercultural competences is associated with increased spiritual guidance, but decreased intercultural competence is not associated with decreased spiritual guidance. This suggests the possibility of a mitigating factor involved in this relationship.

**Native speakers and training.** The study points out additional key factors contributing to increased intercultural effectiveness, including native speakers, the MTC, and foreign mission training programs, as well as pre-MTC experiences, with native speaker teaching partners (companions) being considered the most helpful. The preeminence of native speaker interaction is consistent with the findings of Portalla and Chen (2010) in validating the IES, and in research
reports on study abroad programs. The significant contribution of intercultural training supports the findings of other studies linking intercultural competence with learners’ ability to adapt well to a new culture (Kaye & Taylor, 1986; Forster, 2000), gain intercultural perspectives, and successfully complete communicative tasks (Majumdar, et al., 2004).

However, the survey results also show that a significant number of missionaries do not have native speaker companions, nor do all missionaries have opportunity to interact with native speakers during MTC training, thus this key resource is inconsistent in missionaries’ experiences and cannot be relied on as a strong, universal source of cultural learning. Regarding training, some participants reported not experiencing in-country cultural training, and where such training programs exist, they seem inconsistent. Inconsistency in both training and in experiences with native speaking companions is another pattern in missionary perceptions.

The findings regarding the value of training in improving intercultural effectiveness, and of the interconnectedness of language and culture learning, may have strong implications for training at Church MTCs, where the training manual states that “culture and language are closely related” and enjoins missionaries to “strive to understand the culture of the people so that you can communicate” more effectively (Church, 2004). For, as noted by Cutshall (2012):

“Long gone should be the days when anyone would suggest that language could be taught “on its own” as discrete grammar points with no sense of the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of native speakers. As the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century document states, “the true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language.” (p. 32)

For Chinese L2 learners, this was emphasized in the National Foreign Language Center Guide for Basic Chinese Language Programs (Kubler, 2006).
“No matter how good the pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary of learners may be, if learners say or do things that unwittingly anger, amuse or confuse their Chinese audience, successful communication will not take place.” (p. 65)

Missionary perceptions as expressed in this study support both the value of intercultural training and the likely high value in integrating C2 and L2 learning.

**Research question 3.** Does missionary L2 listening proficiency correlate with their intercultural effectiveness?

Results of this study show significant correlation between the intercultural effectiveness sub-score for *positive regard* and participants’ listening proficiency. Whether increased *positive regard* helps missionaries listen better, or whether listening better increases *positive regard* is not clear. It is interesting to note, however, that when a previously cited (Martinsen & Alvord, 2012) study found correlation between one subcategory of intercultural sensitivity and pronunciation skills, that study reported the correlation was with *pre*-foreign experience intercultural sensitivity, suggesting a possible time-based conclusion that the *pre*-experience sensitivity causes the improved language proficiency. Further research is needed to determine if the same may be likely for *positive regard* and improved missionary listening proficiency.

**Conclusions.** This study has provided evidence that intercultural competence significantly affects L2 communication, particularly as it relates to missionary work. Survey results show that missionaries perceive strongly that increased intercultural awareness and competence, especially culture-specific competence, leads to increased success in completing communicative tasks, and increased feelings and communication of love. They also perceive that cultural competence and language competence are interconnected in use and learning, and that cultural training contributes to increased awareness and competence. These findings support the literature that connects intercultural effectiveness and communicative success. They also add texture and depth to the studies of Church missionaries that linked intercultural competence to
The analysis of all the instruments supports cited research that intercultural competence and listening proficiency are significantly correlated. It also shows something not emphasized on cited studies, that there is significant correlation between missionaries’ awareness of the specific foreign culture where they lived and their *positive regard* for people (a factor of intercultural effectiveness, or culture-general competence), and that missionaries perceive culture-specific learning is very helpful in achieving communicative success. The study findings suggest factors contributing to missionaries’ intercultural competence (i.e., love, *positive regard*, culture-specific understanding, integrated language-culture ability, and training), and thus to success in completing communicative tasks.

Thus, the results suggest that considerations to reinstitute culture training in the Church’s MTCs may prove to be positively productive. They also suggest the MTC (and other centers of language instruction) may profit from further research and development in these types of training programs. As the returned missionary quoted at the beginning of this study enjoined, “Missionaries feel a need to learn language, language, language; but they need to learn culture with it.”

**Pedagogical implications.** These findings also suggest some pedagogical approaches. First, they suggest that since missionaries are learning culture even when it is not explicitly taught in the MTCs, an intentional approach may yield increased culture-specific competence and increased *positive regard*, which may result in increased listening proficiency and increased success in completing communicative tasks such as finding people to teach, teaching effectively, and helping people make and keep commitments.

Second, the findings suggest since missionaries perceive culture and language as interconnected; thus, teaching them in an interconnected way may yield positive results. This idea, combined with first idea noted in the above paragraph, suggests that cultural training may
be integrated directly into the language and proselyting training that relates to the communicative
tasks listed above.

Third, the findings suggest that intercultural competence training may be beneficial both in the MTCs and in the foreign missions.

Fourth, the findings suggest that the best way to increase cultural competence is to have missionaries interact with native speakers in intentional ways to learn appropriate cultural communication, both in the MTCs and in the foreign missions.

Limitations

**Limitations in nature of the study.** This study did not seek to address all aspects of Church missionary success, but rather focused on those themes identified in the preliminary interviews. It is largely descriptive, providing evidence to clarify and confirm or disconfirm elicited themes. Additionally, the language used in the interviews and the qualitative survey may be ambiguous, thus leaving results open to broad interpretations. Yet, the most important words used in the survey (e.g., ‘love’, ‘guidance by the Spirit’, ‘teaching opportunities’) were provided by the participants during the preliminary interviews and seemingly understood in coherent ways by the survey participants. In the standardized measures, while associations of variables were sought, any cause/effect relationship may only be inferred.

