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SITUATED INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT INTERACTION

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INTERACTION

BY

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ABSTRACT

As higher education continues to internationalize, more institutions are making it an educational priority to increase intercultural competence among all students. Despite this goal, institutions regularly place students in intercultural programs without facilitating training and reflection on intercultural learning, with the expectation that students will learn from contact alone. There is a need for investigation into situated intercultural communication, for the limited studies that do examine interactions between international and domestic students do not look at the interactions themselves, do not situate the interactions in a specific context, and often examine only the students' international/domestic statuses or countries of origin as the differences having the most influence on their communication. This study examined intercultural interaction in-action, through exploring students' experiences and interactions in a Conversation Partner Program pairing U.S. domestic students and Chinese international students to meet for weekly conversations over a ten-week period. Framed theoretically with critical intercultural communication (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) and a discourse approach to intercultural communication (Scollon, Scollon & Jones, 2012), the focus was on the discourse-specific, relational, and situated dynamics involved in the conversations between domestic and international students, underscoring the power dynamics that were present in the interactions.

The interview data and conversation data were triangulated to explain what transpired in the communication between conversation partners and what participants said about their experiences in the Conversation Partner Program. Intercultural competence development and shifting power dynamics between participants were

explored in depth. Based on students' comments during the interviews and their

conversations with their partners, there seemed to be a lack of intercultural

competence among all of the students, with the exception of one student some of the

time. There was not a clear dichotomy between domestic and international students in

terms of the power they held in these interactions, and there were a variety of power-

laden issues such as gender, race, socioeconomic status and language differences,

which seemed to influence the interactions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Internationalization and the Conversation Partner Program

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on internationalization in higher education. One dimension of internationalization of higher education involves increasing the enrollment of international students with the expectation that intercultural learning will be enhanced campus-wide (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, this focus on internationalization and the growing numbers of international students have not translated to more effective programming for language and culture learning, and there is not yet a well-developed research base for understanding what takes place when students engage with one another across differences.

One strategy in higher education to facilitate intercultural learning is to create conversation partners, pairing international and domestic students to explore various topics and learn from cultural differences and similarities (Wang, Harding & Mei, 2012). In this exploratory ethnographic study, framed theoretically with critical intercultural communication (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) and a discourse approach to intercultural communication (Scollon, Scollon & Jones, 2012), I examine domestic students' and international students' experiences in the Conversation Partner Program at a private university in the northeastern United States. This particular Conversation Partner Program matches one international student with one domestic student for one term, a ten-week period; the two students are expected to meet for at least one hour every week to discuss course-related topics and to learn about each other's cultures.

Statement of the Problem

According to *Institute of International Education* (2012-2013) *Open Doors* research which features surveys of campuses regarding their international students, international enrollment at colleges and universities across the United States increased by 7.2% in 2012-2013, bringing the international student population to 819,644. In reality, much of this growth is economically driven by institutions seeking to boost enrollments, and their support for international students often lags behind, if it exists at all. Many institutions, however, are now making it an educational priority to strategize and create opportunities for all students to engage in intercultural learning and to learn from the diversity around them with the goal of having them become increasingly interculturally competent individuals (Bennett, 2009).

Despite the fact that increasing the intercultural competence of students, defined in the literature review below, is becoming an educational priority for many institutions, there has been little research into how intercultural interaction should best be facilitated (Jurgens & Robbins-O'Connell, 2008). Rather than focusing on how to increase meaningful intercultural interaction for both international and domestic students on university campuses to live up to the internationalization rhetoric, the international student literature tends instead to focus on adjustment issues for international students. A variety of studies does suggest that communication with domestic students is needed to foster adjustment, intercultural friendships, and mental health for international students (Sumer, Poyrazli & Grahame, 2008). While the studies often suggest a need for more interaction between international and domestic

students, analysis of the specific interactions and how to guide these experiences so they lead to engagement and a meaningful exchange of ideas remains to be done.

Research has found that discrimination and prejudice often shape the way that international and domestic students interact with one another in a group context (Lee and Rice, 2007; Leki, 2001). The goal of the Conversation Partner Program at my institution is for students to share stories and learn about each other's cultures while the international students have an opportunity to practice their English. The program facilitators and professors hope that this sharing will lead to a breakdown of stereotypes and prejudice, and openness to learn more about culture. In practice, the conversation partner experience at my institution often falls short of an ideal model of intercultural learning because professors sometimes do not actively guide the learning and students do not engage with one another on a deep level, but there is very little data and understanding about what participants have to say about their experiences in the program and in particular what actually transpires in their interactions together. This study will investigate the students' experiences of interactions and the interactions themselves over the course of the 10 week Conversation Partner Program.

Definitions: Discourse Specific, Relational, Situated

Instead of identifying the presence of discrimination in intercultural encounters or trying to identify generalizations about what is taking place in these interactions, this research was more specific and relational, looking at the conversation between individuals and their unique experiences of that interaction. Throughout this study, I refer to the need for an analysis of interaction from a discourse specific, relational and

situated perspective. It is critical that I define those main themes guiding the way that I approach the interaction between the partners.

Discourse Specific Perspective

Scollon et al. (2012) argue that it is necessary to be specific about discourse communities when discussing intercultural interaction, explaining that there is too often a lack of specificity regarding overlapping, conflicting communities. For example, I have noticed a tendency in international student literature to refer to international students as a homogenous group rather than looking specifically at their cultural identities and other community memberships. In this study, the international students are all Chinese, but they are from different areas in China, a very large and diverse country, and speak different dialects of Chinese and they also have differing interests and experience bases that must be taken into account. When a Chinese student and American student interact, their national identity is not necessarily going to be the difference that has the most impact on the conversation. Scollon et al. (2012) begin their book with an example of a Chinese university student interacting with an American university student on a social media website. These two students have a lot in common, such as their ages, their online community, their interest in animation and their familiarity with English; they also have some differences, such as their nationalities, their majors and their sexualities. For the most part, these students' differences do not have much influence on the interaction and the students communicate well with one another. The only difference that does cause a little confusion is the fact that the Chinese student is Christian and the American student is Buddhist. The Chinese student from Hong Kong is one of the country's 80% majority

who is Christian and the American student is part of a growing population of American Buddhists in California. Both students were surprised by the other's religion, causing them some confusion in their communication, but not significantly impacting their relationship. This was a short case study and thus, it is not clear how their relationship progressed, but Scollon et al. (2012) present it to show that each individual belongs to a variety of different discourse communities. National origin, while undoubtedly significant in a lot of interactions and situations, is not necessarily going to have the most significant impact on one's communication with another individual. In line with Scollon et al. (2012) this study aims to be as specific as possible when discussing the international student body, in order to explore the intercultural interaction as thoroughly as possible.

Relational Perspective

Furthermore, examining the interaction from a relational perspective means that I delve into the dynamics between the two participants in each conversational pair rather than simply listening to individual perspectives on the interaction. I will be recording and analyzing the interaction as well as talking individually to each partner about the interaction, rather than just making assumptions from one participant's perspective. Scollon et al. (2012) make a distinction between studies of cross-cultural communication and interdiscourse communication, explaining that the former compares "communication systems of different groups when considered abstractly or when considered independently of any form of social interaction" and the latter looks at "communication when members of different groups are directly engaged with each other" (p. 17). They explain that research literature in a variety of fields often focuses

on comparing systems rather than examining people communicating with one another across differences. Scollon et al. (2012) claim, "Ultimately, however, there is a difficulty with that literature in that it does not directly come to grips with what happens when people are actually communicating across boundaries of social groups" (p. 17). This study aims to be relational, addressing this gap in the research literature and focusing on what happens when domestic and international students communicate with each other.