This study is not in any way sponsored by nor is it currently coordinated with the MTC or its personnel. Because of the special characteristics of the subjects of the study, generalizability to other L2 learner populations may be severely limited. However, some generalizability to the general Church missionary population may be possible.

**Limitations of sample size.** The most significant limitation of this study is the low number of participants (n). Because of this limitation, only the chi² tests were likely to have validity in showing significant results. According to BYU’s Department of Statistics’ Consulting Center, because the study was comparing high and low scoring groups within each
instrument, it should have had at least 30 participants for each group (i.e., at least 60 participants per instrument) to obtain significant comparison data. As it was, with only 15 or less in each High or Low group, the significance may be lessened. The same problem exists when comparing data between instruments: less than 30 completed both the IES and ALT, the IES and the survey, the ALT and the survey, and all three instruments. When divided into high and low categories, the n for each subgroup was below 15, making statistical clarity difficult.

However, the sample size for the qualitative survey is sufficient to give some texture and insight into how Church missionaries experience the themes elicited and was manageable for the nature of the project. More would still be better.

**Limitations of sample type.** The fact that this was a convenience sample is also limiting. All were volunteers from classes selected by the researcher. They varied in the amount of time they have been home from their missions, their preparation, and where they served. Except for the variable of gender, data gained from cross-tabulating demographics returns us to the first limitation—too few in each area to see any meaningful patterns. Resolving this issue, while also resolving the problem of low ‘n’, would be greatly facilitated by having access to a larger population of Mandarin speaking returned missionaries within a specified time of their return—access not available at the time. While the nature of the sample being all returned missionaries, predominantly Caucasians, limits the generalizability of the study to other populations, it is not considered a significant limitation for the purposes of the study as these characteristics are highly representative of the population to which the results are intended to be applied (i.e., missionaries of the Church).

**Limitations of self-reported information.** Both the survey and the IES are based on self-reported information, which has inherent limitations. They measure personal perspective, not objective reality. Additionally, the survey is not measured against a standard or group norm—that is, we do not know how these perceptions compare to similar or different
populations.

**Suggestions for Future Research and Program Development**

Much still needs to be done to determine how strong the links between L2 listening and intercultural competence are, which way they relate, if they are generalizable to other areas of language proficiency, and which training methods produce the best results. The answer to these questions may vary by L2/C2 environment. In the research studies cited, it seems that the explicit intercultural instruction mentioned by some included frameworks, theories, activities, and practices addressing both culture-general (e.g., how to be open to others, how to recognize one’s own cultural influences, how to analyze culture, etc.) and culture specific (e.g., behavioral practices for a region) content areas. What types of gains are associated with each area of culture training/education? How easily applicable are the culture-general learnings to specific cultures? How transferrable are the culture-specific learnings to interactions with other cultures? For the Church’s Missionary Training Centers, the study and literature suggest exploration of whether the MTC should focus on culture-general competencies in pre-mission training (i.e., prior to and during the MTC experience), and culture-specific competencies during the mission (i.e., during the MTC experience and in the mission field of service), or some other timing sequence. The literature also suggests consideration of embedding culture learning in the language learning, and vice-versa (Christensen & Warnick, 2006; Standards, 2006; Cutshall, 2012). While the survey did not directly address this issue, survey responses suggest culture and language are interrelated, especially in accomplishing communicative tasks.

Results from this study suggest additional research areas for the MTC. For example:

- The study suggests culture is being learned by missionaries both at the MTC and in their foreign missions--How are missionaries currently learning culture at the MTC and in their foreign missions?
• The study indicates most missionaries suggest the MTC increase culture training, while a significant minority think the current training is enough—What factors (or demographics) lead missionaries to have these divergent views?

• The study found evidence that the MTC is considering development of cultural training for missionaries--Which methods and topics of cultural training at the MTC are more likely to produce increased intercultural effectiveness?

• Most study participants focused on cultural issues specific to the culture where they lived, and suggested a significant correlation between culture-specific competencies and language proficiency--Should the MTC focus on culture-general training (i.e., sensitivities and behaviors that are helpful in all intercultural situations) or culture-specific training? Is culture-specific training (i.e., understandings and behaviors applicable to a specific culture) better delivered in the MTC or in the foreign missions?

• The study showed that while most intercultural competencies were gained in the foreign mission (as compared with anything that occurred in the MTC or prior), it also showed inconsistency in experiences and training that might lead to those competencies—What current training/experiences in the foreign missions correlate with increased intercultural effectiveness? What elements of these successful trainings/experiences can be replicated in other cultural situations?

• The study elicited evidence that language and culture are strongly connected in the minds of missionaries, with evidence that certain aspects of intercultural effectiveness significantly correlate with listening proficiency—Should language and culture be strongly connected in the MTC and foreign mission training curricula?
• The study suggested a strong connection between intercultural competencies and missionaries loving the people they work with and teach—Will increasing intercultural competence increase this love? Or vice-versa?

• The study might also suggest a connection between intercultural competencies and missionaries receiving spiritual guidance, possibly mitigated by love—Will increasing intercultural competence increase instances of spiritual guidance?

• The study suggests a connection between intercultural competence and communicative success (e.g., obtaining referrals, obtaining teaching opportunities, helping people make and keep commitments)—Will increasing intercultural competence and sensitivity increase communicative success?

Many of these areas may best be studied through quasi-experimental action research methods (e.g., pilot programs with pre- and post-tests and control groups), focusing on areas suggested by these study results and using methods suggested in the literature: e.g., dedicated culture classes, integration of language and cultural learning, etc.

Regarding missionary training development, it is hoped this paper and these results will contribute to deliberations in the ‘small-scale experiment’ stage of the process (Henrichson, 1999). All the above questions are suggestions for further research for, to paraphrase some missionary language, ‘the field is white already to harvest.’
References


Bradford, L. (1986). A cluster analytic study in intercultural communication of Rokeach’s instrumental values among LDS returned missionaries (Master’s Thesis). Brigham Young


Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (2004). *Preach my gospel*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.


https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/dlls/vol25/iss1/11
doi 10.1108/02683949710189102


Appendix A

Preliminary Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Hi, my name is David. I am a graduate student here at BYU doing research. My topic is—“How does culture affect certain aspects of missionary work?” I am beginning with Chinese and Spanish speakers. Where did you serve? How long have you been back?

- What did you appreciate about the culture?

- What cultural challenges do you remember experiencing, if any?
  - What were some cultural challenges you think were common for missionaries?
  - Why do you think those challenges happened?
  - How do you think those challenges affected your ability to communicate in the language?
  - How do you think those challenges affected your ability to fulfill your missionary purpose?

- What cultural knowledge/understanding/skill was helpful to you?
  - How did it help you?
  - How did you gain this knowledge/understanding/skill?

- On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you think understanding the everyday culture is for missionaries to communicate in the language, with 1 being not very important and 5 being very important?

- On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you think understanding the everyday culture is for missionaries to better fulfill the purpose of a missionary, with 1 being not very important and 5 being very important?

- (What do you think might better prepare missionaries to meet cultural challenges and become more culturally competent?)
Culture Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q35 Please provide your email address.

Q1 I served an LDS mission in--

- Taiwan  (1)
- Other  (2)

Skip To: Q2 If I served an LDS mission in-- = Taiwan

Q1a I served in the following mission.

Q1b The percentage of time I spent communicating in Mandarin Chinese in my mission was--

- 0-20%  (1)
- 21-40%  (2)
- 41-60%  (3)
- 61-80%  (4)
- 81-100%  (5)
Q2  What is your age?

________________________________________________________________

Q4  What is your gender?

▼ Male (1) ... Female (2)

Q8 I have been released from my mission for--

○ 0-6 months (1)

○ 7-12 months (2)

○ 13-18 months (3)

○ 19-24 months (4)

○ 25 + months (5)

Q9 How much instruction did you receive before entering the MTC--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None (1)</th>
<th>1-6 months (2)</th>
<th>6-12 months (3)</th>
<th>1-2 years (4)</th>
<th>More than 2 years (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Chinese (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a language OTHER THAN Chinese (please specify) (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12 Before my mission, I lived outside of the United States for--- (click time frame and type name of foreign place)

- 0 years (1)
- between 0 and 1 year (2) ________________________________
- between 1 and 2 years (3) ________________________________
- More than 2 years (4) ________________________________

Q13 Before my mission, I visited (for one month or less) the following Chinese speaking areas.

- China/Hong Kong/Taiwan/Macao (1)
- Singapore/Malaysia (2)
- Other (3) ________________________________
- None (4)
Q14 Before my mission, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) was spoken in my home--

- Never  (1)
- Sometimes  (2)
- About half the time  (3)
- Most of the time  (4)
- Always  (5)

Q15 I have taken the following tests in the past month.

- Both the Mandarin Adaptive Listening Test (ALT) in the JFSB Testing Lab and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) online  (1)
- Only the Mandarin Adaptive Listening Test (ALT) in the JFSB Testing Lab  (2)
- Only the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) online  (3)
- Neither  (4)

Skip To: Q17 If I have taken the following tests in the past month. = Neither

Q16 Please type your name so that we may match these results with your ALT/IES results.

________________________________________________________________

Q17 Briefly list what instruction you have had in foreign culture and in Chinese language since returning from your mission.

________________________________________________________________
Q20 What were some things you appreciated most about the culture where you served? (Briefly describe.)

________________________________________________________________

Q21 What were your biggest cultural challenges to being happy and finding success in your mission? (Briefly describe.)

________________________________________________________________

Q22 Thinking back to how you were before your mission, how would you rate your awareness of and sensitivity to the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very High (1)</th>
<th>High (2)</th>
<th>Average (3)</th>
<th>Low (4)</th>
<th>Very Low (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese culture</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specifically (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign cultures</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in general (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q33 At the present, how would you rate your awareness of and sensitivity to the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very High (1)</th>
<th>High (2)</th>
<th>Average (3)</th>
<th>Low (4)</th>
<th>Very Low (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese culture</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in particular (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign cultures</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in general (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q24 Please indicate how helpful each of the following was in helping you gain awareness of or sensitivity to other cultures, BEFORE arriving in your mission area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Helpful (1)</th>
<th>Helpful (2)</th>
<th>Moderately Helpful (3)</th>
<th>Not Very Helpful (4)</th>
<th>Not Helpful At All (5)</th>
<th>Not Applicable (e.g., did not have this) (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School language class (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other High School class (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College language class (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other College class (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in a foreign place (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting a foreign place (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in a cultural community (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family from another culture (i.e., not mainstream US) (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends from another culture (i.e., not mainstream US) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q25 When you first arrived in your mission area, what things that you had previously learned about the local culture were most helpful to you? (and how had you learned them?)

______________________________________________________________

Q26 While you were on your mission, was there something you wished you had known about the local culture when you first arrived in your mission area?