Situated Perspective

Lastly, this study strives to situate this interaction in not only the relationship between the individuals, but also in society and in terms of power differences. As suggested by both a discourse approach to intercultural communication (Scollon et al., 2012) and by critical intercultural communication (Halualani and Nakayama, 2010), all communication is inherently a power struggle and being aware of this reality in this study brings a critical perspective to the relational, interactional dynamics. Halualani and Nakayama (2010) explain that intercultural communication as a field has often misrepresented communication as existing between equal players, where the focus is on the shared meanings and practices of culture without taking into account issues of power. They state, "The view then of culture as a set of socially created/shared meanings and practices must always go hand-in-hand with attention to the structures of power (government, law and court system, economy and modes of production, education, and the media) that attended its constitution" (p. 6). For example, a Chinese international male student interacting with a White domestic female student might be influenced not only by their national cultures, but also by gender issues or

6

race issues that emerge in their interaction together. These issues and other power dynamics are likely to have an impact on the interaction, and thus their communication is going to be inherently unequal across a variety of dimensions. I refer to these power issues often and incorporate them into my framing of the study and analysis process.

Research Questions

In order to explore these issues, this study investigates the situation and the interaction between conversation partners in the Conversation Partner Program at a private university in the Northeast to understand what happens when domestic students from the United States and international students from China interact with one another. The following questions are examined:

1. What transpires in the interactions between conversation partners?

2. What do participants say about their experiences in the Conversation Partner Program?

Initially, there was a third research question exploring how the Cultural Intelligence assessment was reflected in the interactions between participants, but this question was eliminated because as this study progressed, it became apparent that the Cultural Intelligence framework did not fit with my ethnographic methodology. As will be explained in much greater depth in the analysis sections, when I tried to structure the analysis of interviews and conversations using Cultural Intelligence as a frame, it seemed as though I was forcing the data artificially to fit into a pre-existing mold. As an exploratory ethnographer, I wanted the participants to speak for themselves and for categories to emerge from the data; Cultural Intelligence was used to focus the

conversations between conversation partners on issues of intercultural interaction, and the other two questions came to the forefront in my analysis. Furthermore, as will become clear in the explanation of the analysis below, issues of intercultural competence development were addressed within the first two questions, so the purpose of question number three, delving into intercultural competence in a relational context, became unnecessary.

Personal Connection to Study

Given that this is an ethnographic study, the researcher's role in the study should be as transparent as possible, for my role and how I conduct the interviews and facilitate the study has a significant impact on what happens in the study. Blommaert and Jie (2010) discuss the error that a lot of researchers make, namely, "That the interviewer had a tremendous influence on what was said and how it was said (in other words: that nothing the interviewee said could come about *without* the interviewer's active input) escapes the attention of the researchers" (p. 49).

Thus, I am going to explain my role at the university as well as my personal connection to the study and the strengths as well as limitations that follow. I am an Assistant Professor at this university; I teach English to English Language Learners and also coordinate a variety of programs for our department designed to foster intercultural communication amongst members of the student body. One of the programs that I coordinate and organize is the Conversation Partner Program. In this work, I have a lot of close relationships with students. Within the international community, students see me as an authority figure, as I am often the teacher or the facilitator of their programs. While I try to be as helpful and as open as possible, I

know that many students see me in a professorial role, so they try to say things to please me. While the students in this study were not my students, they knew that I was teaching at the university and saw me in that role. For the study, I tried to ease their nerves about talking with a professor about personal matters, by providing snacks and a comfortable environment in my office as well as explaining confidentiality and my project openly, but I know that my role always played a part in conversations with these students.

Conclusion

This exploratory study aims to tackle a pressing problem for the internationalization of higher education: intercultural competence development needs to be situated in specific context, beginning from a knowledgeable place. There is a need to know what happens when international and domestic students come together and interact with one another in order to know how to best structure and design intercultural programming. In the chapters that follow, the literature review will show why this study is needed and then the methodology chapter will explain how data collection and analysis were conducted. Finally, in the concluding chapters, the setting and the results of the analysis will be presented and discussed, drawing connections to the research literature.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This discussion begins by providing key definitions, followed by an

examination of internationalization efforts and intercultural competence research.

Next, there is an exploration of what is missing from the international student

literature: specifically, there is an overemphasis on adjustment issues and very little

attention paid to discourse-specific, relational, and situated dynamics of those engaged

in intercultural interaction. Finally, this review of the literature explores the

theoretical underpinnings of the study: primarily Scollon et al.'s (2012) discourse

approach to intercultural communication and critical intercultural communication

(Halualani & Nakayama, 2010), informed by my feminist perspective as a reflexive

researcher (Collins, 1990; Harding 1991, 2004; Weber, 2004)

Definitions: Intercultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence

Intercultural Competence

Deardorff (2011), a widely published researcher on intercultural competence

and assessment, suggests that, in postsecondary institutions, scholars often do not

define intercultural competence with reference to the research literature, and instead

base definitions on discussions among faculty and others involved in intercultural

development efforts.   It is critical to begin this discussion of intercultural competence

with the definition I will be using throughout this study. For this study, Deardorff's

(2006) model of intercultural competence will be used because of its research base.

Deardorff (2006) conducted a study using the Delphi technique to examine a variety of

intercultural experts' models and definitions of intercultural competence; her model

represents consensus among the intercultural experts. The model, shown in Figure

2.1, delineates the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to develop the internal

outcome of an "informed frame of reference shift" and the external outcome of

"effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural situation."

Figure 2.1. Intercultural Competence Model

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE MODEL
From "The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States" by Dr. Darla K. Deardorff in *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Fall 2006, 10, p. 241-266 and in *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence*, 2009 (Thousand Oaks: Sage).

Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006. 2009):

DESIRED EXTERNAL OUTCOME:
Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree

DESIRED INTERNAL OUTCOME:
Informed frame of reference/filter shift:
Adaptability (to different communication styles & behaviors; adjustment to new cultural environments);
Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility);
Ethnorelative view;
Empathy

Knowledge & Comprehension:
Cultural self-awareness;
Deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including contexts, role and impact of culture & others' world views);
Culture-specific information;
Sociolinguistic awareness

Skills:
To listen, observe, and interpret
To analyze, evaluate, and relate

Requisite Attitudes:
Respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity)
Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment)
Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

NOTES:
• *Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)*
• *Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements*

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The only point that all intercultural experts agreed on was the ability to see from

others' perspectives and thus this point is critical to understanding intercultural

competence development. Despite the value of this model, one criticism is that it

draws from research of individuals out-of-context, rather than in relations with others.

Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) explain that this lack of relational dimensions is a common problem with intercultural competence models and the problem of "where competence is located" (p. 44) is one that needs further examination. Thus, an exploration of the relational dimensions to intercultural competence is a research priority (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Cultural Intelligence

Coupled with Deardorff's (2009) model of intercultural competence, Cultural Intelligence (CQ) will be used in this study as a tool to guide students to discuss issues of culture and interaction across differences in conversations with one another. This is a quantitative assessment tool that provides feedback to participants, and thus it is a concrete way to focus students' conversations around issues of intercultural ability. There is a variety of assessment tools to gauge intercultural competence, but as Deardorff (2009) explains, no one tool is sufficient to do so alone. Thus, this tool will not be used to provide a final and comprehensive assessment of an individual's ability to interact across cultures, but it has been chosen to complement Deardorff's (2006) model as it is a relatively "cleaner construct" that has a strong theoretical foundation as compared to other instruments (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Cultural Intelligence is also distinct in that it is related to intelligence research, which brings an individualized approach into notions of culture. There are four different capabilities that are assessed in the Cultural Intelligence assessment; they are CQ Drive, CQ Knowledge, CQ Strategy, and CQ Action. Drive is one's "interest and confidence in functioning effectively in culturally diverse settings" (Livermore, 2011, p. 6-7), and it has been shown that if one is lacking this critical motivational piece, one is not likely to be

successful in communication across cultures. Knowledge is "your knowledge about how cultures are similar and different" (Livermore, 2011, p. 7). Strategy is "how you make sense of culturally diverse experiences" (Livermore, 2011, p. 7) and specifically how one is able to judge one's own thought processes and then plan accordingly for encounters. Lastly, CQ Action is "your capability to adapt your behavior appropriately for different cultures" (Livermore, 2011, p. 7).

Internationalization Efforts: Lagging in Intercultural Competence Development

Altbach and Knight (2007) explain that the internationalization of higher education is an effort to respond to the global economy. Internationalization includes the academic policies and practices created in response to the global economic environment. As mentioned above in the problem statement, many institutions depend on internationalization efforts to bring in revenue. Despite the linguistic and cultural learning objectives woven into internationalization plans, there is often an absence of institutional support to ensure that those objectives become a reality; many faculty, staff and students do not get the support or guidance required to foster such learning in a meaningful way. Faculty commitment to internationalizing the curriculum varies widely across universities in the United States, but overall there are significantly fewer committed faculty members working on internationalization efforts as compared with counterparts in other countries. Furthermore, it has become apparent, through examination of universities' relative levels of success with internationalization, that piecemeal approaches, simply adding one course or requiring a particular program of students, are not effective. Institutional support and campus-wide engagement,

including faculty, staff and students, are necessary if internationalization plans are to succeed (Engberg & Greene, 2002).

In reality, faculty and staff are often not engaged in fostering intercultural competence partly due to the lack of institutional support and partly due to the reality that our society perpetuates power imbalances, and it is not common to question the status quo and engage in critical intergroup dialogues (Goodman, 2001; Smith, 2009). Smith (2009) discusses the importance of engagement in difficult discussions, rather than avoiding them. Goodman (2001) also discusses this tendency for people to avoid meaningful discussions, particularly regarding our social identities. Goodman (2001) states,

> The publicly perpetuated norm encourages avoidance of honest, meaningful discussions about our social identities, about social inequalities and about our experiences of them. People enter workshops with this internalized taboo and a lack of skill or comfort in having these types of discussions. (p. 70)

The inequality perpetuated in our society is reflected and perpetuated in higher education, and internationalization efforts often lack critical intercultural competence development necessary to make effective intercultural communication a reality.

Thus, although developing students' intercultural competence is becoming an educational priority for institutions, included in internationalization plans and mission statements, the reality of intercultural learning on college campuses seems to be lagging behind the rhetoric; examination of what leads to intercultural competence development and how intercultural interaction can be best facilitated in specific contexts is needed(Deardorff, 2011; Jurgens & Robbins-O'Connell, 2008). Jurgens

14

and Robbins-O'Connell (2008) interviewed staff members working in international

programming at three different universities, one in the United States and two in

Ireland. The interviewees explained that they do not have methods for keeping track

of the cultural competence development that their programs claim to foster. Jurgens

and Robbins-O'Connell (2008) also explained,

> Each of the interviewees stated that not only were they unable to comment on
>
> the frequency of such programming or activities, but also that no current
>
> method of determining the level of such need, nor for determining the success
>
> of current programming and activities had been developed or utilized by their
>
> respective departments or the universities in general. (p. 72)

Developing intercultural competence is an ongoing process that must be

actively fostered throughout one's lifetime. While many institutions are still just

putting students together and expecting them to learn from their differences, it has

been widely acknowledged that more intentional programming and curriculum

development are necessary for intercultural competence to develop. Bennett (2009)

explains, "In the past, many professionals assumed that any contact across cultures

was useful contact and would reduce stereotypes and prejudice, allowing intercultural

competence to synergistically evolve" (p. 133). In reality, intercultural competence

development has to be actively facilitated, including training, ongoing reflection,

meaningful interaction and critical assessment of specific measurable objectives. In a

higher education context, this intercultural competence development can happen

through courses, service learning opportunities, education abroad or on campus

learning (Bennett, 2009; Deardorff, 2011). While there is research on what needs to

happen in order to facilitate intercultural competence development, there has been little investigation into intercultural competence development in action and in a specific context. As was mentioned previously, a close examination of interaction across discourse communities needs to be conducted (Scollon et al., 2012). Thus, this research, aiming to be discourse-specific, relational and situated, will address a gap in the current research on intercultural competence development.

<div align="center">**Research on Intercultural Competence Development**</div>

The research on intercultural competence development has mostly focused on specific programs aimed at increasing intercultural competence, examining whether those programs succeed at achieving that goal. There has also been some research on other factors, such as identity and previous intercultural contact, that lead to the development of intercultural competence.

Program Effectiveness

The research on intercultural competence development often examines the effectiveness of particular programs in increasing intercultural competence among participants. Spooner-Lane, Tangen, Mercer, Hepple and Carrington (2013) looked at Malaysian and Australian pre-service teachers' intercultural competence after completing the *Patches'* program, a semester-long academic and social curriculum designed to build intercultural competence of participants. Through an examination of focus groups and reflective logs, using Deardorff's (2006) model, the researchers learned that the participants were demonstrating intercultural competence development; in particular, the participants showed the requisite attitudes, skills and knowledge for intercultural competence development. Tangen, Mercer, Spooner-Lane

and Hepple (2011), in their description of the *Patches'* curriculum and what specific aspects were facilitative of changing views, explain,

> Changes in perspectives about interculturality occurred during these sharing sessions when both groups stated that their identities had been challenged and that they were able to see how to use these challenges to their advantage in gaining a deeper understanding of who they were, how to respond to the 'other', and how this transformational learning could apply to their future work as teachers. (p. 70)

In terms of internal outcomes, showing an informed frame of reference, participants discussed how they were becoming more reflective and aware of their own ability to be flexible and empathetic. As for external outcomes, showing that they were behaving appropriately in intercultural communication, participants commented on how they were doing this. While there were some comments about the ways they were changing their views and their behavior, this area in this study needs further examination. Additionally, the participants spoke about their desires to be more culturally aware in the future, but it was not clear how these desires would actually translate into changed behavior. To determine whether internal and external outcomes were actually achieved through participation in the *Patches'* program, there should have been some observations or recorded conversations rather than self-reporting alone. This triangulation of data would also have helped to confirm what they were saying about their attitudes, knowledge and skills. For example, when students reflected on their own prejudices and how they were much more open-minded about Muslim women now, I wonder what this increase in open-mindedness

looks like in their actual communication and if it is perceivable to the other students engaged in the interaction.

Additionally, missing from this study is an analysis of the participants' thoughts about their own intercultural competence at the outset of the program. The reader is left wondering whether the *Patches'* program actually had an effect on their intercultural competence or whether they already had these ideas previously. This study also does not discuss any specific differences within the communities that might have effects on their relative levels of intercultural competence. As was mentioned previously, Scollon et al. (2012) discuss how national identity is not necessarily going to be the difference that has the greatest impact on communication and this study focused entirely on national identity, and the international/domestic student statuses, as the only points of difference in their identities. There is no mention of other factors in this study, such as race and gender, which could have an impact on communication.