______________________________________________________________
Q27 How important were the following methods of learning about culture during your mission?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Extremely important (1)</th>
<th>Very important (2)</th>
<th>Moderately important (3)</th>
<th>Slightly important (4)</th>
<th>Not at all important (5)</th>
<th>Not applicable (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native companions (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native companions (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local members (3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission programs (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using skills learned before your mission (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (6)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q34 Looking at the area(s) from the previous question that you rated as most important, please describe one or two examples of something important you learned from this/these area(s).
Q28 Please indicate how often the following statements were true, based on your personal experience. (After each statement where you answer **sometimes** or **often**, please share an example of how culture affected that issue)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never (1)</th>
<th>Rarely (2)</th>
<th>Sometimes (3)</th>
<th>Often (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A member/non-member stopped working with us when she/he felt a missionary did not respect the culture (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A missionary was offended when he/she felt a local person did not respect the missionary's culture (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A missionary's appropriate or inappropriate behavior affected whether members referred friends to missionaries (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionaries gained teaching opportunities based on handling of difficult cultural situations (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionaries missed or lost teaching opportunities based on handling of difficult cultural situations (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Investigators, or potential ones, stopped talking with you for cultural reasons (6)

Serious miscommunication happened because a missionary made a cultural mistake. (7)

Serious miscommunication happened because a missionary made a language mistake. (8)

A missionary's handling of a cultural concern helped someone making or keeping a commitment. (9)

A missionary's handling of a cultural concern got in the way of someone making or keeping a commitment. (10)

A cultural concern got in the way of someone being baptized. (11)

Negative feelings about some part of culture got in the way of you feeling or following spiritual guidance. (12)

Negative feelings about culture led to negative feelings about local people. (13)

Understanding of culture helped you appreciate and love someone. (14)
Q30 What did you learn after you came home that you wish you had known on your mission?
Q31 How important do you think understanding the everyday culture is for missionaries to do the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely important (1)</th>
<th>Very important (2)</th>
<th>Moderately important (3)</th>
<th>Slightly important (4)</th>
<th>Not at all important (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectively communicate in the language (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt to their new environment (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work cooperatively with members (3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain teaching opportunities (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help investigators make and keep commitments (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a feeling of love for local people (6)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel and follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost (7)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help more people enter the waters of baptism (8)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q32 What suggestions do you have for helping missionaries communicate more successfully in their
mission culture?

End of Block: Default Question Block
Appendix C

Qualitative Survey Results

_Culture Survey_

October 15th 2019, 12:05 pm MDT

Q1 - I served an LDS mission in--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>62.96%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>37.04%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q1a - I served in the following mission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore/Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand, Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taichung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California San Diego Mormon Battalion Historic Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China, Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q1b - The percentage of time I spent communicating in Mandarin Chinese in my mission was--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0-20%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21-40%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41-60%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>61-80%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>81-100%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Q2 - What is your age?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 - What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46.43%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q8 - I have been released from my mission for--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0-6 months</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7-12 months</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13-18 months</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19-24 months</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25+ months</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9 - How much instruction did you receive before entering the MTC--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1-6 months</th>
<th>6-12 months</th>
<th>1-2 years</th>
<th>More than 2 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In Chinese</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In a language OTHER THAN Chinese (please specify)</td>
<td>36.00%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9_2_TEXT - In a language OTHER THAN Chinese (please specify)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Japanese and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12 - Before my mission, I lived outside of the United States for--- (click time frame and type name of foreign place)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 years</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>between 0 and 1 year</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>between 1 and 2 years</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>More than 2 years</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q12_2_TEXT - between 0 and 1 year

China

4 months in Mainland China

3 months

Taiwan

1 semester

between 1 and 2 years

between 1 and 2 years - Text

More than 2 years

Singapore

England

Singapore, Australia

Q13 - Before my mission, I visited (for one month or less) the following Chinese
speaking areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>China/Hong Kong/Taiwan/Macao</td>
<td>26.92%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Singapore/Malaysia</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>69.23%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other

Other - Text

none
Q14 - Before my mission, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) was spoken in my home--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>About half the time</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q15 - I have taken the following tests in the past month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Only the Mandarin Adaptive Listening Test (ALT) in the JFSB Testing Lab</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Only the Intercultural Effectiveness Survey (IES) online</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Both the Mandarin Adaptive Listening Test (ALT) in the JFSB Testing Lab and the Intercultural Effectiveness Survey (IES) online</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q16 - Please type your name so that we may match these results with your ALT/IES results. [DELETED BY RESEARCHER]
Q17 - Briefly list what instruction you have had in foreign culture and in Chinese language since returning from your mission.

I lived with a Chinese family in Shandong for 3 months the summer after completing my mission, they had a lot of help with culture. I have taken Chinese classes every semester since I've been back and am in the flagship program so I have a private tutor as well.

BYU Chinese 201 and 202

1 semester of chinese language class (CHIN201)

Chinese 202 for one semester with Julie Lefgren

201, 202

Chinese classes at BYU (201,202,301)

Chinese 201, Chinese 202, Chinese 301

Chinese minor - Chinese culture and up to CHIN 302

Chinese 102, Chinese 200R, Chinese 201

Chinese 112 & 201 at BYU

None, other than texting old friends from Taiwan

One Chinese 202 class at BYU

I was admitted into the Chinese Flagship Program, took Chinese 201 and 202, along with a Chinese Literature class. I've also read some cultural related books on the side including one on Chinese history.

At school chinese 202 and 301

After my mission I lived at home for three months with my Taiwanese mother. Since returning to BYU I have completed a four-credit language class, Chinese 302 (Advanced Mandarin Part 2)

Chinese 201 at BYU

Taken Chinese 202, Chinese 301. On a fairly regular basis have talked with natives (in Chinese) and have learned more pertaining to both culture and language in those instances

CHIN 301, CHIN 302, CHIN 322, CHIN 344, CHIN 441, and CHIN 442 at BYU

Mandarin 201,202,301

Chinese 201 Class

Enrolled in Chinese 202 and 326, skyped my Taiwanese friends, made Taiwanese friends on campus

Chinese 201

Chin 201 and 202 at BYU

Mandarin 101 and 102
Q20 - What were some things you appreciated most about the culture where you served? (Briefly describe.)

The food, we are living below our privileges here in America thinking that we have good food. I also appreciate the respect for the importance of the family that Chinese have.

Chinese people are very generous and good to missionaries.

How kind and giving everyone was in Taiwan.

People are very much in control of themselves in public.

Very polite

The great food, how polite and respectful most chinese were to us

How giving everyone is, they would take the coat off their back if you needed it.

The conscious display of respect for everyone

The ability people had to restrain themselves. Ego was typically not as big in China. My relationship with people was either don't mind or really like. I rarely ran into people I really couldn't stand.