A different study addresses some of these problems. Wang (2013) examined the intercultural competence at both the outset and completion of participants' participation in a course aimed at increasing intercultural competence. Wang (2013) used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess students before and after the program in order to show any progress in the development of intercultural competence. Initially, the students were mostly in the minimization stage, deemphasizing the importance or the presence of cultural differences. Then, they were led through a course aimed at defining culture, increasing cultural self-awareness and drawing connections through culture and communication. After taking the course, the students began to see the impact that cultural differences have on people and were

less likely to negate their potential impact. This was determined through a post-test of the IDI in which students' scores increased; while students were still in the minimization stage, the increase in their scores was determined to be significant, when compared to other similar studies and what happened in regard to their students' increases in IDI scores.

This study did not, however, look at the specific context of interaction for these students; through a pencil and paper instrument, it primarily looked at intercultural competence as residing in the individual. Additionally, the study only used the IDI to assess intercultural competence development; it would have been helpful to have interviews or focus groups to complement the quantitative assessment tool in order to see what the learners had to say about their learning and their progress having taken the course. When the course was being described, the emphasis was on what knowledge and skills were being imparted to students, with no focus at all on how these were received by students. A quantitative assessment alone does not provide insight into students' responses to the course and the specific areas where they were gaining knowledge and the areas where they were struggling. Lastly, when relying solely on the IDI looking at pre-test and post-test numbers, one can wonder whether there has been increased sensitivity to the instrument. Students are not only more familiar with the instrument, but they are also more familiar with what the "right" answers might be, given that focus of the course content was on interaction across cultures. Conversations and interviews with students would have provided some insights into whether students were thinking along those lines, or whether they had actually learned from the course.

Factors Contributing to Intercultural Competence Development

Having explored the impact courses and specific in-depth training programs have on intercultural competence development, I now turn to other studies that examine the factors that determine whether intercultural competence development will unfold in an individual's life. Kim (2009) discusses identity inclusivity and identity security as being important precursors to the ongoing development of intercultural competence development. Identity inclusivity means that one will be willing to have a more flexible, open view of one's own identity and others'. Rather than stereotyping and placing all individuals together into categories, a person who exhibits identity inclusivity sees that group membership is a lot more complex and inherently multicultural. Identity security is also critical for intercultural competence to develop: if one is secure in one's identity, then one is more likely and willing to be open to interaction with those who are different from oneself. This allows one to truly empathize with another person without feeling that one is compromising one's sense of self. Thus, according to Kim (2009), the degree to which an individual demonstrates identity inclusivity and identity security will influence intercultural competence in interactions with dissimilar others.

Furthermore, past intercultural contact has been shown to have an impact on individuals' intercultural competence development. Vollhardt (2010) conducted a study looking at individuals who have experienced close and extended intercultural contact in the past. He examined German host families hosting exchange students for one year. He examined some families at the start of the program and other families at its completion. Vollhardt (2010) provided cases of critical incidents to participants

and asked them to explain what was going on in these incidents that involved culture clashes. Those participants who have had significant intercultural contact are more likely to make external attributions and culturally sensitive attributions of out-group members as compared to those who have not had significant intercultural contact in the past. Rather than labeling out group members in a certain way, attributing their behavior to their group membership, participants with prior close intercultural contact were more likely to attribute some of their behaviors to the context, the society or group norms.

Vollhardt's (2010) report, however, only provided one example of the scenarios provided to participants to elicit attributions; in order to have a fuller understanding of the types of scenarios presented to participants, it would have been helpful to know more about what was included. Also, I am left wondering about the nature of the previous intercultural contact, as I think that extended, close contact could take a variety of forms and the study would have been stronger if there was more description of the intercultural contact. Lastly, he makes the claim that it is possible to compare these groups because all other variables are held constant and the year abroad is the only variable of focus, but I think this limited view of variables is leaving out some possible contextual and individual differences among participants. In other words, there could be other possible factors influencing participants' attributions, other than their experience having housed exchange students for that particular year.

Contact Hypothesis

In addition to intercultural competence development research, research using Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis is another area where there has been some examination of factors influencing interaction dynamics. Allport's (1954) hypothesis proposes four criteria necessary for intergroup contact to lead to prejudice reduction: equal status of the people involved, common goals, acquaintance potential, and the involvement of authority. Many of the most current studies suggest that more research into the complexity of interaction dynamics and the factors involved in successful and unsuccessful contact are necessary.

For example, Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) reviewed research using the contact hypothesis and suggest directions for further research. As Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) explain, intergroup contact alone does not always lead to intercultural learning. Some students actually feel frustrated by communication challenges and this frustration may be associated with an increase in prejudice (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) explain that more research is needed to examine the processes involved in successful intergroup contact and to explore negative group contact where prejudice is increased. In their meta-analysis of mediators impacting prejudice reduction, Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) also indicate that more work on empathy and perspective taking is necessary considering how their analysis pointed to those as being areas that influence successful group contact.

Halualani (2008) investigates multicultural university students' perceptions of intercultural contact, a research area that needs attention due to the paucity of research at this time, and suggests that research on intercultural contact needs to take into

account the complexity and myriad of factors potentially implicated in making sense of intercultural contact. He suggests that models of intercultural contact imposed on students are insufficient in explaining their perceptions and thoughts on what is happening. He states, "By directing our efforts at investigating idealized intercultural contact that may occur infrequently, we have in large part overlooked how individuals and cultural groups actually experience intercultural contact in the messiness of real life" (p. 3). In his study, he engages in in-depth interviews with university students over the course of three years. One of his findings is that students on a very diverse campus see themselves as having intercultural contact all the time, even if they are not actually engaging in it regularly, and they also no longer see their intercultural interactions with peers who are from different background as being intercultural because they claim that they see interaction the same no matter who they are talking with. Halualani (2008) wonders whether it is better to have students enter interactions seeing them as intercultural interactions or whether entering interactions seeing them as just interactions will actually facilitate more intercultural learning. He states, "Here I ask: Is it better to have individuals notice and highlight the 'intercultural'-ness cultural difference of their interactions or not? What are the sensemakings and consequences that correspond with each approach?" (p. 14).

Lastly, O'Dowd (2003) examined the factors involved in intergroup cultural learning between Spanish and English speakers in email exchanges and found that close analysis of email exchanges was necessary in order to gain a better understanding of what was leading to effective intercultural learning. Using Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence and Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis, he

examined the characteristics of email exchanges that reflected intercultural

competence development. His methodology included examination of the emails

themselves, interviews with participants, peer group feedback and a reflexive journal

that he, the teacher and researcher, would take notes in. He found that some students

felt there was a lack of a receptive audience for their ideas and this led those students

to lose motivation for participation in the project and to have a pessimistic attitude

about the other students' cultures. Furthermore, another student felt as though his

attempt to elicit different perspectives from his partner was ignored and thus he

developed negative views of that student's culture from the little information that he

did have.