I loved the generosity and hospitality of the people. So willing to help out strangers

I liked that people had a really good work ethic and put family and loyalty as priorities. I also really like the food and how many breakfast shops there are.

I wish I had understood it more. I like how they treat guests

I really liked how there were so many people from all over the world, apart from teaching Chinese and Taiwanese, I taught Korean, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Philipino, Sudanese, Ethiopian, Iranian, Kenyan, etc. I appreciated being able to learn from their respective cultures.

The culture was very familiar to me and it helped me to get to know my mom better. Some things I appreciated most were hospitality, friendliness, and eating meals together.

Kind people, delicious fruit,

How people treated and interacted with others, their view on families and society, and the general inter-connectiveness of the people are a few that come to mind

food, the respectful nature of the people, integrated mix of multiple cultures, the kids coming to the historic site

I loved how courteous the Chinese people were and how important family was to them.

I love the people and they're hospitality. I also loved the food so much!

Everything! Food, curiosity, openness to learn, childlike innocence

How nice the people were

People were always impressed with your Chinese. They live a hard busy life. They are willing to sacrifice. They live in small spaces.

I love how helpful and honest the people are. They are deeply connected as a family and work hard.
Q21 - What were your biggest cultural challenges to being happy and finding success in your mission? (Briefly describe.)

The fact that no one would actually reject us, if people weren't interested they would make up excuses or not give straight answers. I wish I had understood more that Chinese people often are not direct at all and understood more how to read between the lines when people told me that something just "wasn't convenient" that it actually meant it just wasn't going to happen.

Chinese people for the most part don't voice their emotions like Americans do.

How some people just wanted to meet with us because we were American or they wanted to practice their english, other than at English Class.

People all seemed to think basically the same way and you could anticipate reactions fairly accurately. People often used the same couple phrases in the same exact situation in the exact same way.

Buddhism

There were some things Chinese people did that I just didn't understand. Some of these things I have only come to understand after my mission.

Accepting the fact that many people worshipped their religion because it was simply tradition and not because of a conviction of their faith

Being white in China was a little strange. No matter how much I learned Chinese and how much I understood Chinese culture, sometimes I felt like I was not a part of the club in a sense. In some areas this was very prevalent. In others I did not feel it at all.

The tradition of just following their ancestors religion - they aren't very opinionated in why they are Buddhist or Taoist

I was frustrated when people were too embarrassed to tell us they weren't going to show up to an appointment, then they wouldn't show up.

That the Chinese weren't as open to foreigners as to their own people

For me, I embraced the culture, however I would say the biggest challenge was the language barrier especially when it came to teaching people in a language that my companion and I could not speak such as Japanese because we found that they were unfamiliar with a lot of basic religious terms and explaining them in English proved to be ineffective.

Traditional religious beliefs, the idea of absolute filial piety.

Chinese culture made me very happy. However, sometimes it was hard to find success in a culture with religious traditions and practices that are profoundly different from what I grew up with in the United States. Most people in Taiwan are culturally Buddhist, Taoist, or a syncretic combination. They were not interested in converting to Christianity.

Language

The most difficult challenge in that regard may just have been learning the culture itself. It took time and a lot of human interaction but I can't say it ever kept be back from being happy or successful. The Taiwanese were rather patient with my learning and always willing to help.

In a mission with no primary language, it was hard to master the foreign languages. In dealing with a specific ethnicity, it was hard to find people who qualified as they were scattered across the region.

My biggest challenge was catching hidden meanings. Like saying no to everything to be perfect polite.

I had no cultural challenges.

People being too busy - usually meant they didn't feel the gospel wasn't going to help them, wasn't a
priority. Probably my bad for the following

Understanding the culture in general

Initially it was not speaking the language. Then, it was more having a hard time to find humble people to listen to our message.

It was hard to remember that Bhuddism plays a huge role in culture and family
Q22 - Thinking back to how you were before your mission, how would you rate your awareness of and sensitivity to the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chinese culture specifically</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Foreign cultures in general</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q33 - At the present, how would you rate your awareness of and sensitivity to the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chinese culture in particular</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>45.83%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Foreign cultures in general</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>54.17%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q24 - Please indicate how helpful each of the following was in helping you gain awareness of or sensitivity to other cultures, BEFORE arriving in your mission area.

![Bar chart showing helpfulness of various experiences](image-url)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very Helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Moderately Helpful</th>
<th>Not Very Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful At All</th>
<th>Not Applicable (e.g., did not have this)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High School language class</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other High School class</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>College language class</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other College class</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Living in a foreign place</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visiting a foreign place</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Living in a cultural community</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family from another culture (i.e., not mainstream US)</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends from another culture (i.e., not mainstream US)</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Personal study</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>MTC teachers</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>MTC teaching opportunities</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Returned missionaries who had gone to Taiwan

Older brother who served mission in Chinese environment

Firmly believing that everybody would want the gospel if they could understand it perfectly, so I just needed to better understand them to teach them right.
Q25 - When you first arrived in your mission area, what things that you had previously learned about the local culture were most helpful to you? (and how had you learned them?)

The language training in the MTC was definitely the most important.

I didn't know much about Chinese culture so I was going in pretty blind.

How to use chopsticks, I had learned this in my high school Chinese class and previous experience.

That people were kind and patient with foreigners trying to speak their native language. They were!

Religious background

I honestly didn't learn much about the local culture (Chinese and New Zealand). All I knew was that the Chinese way of thinking was significantly different from western culture and I had to work with that.

I only had what they told us in the MTC, don't stick your chopsticks straight up and down in your food, don't write anyone's name in red, etc.

Understanding the concept of face

eating customs were helpful to me. Proper chopstick use was a huge face saver for me. My Chinese teacher in the MTC gave us time to practice it.

Little customs or words not to say because it's offensive. Or phrases that helped me communicate clearly and connect with the people

I had previously taken several college courses on Eastern religion. That was extremely helpful in understanding the beliefs and concerns of my investigators.