   In contrast, situations where students were able to express their feelings about

culture and reflect critically on their own culture through dialoguing with their

partners led to culture learning and positive attitudes about culture. O'Dowd (2003)

also analyzed the specific components of the emails in situations where learning

occurred and the components of the emails where learning did not occur. For

example, intercultural learning was associated with emails in which participants

brought in personal connections, asked questions of their partners' beyond just the

required tasks and took into account the socio-pragmatic rules of their partner's

language when writing in that language. This study, however, focused primarily on

email exchanges and did not examine communication taking place orally. A study

looking at the specific components of intercultural conversation, modeled after this

research on email exchanges, would provide insights into the discourse-specific,

relational and situated context of intercultural contact.

Thus, the research on the Contact Hypothesis shows that the exploration into intercultural contact in action has been quite limited and there is a need for a close investigation into the interaction dynamics of intercultural contact.

International Student Literature: Lack of Depth into Social Interaction

While the international student literature points to a need for more interaction between international and domestic students, there has been little investigation into specific, contextual interaction dynamics and how to best guide the interactions. Additionally, in the limited research on conversation partner programs, more exploration of interaction dynamics is needed.

International Student Adjustment: Social Network Needed

While there are some studies about the factors thought to be involved in promoting intercultural competence development as well as some research exploring and extending the implications of the Contact Hypothesis, much of the literature on international students in higher education focuses on adjustment issues for students. This research on adjustment suggests that international students need more interaction with domestic students in order for adjustment and intercultural learning to occur. Specific guidance as to how such collaborative learning should be facilitated is lacking. Li, Fox and Almarza (2007) interviewed international graduate students about common challenges that the international students face. Learning English, adjusting to a new culture and not having established social networks were three of the common issues that emerged; in order to learn English, students recommend seeking out opportunities to practice English and interact with native speakers whenever possible. Similarly, Hinchcliff-Pelias and Greer (2004) used focus groups and

interviews with international students, along with narrative analysis of their reflective writing, to analyze how international students approach communication. One suggestion that international students had to improve communication is for the university to offer more opportunities for meaningful engagement between international and domestic students. Sumer, Poyrazli and Grahame (2008) also looked at international student adjustment and they conducted a correlation analysis looking at a variety of variables, including gender, age, length of stay, race and social support, and whether they were predictors of anxiety and depression among international students. They found that social support was critical in terms of fostering mental health for participants and one of their recommendations was peer programs pairing American and international students. They explained that domestic and international student interaction was important in order to expand the international students' social network and to facilitate English language acquisition. Lastly, Khawaja and Stallman's (2011) discovery, in their qualitative study of international student coping strategies, that international students find interaction and social support from domestic students to help ease stress reflects the existing literature on easing adjustment stress (Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004). Through comments during focus groups, students in the study actually recommended having international students make efforts to interact with domestic students so that they benefit from these interactions, but they did not propose how to do this. These studies and others point to the need for more social support and opportunities for interaction between international and domestic students.

Need for More Interaction: How to Guide It?

Thus, while some of these studies point toward the need for more interaction, implying that this will be beneficial to both groups, there is scarce analysis into how to best structure and guide those interactions for international and domestic students. Zhao, Kuh and Carini (2005) conducted a quantitative study on international and domestic student engagement in educational practices and found, among a variety of other findings, that increasing numbers of international students on campus does not immediately lead to more learning from diversity and the increasing enrollment of international students must be accompanied by programs and social opportunities that integrate domestic students and international students effectively. Zhao, Kuh and Carini (2005) state, "A campus cannot simply recruit a critical mass of international students; it must also intentionally arrange its resources so that international and American students benefit in desired ways from one another's presence" (p. 225). Just placing domestic and international students into a group together does not guarantee that they will learn from one another, as the program development needs to foster learning for the students, taking into account the perspectives of all students involved. Wang, Harding and Mei (2012) conducted interviews with international and domestic students engaged in teamwork and came to the conclusion that there needs to be more well-facilitated and structured culturally-mixed teamwork in order to facilitate meaningful relationships between international and domestic students.

In order to foster this meaningful dialogue, Tas (2013) explains some of the best practices associated with hosting international students and explains that diversity training is critical for faculty, staff and students to learn from and facilitate the

intercultural interaction on campus. Additionally, he explains the need to transition to a more international culture. Learning from the diversity on campus is not going to happen without intervention and there needs to be a structure in place for how such learning is going to be facilitated. Tas (2013) states, "Diversity does not just happen and planned change must occur to meet diversity challenges and opportunities. Organizational and individual commitments are part of the mix. These commitments involve participation and leadership at all levels" (p. 16).

Conversation Partner Experience: Interaction Dynamics Need Exploration

The limited studies of the conversation partner experience point to a need for a closer examination of the interaction dynamics involved. Wilson (1993), in his exploration of a conversation partner experience, learned that the partners acquired much knowledge, such as substantive knowledge and perceptual understanding as well as personal development and interpersonal relationships, from one another in this situation. Wilson's (1993) study, however, was based solely on reflection papers of students involved in a conversation partner program and did not take into account the actual interactions themselves. The study was also limited in that it only briefly alluded to challenges such as time and language, but did not explore these issues or others in much depth.

Gresham and Clayton (2012) discuss another similar program in Australia, the *Community Connections* program; it pairs international and domestic students together and they meet over the course of the term. While participants experienced time challenges and difficulties sustaining the conversation, the participants reported on a survey, asking about the extent and depth of their partnership as well as its impact on

the students, that overall they learned from the experience and felt that they gained perspective and more understanding about cultures from the program. Thus, the recommendation is that more programs like this one get integrated into the university. This study, however, also does not provide insight into what actually happened when the students met or whether there were actually genuine learning experiences taking place or whether this was just what was reported in the survey. I also wondered whether students were just giving the desired responses on the surveys. It would have been helpful to complement the surveys with interviews or focus groups with the students as just survey data seems limiting. For example, students report learning more about other cultures. This leaves the reader wondering what they actually have learned and whether such learning is accurate and facilitative of intercultural competence development or whether it is inaccurate and misguided, or somewhere in between.

Thus, much of the international student literature is focused on adjustment issues for international students, pointing to more interaction with domestic students as one of the methods to ease adjustment challenges, and the limited literature that does explore programs similar to the Conversation Partner Program examined in this study do not take into account the specific context or the content of the learning reported by the students.

Group Work: Culture, Discrimination and Limited Domestic Student Perspectives

One area where there has been some research on intercultural communication between international and domestic students is literature on group work. This

overview of the group work literature begins with a discussion about international students being viewed by domestic students as barriers to group work success and facing discrimination in a group context. Then, there is an exploration of the limited research available on domestic student perspectives.

International Students: Barriers to Group Work Success and Targets of Discrimination

Chinese international students are often perceived to be a barrier to group work success because of their cultural backgrounds. Studies have analyzed the cultural characteristics of the students involved and their experiences of discrimination. Baker and Clark (2010) in their mixed methods study of cooperative learning in multicultural groups in New Zealand found that the international students were often unfamiliar with cooperative learning teaching methods coming from teacher-centered learning environments and thus there needs to be structured training for faculty and students with a cultural focus, getting students ready for this type of learning. Similarly, Li and Campbell (2008) in their interview study of Asian students studying in New Zealand found that while international students felt they benefited from in-class discussions, they did not see value in the group projects and found them to be a much less effective means for learning as compared to independent work assignments. Li and Campbell (2008) suggest that faculty take into account these students' cultural backgrounds, including work and learning styles, while constructing their assignments.