Language phrases I had learned in college. We get a lot of mediocre translations as missionaries, and I knew which words were too harsh or titles were wrong because of college. The Chinese would never tell me themselves.

By the time I arrived, I felt that I had known more about the Australin culture than I did about the Chinese culture. In regards to the Chinese culture, it was on the job learning facilitated by my native companion who helped me. In regards to the Australin culture, I learned about it from a family friend who served in Brisbane a number of years ago.

there were just some common etiquette things like not sticking your chopsticks straight up in your rice and taking things with two hands when offered to you that helped. I learned these from friends and from previous Chinese classes.

When I first arrived in my mission area, my companion was Taiwanese. Her habits, such as an obsession with recycling and a craving for chicken feet, were not all that weird to me because they reminded me of my Taiwanese mother. It was helpful for me to already have experience living with a Taiwanese person.

Asking people if they've eaten, Mtc teachers

The need for constant respect of others (particularly elders), and politeness are two that come to
mind. I learned them from Chinese teachers, or my brother who served in New Zealand Chinese speaking

How to respect people and deal with disagreement

I knew that Chinese people were kind but blunt as I had experienced this with high school Chinese teachers before.

Learning from our MTC teachers about how to eat the food.

I learned that people respond well to questions about their lives. I learned that none of them know very much about Christ or white culture, and are very curious about them when the timing is right.

Language (MTC)

I can't really remember learning much about the culture. I wanted to have culture lessons now though.

Since my family's lay is Chinese, many of the traditions were familiar to me. The language also had a familiar sound to it.
Q26 - While you were on your mission, was there something you wished you had known about the local culture when you first arrived in your mission area?

While you were on your mission, was there something you wished you had known about the local culture when you first arrived in your mission area?

While you were on your mission, was there something you wished you had known about the local culture when you first arrived in your mission area?

That politely refusing things and being able I understand how that worked.

Proper dining etiquette with host families

People's attitudes towards health and hygiene are very different in Taiwan than America. I wish I had known that.

Not that I can think of.

Not that I can remember

Not really. I felt it was important that I learned the things I did while I was their.

Not really.

Not really, Australians are pretty straight forward and an easy going people.

No, I liked the opportunity to experience the learning process.

No

More in detail the religion or family customs

More about how Chinese culture differed from western culture.

Known how to say that I could not eat anymore to signal I was finished eating and that I didn't want more food. I wish I had also known more about their religion and concept of God before.

Just how prevalent Buddhist and Confucian culture is in Taiwan. Literally every block had a temple or at least a shrine. I wish I knew how to relate the Christian gospel to Taiwanese religious beliefs and practices. I think the Church would benefit from teaching missionaries discussions like that, instead of just Joseph Smith's First Vision. I'm sure the First Vision is great for helping Christians become Mormon. But there needs to more a greater emphasis on helping non-Christians become Christian.

I wish someone had explained to me the power that chengyu's and other proverbs can have. In language study I would try to find Chinese sayings to go along with what we were teaching investigators. If I had known earlier to say “不要守株待兔” to an investigator who wasn't putting forth any effort to get an answer, or to say 天下无难事，只怕有心人 to someone complaining about how difficult it was to get work off or travel all the way to church on Sunday, I could have been more effective earlier. So many missionaries don't understand the importance or power of the hundreds of sayings like these, and that is a pity.

I wish I would have known how to find. The MTC did NOT teach us how to do that. I wish I would have understood how assertive you need to be and how happy, how to set a time in an extremely busy culture, and that giving gifts softens hearts.

I wish I had understood Buddhism and Daoism better because it is such a big part of their culture and family dynamics.
I wish I had known more about what Buddhism means to the people.

I wish I had just seen the human in other cultures. Objectifying them turns them into some sort of alien in my mind. I wish I’d understood they are all just human in the end. The details are just details.

I wish I had better understood the popular religions of Taiwan (Buddhism and Taoism) I didn’t understand why people acted the way they did.

I wish I had a better understand of Chinese History so I could better understanding where the Chinese were coming from?

All of it. A culture class.

A lot of the Chinese speakers we taught were students. It would have been helpful to have some experience dealing with transient students. Also it would have been helpful to know how to establish rapport the the local Chinese business owners. (a lot really). But perhaps knowing more of cultural social cues and various other elements of conversation and communication would have been useful beforehand.
Q27 - How important were the following methods of learning about culture during your mission?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Native companions</td>
<td>78.26%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-native companions</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
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<td>Local members</td>
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<td>4.35%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5.26%</td>
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<td>10.53%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52.63%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Using skills learned before your</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mission</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</table>

Other

Other - Text

Culture and Religion material

Non-members
Q34 - Looking at the area(s) from the previous question that you rated as most important, please describe one or two examples of something important you learned from this/these area(s).

Looking at the area(s) from the previous question that you rated as most important, please describe one or two examples of something important you learned from this/these area(s).

My native companion could always tell whether or not other Chinese were actually interested in learning or just interested in talking to an American, he also knew where the best food was.

Native Chinese Elders taught me how Chinese people act simply though their example. Native companions also taught me a little about Chinese food.

Native companions could correct things that I was doing to be more in tune with the culture because they are with us constantly. One example was ringing multiple doorbells at one residence (for each floor) versus just the main floor which is more polite. The local members were always great to go to when you have questions about culture, for example they told us that once they saw an American lady picking her teeth and they thought that was very rude, we made sure not to do that. We also had an investigator tell us not to say certain words just because it is not very professional language.

It was important for me to bounce cultural insights or questions/frustrations with someone else from my own culture who thought similarly.

Local members inviting you in the home and sharing experiences helped me learn about culture; native companions allowed me to see how the Chinese people live.

Non native companions often saw the differences in culture more easily and were familiar with what would be helpful for me to know. Local members had cultural activities (like the moon festival) and were very willing to share the meaning of the festivals and the culture behind it all.