Lee and Rice (2007) conducted interviews with international students and found that many international students reported feeling as though the domestic students were ignoring them because they did not value their opinions. They talked

about experiencing discrimination from other students, faculty and local community members. Students explained their experiences of having been ignored, verbally insulted and confronted by domestic students in the groups. Sometimes this discrimination was founded in the American apathy to understand other cultures. Thus, these international students did want to engage in group work, but they felt like the discrimination they encounter limited their ability to do so. Lee and Rice (2007) explain, "Though perhaps unintentional, such indifference to other ways of life can marginalize anything not American, anything not understood. Such apathy and unwillingness to attempt understanding translates to the rejection of international students' cultural identities" (p. 399). However, much of this research has focused entirely on international student perspectives, ignoring the intercultural dynamics at play and overlooking the contextual and relational factors.

Leki (2001) conducted a study of nonnative-English-speaking (NNES) students in group projects and also found that these international students faced discrimination in the group context. She found that international students felt ignored by the domestic students and they felt as though the domestic students saw them as less capable of participating in a group dynamic. Leki (2001) references the linguistic, cultural and racial power imbalances that are at play in a group context, suggesting that the native English speakers express their dominance through control of the group dynamics. Other studies looking specifically at Chinese females show that they struggle in their identity negotiation and adjustment to the American context due to disempowerment. Hsieh (2007), in a narrative study of a female Chinese international student's experience of feeling silenced, found that the silence of the non-native

31

students was due to a power clash between the domestic and Chinese students; the Chinese students felt disempowered and voiceless given that the domestic students asserted themselves and did not listen to the international students. In another qualitative study Min-Hua (2006) investigated Chinese female international students' identity negotiation and found that they were often the most marginalized of all the international students and they were silenced by the language power and the cultural homogeneity of the American classroom.

Thus, in the international student literature, the focus has been on international student adaptation to the host institution, and their experiences with discrimination, rather than putting the onus on the domestic students and faculty to become welcoming and facilitative of international student adaptation. The implication in much of the adjustment literature is that host institutions are open to being sensitive if the international students are willing to adapt; there is not much focus on how higher education institutions have to change to be more accommodating and understanding of international students. There is a need for more studies to examine how institutions are organized in ways that make it difficult for international students to succeed, such as favoring the dominant discourse and marginalizing all those who fall outside of it (Lee & Rice, 2007). For example, Lee and Rice (2007) point out that the institution needs to become more aware of the discrimination that exists and start trying to make changes accordingly. Lee and Rice (2007) state, "We recommend that members of the educational community be made aware of this issue and their responsibility in creating intellectual environments that foster cross-national acceptance and learning and in rejecting the perpetuation of national stereotypes" (p. 46).

Scarce Domestic Student Perspectives

The scarce investigation into the perspectives of domestic students points to the need for more research into their thoughts and experiences, as well as the tendency in the literature to focus on international student adjustment. Li and Campbell (2008) point out that their study of Asian international students in New Zealand and their perspectives on group work projects did not address the domestic students' perspectives on group work. According to the researchers, it would be beneficial to examine the domestic students' perspectives, to see how they compare and contrast with international students' perspectives. Similarly, Leki (2001) discusses the international students' perspectives on working in groups with domestic students, but does not explore domestic students' perspectives in her study.

The limited studies exploring domestic students' perspectives do not delve into the specific, situated encounters between people in interactions. The following studies point to what has been learned from the limited studies exploring international student and domestic student interaction, including domestic student perspectives, but it becomes clear that all of the following studies are lacking a discourse-specific, relational, situated approach to interaction. They only take into account students' perspectives in interviews or focus groups and do not examine the interaction in a contextualized in-action context.

Volet and Ang (1998) conducted a study of international and domestic students' thoughts on intercultural group work. They found that students, if given the choice, preferred to stay with their own national or cultural group. According to this study, the students felt more of a sense of belonging with people who they considered

to be similar to them. However, I am left wondering whether issues of discrimination might be factors influencing their desires to stay with their own group in this study as well. In this study, students assigned to multicultural groups claim to have had a positive experience in those groups, but will still choose to be in groups with people similar to themselves after the multicultural experience. This study focuses entirely on international student and domestic student perspectives about what is happening without looking critically at the situated, in action encounters to see what is actually going on.

Similarly, a study by Harrison and Peacock (2010) investigated, through focus groups and interviews, domestic students' interactions with international students. Many students reported low contact with international students. They also discussed feeling resentful when international students sat together in class and talked in their languages. There was a lot of xenophobia reported among the domestic students. Additionally, domestic students explained their anxieties about communication with international students, and Harrison and Peacock (2010) point out that particular attention to reducing anxiety is going to be necessary if intercultural contact is to be effectively facilitated. They also suggest that more research is needed into the construction of home students' perspectives, as this study only identified some of the perspectives not examining how they were developed. This study also did not look at the discourse-specific, relational and situated encounters as the focus of this current study strives to do.

Similarly, this in-action, contextual approach was also missing from Summers and Volet (2008) and Baker and Clark (2010). Summers and Volet (2008) in their

examination of questionnaire data from 233 students examined attitudes towards multicultural group work among domestic and international students in Australia. One of their findings was that domestic students who had prior intercultural experiences were more likely to have favorable views of multicultural group work. Baker and Clark (2010) found through conducting surveys and focus groups with international and domestic students that local Australian students with European roots showed less agreement on the value of multicultural group work, while the Chinese students were more likely to see the value in the collaborative group experience. Both of these studies, with their focus on questionnaires and surveys, did not examine the contextual factors, nor did they look at the specific interactions themselves.

Leask (2009) proposes ideas for integration of formal and informal curricula in higher education to foster meaningful relationships, collaborative work between international and domestic students, and intercultural competence development. These suggestions stem from the work her institution has been engaged in trying to implement system-wide internationalization strategies. Her work proposing curricular changes that facilitate improved interactions between international and domestic students is unique in the literature as it addresses both international and domestic students and it provides suggestions for structuring intercultural learning and for building institutional support for it inside and outside of the classroom. She provides suggestions, such as attention to structural issues and task design as well as training faculty and staff, for formal curricula to effectively build intercultural competence. In terms of informal curricula outside of the classroom, Leask (2009) suggests purposeful planning, support for both domestic and international students, as well as the slow but

necessary change to the campus culture. It is not clear in Leask's (2009) suggestions,

however, how she came to some of these conclusions based on her institution's

experience. I would have appreciated some more specific insights into lessons learned

based on her specific context.

Jon (2012) researched power dynamics in interactions between international

and domestic students in Korea. Through interviews with Korean domestic students,

he found that power imbalances impacted the way domestic and international students

approached one another. Gender, race, national origin, and socioeconomic status

came up in regard to the interactions and students often saw themselves as higher or

lower than others based on some of these dimensions. For example, Korean students

commented on how they looked down on students who came from countries with less

economic power. Jon (2012) explains, "Another student explained her realization of

an assumption on the economic level of a certain Asian country in interacting with an

international student. She confessed that her behavior implied Korea's superior

economic power over that of the international student's country" (p. 446). This study

did not, however, look specifically at the actual interactions to see what happened

when students were actually communicating with one another. Rather, Jon's (2012)

data were based on interview data alone examining student perspectives on their

interactions with the international students.