My native companions helped me to understand how to know when people were just being polite and when to not actually accept food and when to do so. Local members also helped me with understanding cultural expectations like working 6-7 days a week and having kids.

Native companions were able to truly explain cultural norms. For example, I once tried to cut noodles with a fork and knife at a dinner. My native companion stopped me immediately but courteously and later explained why that action was impolite.

From non-native companions (myself included) I learned quickly the error in the way we speak Chinese, and I figured out how to correct it by copying native church members.

I was better able to understand the thought process of Taiwanese people from my native companion.

I learned from my native companion what things I do and say that make people uncomfortable, such as not wiping the table after I eat or not saying "qing wen" when asking a stranger a question.

I know I would've definitely struggled if it weren't for my native companions, they not only taught me the language but along with that, they taught me how to interact around the Chinese.

I learned tons from local members just visiting them in their homes. They always helped me know when I was doing something wrong and loved teaching us about their culture.

Native companions taught me the language, helped me find my way around, and showed me how to interact with local people.

Native companions and members are better able to give suggestions for teaching the gospel to someone in their culture.

During meals, natives would often go out of their way to show you the proper way of eating, and at times even respecting others (notably the host) at such events. I also remember an instance where we asked a man a question and instead of answering it he told us how to appropriately (ie. not bluntly)
ask such questions to people.

There is a huge difference between textbook Chinese and colloquial spoken.

I learned so much from the local members because when I did something like accept stuff from them right away and they would get mildly offended I would learn quickly what things were important and polite in the culture. I also learned that how they feel they treat their guests is very important after my first meal with a member.

My native companion always encouraged me in my Chinese. She also taught me the way that the Taiwanese do certain things. For example, Chinese medicine and the major holidays.

The mission programs didn't help me much. Real experiences with real people helped the most. Example. The bishop's wife would tell me what an investigator was feeling after a lesson. Or my native companion would tell me what teenagers on the street were feeling according to them.

Native-language. Members-culture

I had a companion that would eat the most strange food! We also did certain Chinese Sports on P-day that was new to me.

My companions taught me reasoning behind certain actions and how to have good manners.
Q28 - Please indicate how often the following statements were true, based on your personal experience. (after each statement where you answer sometimes or often, please share an example of how culture affected that issue)

- A member/non-member stopped working with us when she/he felt a missionary d...
- A missionary was offended when he/she felt a local person did not respect t...
- A missionary's appropriate or inappropriate behavior affected whether membe...
- Missionaries gained teaching opportunities based on handling of difficult c...
- Missionaries missed or lost teaching opportunities based on handling of dif...
- Investigators, or potential ones, stopped talking with you for cultural rea...
- Serious miscommunication happened because a missionary made a cultural mist...
- Serious miscommunication happened because a missionary made a language mist...
- A missionary's handling of a cultural concern helped someone making or keep...
- A missionary's handling of a cultural concern got in the way of someone mak...
- A cultural concern got in the way of someone being baptized.
- Negative feelings about some part of culture got in the way of you feeling ...
- Negative feelings about culture led to negative feelings about local people...
- Understanding of culture helped you appreciate and love someone.
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>A member/non-member stopped working with us when she/he felt a missionary did not respect the culture</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A missionary was offended when he/she felt a local person did not respect the missionary's culture</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A missionary’s appropriate or inappropriate behavior affected whether members referred friends to missionaries</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Missionaries gained teaching opportunities based on handling of difficult cultural situations</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Missionaries missed or lost teaching opportunities based on handling of difficult cultural situations</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Investigators, or potential ones, stopped talking with you for cultural reasons</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43.48%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Serious miscommunication happened because a missionary made a cultural mistake.</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45.83%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Serious miscommunication happened because a missionary made a language mistake.</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45.83%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A missionary's handling of a cultural concern helped someone making or keeping a commitment.</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A missionary's handling of a cultural concern got in the way of someone making or keeping a commitment.</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56.52%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A cultural concern got in the way of someone being baptized.</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative feelings about some part of culture got in the way of you feeling or following spiritual guidance.</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>47.83%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative feelings about culture led to negative feelings about local people.</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34.78%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding of culture helped you appreciate and love someone.</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q30 - What did you learn after you came home that you wish you had known on your mission?

What did you learn after you came home that you wish you had known on your mission?

the difference between 的，得， and 地

Listen more then you talk.

To make sure to listen well and help investigators with cultural concerns in every aspect of teaching.

You can sometimes use your own native language if they understand and it's just fine.

So many things it's hard to list, but I'll list one which was the importance of having a living God, not just someone that is an idol to be worshiping that now longer lives or can truly be engaged in your life.

Little details of Chinese culture i didn't know before.

I wish I had known more Chinese idioms, they definitely are the way to people's hearts.

Proper business etiquette. It would have helped with street contacting

I wish I would have known that the people who wronged me would later ask me for forgiveness. Maybe I wouldn't have been so harsh to them in the present.

I learned about Buddhism and the base of their religon

I've only been home six weeks...

More history and context for why the Chinese people act the way they do

More about the Confucian beliefs and how they've shaped Chinese culture.

I wish I had known more professional terms.

More efficient ways to preach the gospel, many of which are barred by the mission rules.

Perhaps just more the way that Chinese people view the world. Opening ones mind to really seeing how they see and acting why they act.

How to deal with depression

More of the language.

Enjoy and embrace the culture more.

That really caring about someone and understanding how to relate doctrine to people is way more important than teaching doctrine to people. I wish I would have known how wonderful it is to set a baptismal date. I wish I would have been more confident inviting people to baptism. I wish I would have been mentally prepared to talk to people all day. The MTC kind of prepares you to study all day.

I could have focused more on personal needs and problems.

I learned the power of genuine service--I feel that could have been an easier way to warm up to foreigners.
Q31 - How important do you think understanding the everyday culture is for missionaries to do the following?

- Effectively communicate in the language
- Adapt to their new environment
- Work cooperatively with members
- Gain teaching opportunities
- Help investigators make and keep commitments
- Develop a feeling of love for local people
- Feel and follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost
- Help more people enter the waters of baptism
<table>
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<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
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<td>Effectively communicate in the language</td>
<td>56.52%</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Adapt to their new environment</td>
<td>69.57%</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work cooperatively with members</td>
<td>69.57%</td>
<td>30.43%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gain teaching opportunities</td>
<td>47.83%</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Help investigators make and keep commitments</td>
<td>52.17%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<td>Develop a feeling of love for local people</td>
<td>82.61%</td>
<td>17.39%</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel and follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost</td>
<td>52.17%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help more people enter the waters of baptism</td>
<td>47.83%</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q32 - What suggestions do you have for helping missionaries communicate more successfully in their mission culture?

What suggestions do you have for helping missionaries communicate more successfully in their mission culture?

Something everyone always says is that, "It doesn't matter if your language abilities aren't very good, as long as you have the Spirit with you." I disagree heavily. Missionaries should be taking advantage of every moment they have to improve their language abilities. If you can't communicate, it is infinitely more difficult your feelings of the Spirit or communicate the message the Spirit wants to share in order to have your investigators feel the Spirit. Of course the Spirit is essential, but if you do not have solid language abilities you will struggle helping people feel it. At the beginning of my mission I liked to take extra time during breakfast, lunch or after planning to do more personal study, but I wish I had used that time for more language study instead. I already had a testimony and knew the lessons, what I didn't have was good Chinese. After I was able to communicate effectively I became a much more effective missionary. Language is so important.

Learn your mission language as much as possible.

Be willing to make mistakes and ask for help from the local people and others.

Try to communicate in different situations in the language - like arguing, joking, bragging - anything that forces you to think and speak quickly.

Have a quick rebound rate. When your pushed down and put down, get up and get better fast - a mission is too short to have a long term memory.

Teach culture in the MTC.

Follow the Spirit and do you all you can everyday to live worthily of the Spirit.

Culture training in the MTV held by natives

Just figure out how you best learn Chinese, and focus on that. And for the love of Saint Peter, learn sounds and tones. It's the difference between being understood and not being understood. Most importantly though, develop a deep love for the people and what you are doing for them. It gives you motivation and strength to learn the language and culture. Become close with people there. Becoming close with someone in that culture a great way to learn the Chinese language and its culture.

Have culture training in MTC

Watch natives. Imitate how they speak, what they do. If you don't understand something, then ask.

Have better real Chinese teachers before you go

They can't just know the language. They must actively study the culture. Perhaps one of the best ways to do so is by talking to others about what they believe and about the experiences they've had.

Love the culture, even if you don't agree with their beliefs! If your teaching comes from a place of understanding and love, people will be more willing to make and keep commitments.

If your mission uses the "Phases," get to Phases 2 and 3 as quickly as possible. Speak in Chinese with whomever will speak back. Have confidence in yourself. Pray for the Lord's help and for the gift of tongues. Keep up your language after you return home -- it will be an asset to you, and you can remain an asset to the Church.

Love the people.
Put aside all forms of prejudice, bias, dislike of, criticism, or hate of any part of the people or the culture, and open oneself up to it in every way possible. As you personally understand and in part let it become part of you, you will be able to communicate in it. Also, ask about it and really deeply observe it.

TRC/skype sessions of just talking about the culture and lifestyle of the mission area

Pay attention to how members interact with each other and others and copy that. It's all about catching the little things about a culture that is important not just the easy big ones.

Learn as much as they can from the natives.

Love the people by sounding excited and engaged in their voice. Giving specific promised blessings, especially the crazy promised blessings you hear about in the Ensign. Then write the promised blessings in the area book. God honors promises he makes. Follow the spirit and be bold, but not overbearing. Say what you want while making tons of eye contact and using a really engaged voice. Always compliment the Taiwanese people. They remember compliments years later.

Smile!

Soak it all in and be open minded.
Appendix D

Adjusted Language Test-Mandarin (ALT) Results

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<th>Student</th>
<th>Finish Time</th>
<th>Floor</th>
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<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thu, 03 Mar 2016</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mon, 14 Mar 2016</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tue, 15 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sat, 05 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Advanced Low Proficiency</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Advanced Mid Proficiency</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>with Developing Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
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<td>with Developing Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sat, 05 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Intermediate High Proficiency</td>
<td>with Developing Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
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<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Intermediate High Proficiency</td>
<td>with Developing Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Intermediate Mid Proficiency</td>
<td>with Emerging Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
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<td>Thu, 03 Mar 2016</td>
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<td>with Emerging Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
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<td>Sat, 05 Mar 2016</td>
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<td>with Emerging Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
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<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Intermediate Mid Proficiency</td>
<td>with Emerging Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Sat, 05 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Intermediate Mid Proficiency</td>
<td>with Emerging Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>Intermediate Mid Proficiency</td>
<td>with Random Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Fri, 04 Mar 2016</td>
<td>Intermediate Mid Proficiency</td>
<td>with Random Abilities at the Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Sample Statements from the IES

(the instrument is proprietary and they do not give out complete sets of questions)
## Appendix F

### Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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| Mean  | 3.98 | 4.25 | 3.13 | 4.28 | 3.30 | 3.59 | 4.12 | 3.70 | 3.44 | 3.76 |
| STDEV | 0.450 | 0.915 | 0.549 | 0.539 | 0.695 | 0.439 | 0.596 | 0.521 | 0.448 |
| Median | 3.89 | 4.30 | 3.00 | 4.25 | 3.22 | 3.67 | 4.19 | 3.60 | 3.44 | 3.78 |
Appendix F (continued)

IES sub-score distribution

\[ y \text{ axis} = \text{number of scores per range of sub-scores, } x \text{ axis} = \text{range of sub-score responses} \]