Dunne (2009) conducted a grounded theory study looking at domestic students

in Ireland and how they perceived the international students. During the interviews

with domestic students, the students expressed that they perceived older domestic

students and all international students to be culturally different. This study also asked

what influenced the likelihood that students will interact with students who are different from them on campus. One of the findings regarding student motivation showed that host students generally were motivated to engage with students who were different from themselves if it was going to be useful for them in some way. For example, students wanted to interact with international students if they needed to practice a foreign language or were about to travel overseas. Less frequently, the students attributed their motivation to the idea that they have a shared future or that they have interest in or concern for the students. In terms of challenges, the host students reported anxiety, language challenges, effort required to communicate and compromised identities in the communication. This study was useful in that it explored domestic students' perspectives, but, like the aforementioned studies, it did not look specifically at the interaction at all and only looked at what study participants had to say during the interviews. It would have been helpful if there had been another data source to triangulate what the participants had to say. Also it would have been useful to know more about the specific identities of the students interviewed as well as the international students they were talking about in their interviews.

Shiyong (2012) examined stereotypes that Chinese students and American students hold of one another through conducting content analysis of students' reflective writing. Overall, both groups held stereotypes of one another, but the American students in this particular study held more negative stereotypes of Chinese students and the Chinese students held more positive stereotypes of American students. The implication of this study is that, given the stereotypes that students hold of one another, it is necessary to take these into account and try to bring more

intercultural knowledge into teaching and programming. This study, similar to the others mentioned previously, did not look specifically at the interaction dynamics, nor did it situate those interactions in a specific context.

Thus, the group work literature shows Chinese students are often perceived to be a barrier to group work success and they face disempowerment and discrimination in the group context. The scarce investigation into domestic students indicates a need for more research in this area, particularly exploring the discourse-specific, relational, situated intercultural encounters.

Theoretical Underpinnings: Discourse Approach to Intercultural Communication and Critical Intercultural Communication Studies

For the framework of this exploration of interaction, I use the discourse approach to intercultural communication of Scollon et al. (2012) along with critical intercultural communication studies (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) to support the need for this research and frame the analysis of the interaction. Feminist perspectives (Collins, 1990; Harding, 1991, 2004; Weber, 2004) support this methodological choice and inform my research perspective.

In their discourse approach to intercultural communication, Scollon et al. (2012) explore what happens when people come together in an interaction and try to communicate. They explain that research literature is often missing this investigation into the experience of interaction. Scollon et al. claim, "Ultimately, however, there is a difficulty with the literature in that it does not directly come to grips with what happens when people are actually communicating across boundaries of social groups" (p. 17). Through exploring this question and conducting ethnographies of human

interaction, they have come to a discourse approach in contrast to a purely

intercultural approach, with specific frames through which to understand interactional

dynamics. Critical to such an approach are the notion of discourse, as opposed to

culture, and the situated nature of an understanding of human interaction. Were

Scollon et al. (2012) to refer to a notion of culture, they would explain that they would

describe such a notion as a verb, in contrast to the static notion that one "has" a

culture.

Building from this theoretical frame of a discourse approach to intercultural

communication, Scollon et al. (2012) tackle the inherently complex nature of human

interaction, by suggesting that people are part of intersecting, sometimes conflicting,

dynamic discourse systems and they explore what happens when they come into

contact with other people in interaction. Scollon et al. (2012) caution researchers

against saying that certain communities communicate in a certain way because of the

culture they represent, but instead they suggest that when analyzing communication,

all discourses should be analyzed. For example, instead of assuming a Chinese person

is shy because of his/her culture, one should examine as many reasons as possible for

such shyness. Obviously, it will be impossible to do an exhaustive analysis of

someone's discourse communities, but the point is not to assume causality where it

may not exist. Scollon et al. (2012) explain that:

> We have set aside – not as unimportant but rather as directly relevant – aspects
>
> of cultural, group or social difference that are not directly involved in social
>
> interactions between members from different groups. Our focus is on social
>
> interactions, on how they develop an internal logic of their own, and how

people read those social interactions in making decisions and in taking actions

that have consequences far beyond those situations themselves (p. 18).

In addition, Scollon et al. (2012) point out that power differences exist in most

interactions for a variety of different reasons. They explain the power differences

"arise based on differences in age, gender, wealth, hunting prowess, ability to

entertain, education, physical strength, or beauty, membership in particular families or

color of hair or skin" (p. 36). Hierarchical distinctions are constantly being made in

our communication and depending on the context, the power differences can shift. I

am interested to see whether the domestic students or the international students seem

to show they have power in the interaction or whether there is not such a clear power

distinction in the interaction. Through an examination of the recorded conversations

between international and domestic students and an exploration of students' roles in

the communication, with a focus on the students' initiations, this question of power in

the interaction will be further explored.

Coupled with a discourse approach to intercultural communication, this study

is aligned with critical intercultural communication studies. Scollon et al. (2012) argue

that it is impossible to disconnect interaction from issues of power in any interaction

and they provide frames through which to analyze power-laden discourse. Halualani

and Nakayama (2010) explain that critical intercultural communication emerged in

order to account for power dynamics and historical and contextual factors in

intercultural communication studies, which have often been criticized for ignoring

such phenomena. This study aims to situate the conversations between the

conversation partners, taking into account to the best of my ability as a reflexive

researcher the variety of discourses that the partners are part of and the power issues involved. While it will not be possible to incorporate all possible power dynamics in this study, I will try to be inclusive and open to what transpires in the interactions. As was mentioned above, the issues for international students tend to center around the disempowerment that they experience given the discrimination they face; through an integration of a critical intercultural approach, I will be able to explore some of those issues and other power dynamics that emerge in this exploratory study.

Supporting critical intercultural communication, feminist perspectives influence this research as well. As a feminist researcher, I recognize power imbalances and oppression as permeating forces in our lives. Weber (2004) argues that too often cultural difference perspectives do not include a focus on power/privilege and that it is critical to analyze the specific situations that people are in, not only their nationalities. She explains that race, class, gender and sexuality are contextual and socially constructed. It is a mistake to label someone and then categorize them as such. Weber (2004) argues that it is becoming critical to examine privilege, like the social construction of whiteness, alongside looking at oppressed groups, because oppression and subordination go together. It is also critical to take into account both the macro and the micro levels of the expression of these evolving discourses, considering they are both simultaneously expressed. Most people have oppressor and oppressed status in their lives and thus it is important to acknowledge this and incorporate this complexity into an understanding of what is transpiring.

Another feminist whose work supports my theoretical framework of critical intercultural communication and interdiscourse communication is Harding (1991,

2004). Harding (2004) discusses her notion of "strong objectivity" and argues that

starting from women's lives and other marginalized communities will provide a more

objective approach to inquiry into human experience and interaction. Harding (2004)

refers to some of the concepts in her book, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge* (1991)

and as a standpoint feminist, she examines how conventional approaches to objectivity

are actually not objective at all, given the androcentric biases through which such

approaches are created. She suggests that researchers approach research ready to

listen and be reflexive, and to avoid imposing notions and models from the outside.

All ideas are entrenched in power imbalances and the most "objective" research in her

view, strongly supported here, is open to shifting foci and ideas, depending on what

participants bring to the research.

Similarly, in Collins' (1990) work on interlocking systems of oppression, she

challenges the notion that sharing a common oppressed identity affects all people in

the same way. There are multiple overlapping identities that affect people differently.

A Black woman and a White woman experience gender oppression differently.

Similarly, drawing a connection to this study, a language learner from an upper class

family will experience language oppression differently than a language learner from a

lower class family. Collins (1990) writes, "The significance of seeing race, class and

gender as interlocking systems of oppression is that such an oppression fosters a

paradigmatic shift of thinking inclusively about other oppressions, such as age, sexual

orientation, religion and ethnicity" (p. 225). Rather than thinking only in terms of the

international/domestic student dichotomy, where the international student is in a

subordinate position, this study includes other aspects of participants' identities, like

race, socioeconomic status and gender, which could potentially influence their levels

of power in the interactions with each other. Collins (1990) then goes on to say,

"Depending on the context, an individual may be an oppressor, a member of an

oppressed group, or simultaneously oppressor and oppressed" (225).

Thus, to explore interaction dynamics between domestic and international

students in the Conversation Partner Program, I used the discourse approach to

intercultural communication of Scollon et al. (2012) along with critical intercultural

communication studies (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) to analyze the interactions and

to guide my research focus. Feminist perspectives (Collins, 1990; Harding, 1991,

2004; Weber, 2004) are also woven into my methodology, informing my choices as a

researcher.

Conclusion

This review of the literature began with some critical definitions and then

explored internationalization efforts and intercultural competence research. Then,

there was an examination of what was missing from international student research and

finally a description of the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

Throughout the process of trying to best address my research questions,

collecting data and analyzing it, the exploratory nature of qualitative research has been

a journey requiring immense reflection and revision of the original plan along the way.

Blommaert and Jie (2010) sum up the inherently chaotic process of ethnographic data

collection and analysis by saying, "Chaos is the normal state of things. It is nothing to

worry about. Remember what we set out to do: to describe and analyse *complexity*,

not to simplify a complex social event into neat tables and lines" (p. 25). They then go

on to explain, however, that the more we understand complex events the less likely we

are to experience them as chaotic. In this chapter, I will explain the research questions

and the choice of ethnographic method along with participant recruitment, data

collection and analysis which all led to a fuller understanding of the students'

experiences in this particular Conversation Partner Program.

Research Questions

In order to explore the situation and the interaction between conversation

partners in the Conversation Partner Program, to understand what happens when

domestic students and Chinese international students interact with one another, the

following questions were explored:

1. What transpires in the interactions between conversation partners?

2. What do participants say about their experiences in the Conversation Partner Program?

Ethnographic Method Choice

Ethnographic interviewing of eight individual participants and analysis of the interviews and recorded conversations between conversation partners were used to explore the research questions. I chose an ethnographic approach to interviewing and discourse analysis as a way to explore interaction, theoretically framed with a discourse approach to intercultural communication and critical intercultural communication studies. Fitch (2001) discusses ethnography of speaking and explains that at the center of this field is situated language; rather than assuming that language transmits meaning, ethnography of speaking studies language in context, examining its social construction. This contextual lens is more informative because it allows researchers to try to see what is really happening, rather than making assumptions based on expectations of what might happen. In this study, I explore what conversation partners say about their interaction with one another, as well as look at their communication with one another.

Ethnographic interviewing aims to study people's lives from their perspectives, while taking into account the social context (Reinharz, 1992). This particular methodological choice is appropriate for this study because I am looking at students' experiences in the context of the specific situation, taking into account the relative power each individual holds and the specific dynamics of their interaction. As mentioned above, Blommaert and Jie (2010) in their explanation of ethnography

explain that it is impossible to remove any research from its context. They discuss how inherently chaotic any situation is prior to contextualizing it. Once more is learned about the context, however, the chaos seems to dissipate. Blommaert and Jie (2010) state, "The more we get to understand the context of events, the less we experience such events as chaotic" (p. 26). While some researchers have tried to remove context from research, ethnographers argue that this is impossible because all knowledge and experience are bound to their context.

To illustrate this, they give the example of Bourdieu's work and how he underscored the importance of the situated nature of knowledge in his work. They discuss the photographs that Bourdieu took in Algeria in the 1960s; there was one photograph of pottery that Bourdieu noticed was well-lit despite having been taken in the house. The roof of the house had been blown off by French grenades and therefore, there was a lot of natural light coming into the house. The point of this story is that historical context brings meaning to events in a given situation and must always be taken into account in research. Being a Frenchman in Algeria when Algeria was fighting against French colonial rule, Bourdieu often found his identity problematic; it made him realize how he as the observer played an active role in what was being observed. Blommaert and Jie (2010) explain,

> It made Bourdieu very much aware of reflexivity in research: the way in which the observer has an impact on what is observed, and the way in which the observation events themselves are captured in a real historical context, from which they derive meaning and salience. (p. 66)

Furthermore, Scollon et al. (2012) use ethnography as the foundation for their discourse approach to intercultural communication, guiding others researching intercultural communication to do the same. They discuss the four types of ethnographic research: members' generalizations, neutral observations, individual member's experience and observer's interactions with members (p. 20). All four types will be integrated into this study, through my own observations, interviews and discourse analysis. Unlike methodology using only interview data representing members' generalizations and individual experiences, the data set in this research study also includes the actual behavior of partners engaged in intercultural communication. Scollon et al. (2012) discuss the importance of this type of data and explain,

> The importance of this for our studies of interdiscourse communication is that the second kind of data keeps us from taking members' generalizations at face value. It protects us from making the same generalizations in our own analysis. After all, it is a person's actual behavior which is of importance in interdiscourse or intercultural communication. (p. 21)

Participants

At the outset of the data collection, all eight participants, four Chinese international students and four domestic students, were chosen through purposive sampling. I explained the opportunity to participate to a group of undergraduate conversation partners at an evening meeting during which students would be meeting their partners for the first time. I needed four Chinese international students and four domestic students, and it happened that in addition to the domestic students present, all

international students at this particular meeting were Chinese. The students'

professors were also at this meeting and the professors explained that the students

could choose participation in my study to get credit for one of their assignments. To

show their interest in the study, I had the students' put a star on their sign-in sheet and

then we put those papers with stars in a separate pile. Twenty students, twelve

international and eight domestic, expressed interest in being in the study and then I

took the piles and shuffled them and chose four international students and four

domestic students to pair together. At that time, I then had my colleague finish

matching the other partners and I took the participants to the computer lab to explain

the study, to answer their questions, and to have them sign their consent forms.

(Consent form included in the APPENDIX) I also had them complete the Cultural

Intelligence inventory and schedule their first interviews with me.

Data Collection Process

The data collection included two main data sources: interviews and recorded

conversations. The schedule of the data collection that occurred over the winter term,

December 2012 through February 2013, is presented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Winter Term Data Collection Schedule: 8 Recorded Conversations and 24
Interviews

Week 2	-Meet with participants to explain study and recruit participants -During meeting: explain interview process, explain and conduct cultural intelligence assessment
Week 3	Round One Interviews- I meet with each of the eight participants (background information, initial thoughts on participation in program and reactions, explain cultural intelligence inventory)
Week 4	Students Record Conversation Discussing CQ results
Week 5	
Week 6	
Week 7	Round Two Interviews (Member Check, how is experience going?)
Week 8	
Week 9	
Week 10	Round Three Interviews (Member Check, how is experience finishing up?) Conversation Partners Make Second (and Final Recorded Conversation (CQ and Experience)

During the student recruitment evening, described above, all eight participants took the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) assessment directly after the study was explained to them and they had filled out the consent forms. This assessment experience was used as a discussion topic for the conversation partners and also as a topic for reflection during the interviews. Deardorff (2009) explains that the majority of intercultural competence experts agree that case studies and interviews are the best way to gauge an individual's competence levels and warns against blind adoption of an assessment tool without thinking about how such a tool is directly connected to the particular goals of a study or program. She also explains that it is critical to include multiple perspectives and methods while coming to conclusions about an individual's intercultural competence. Thus, I did not use CQ to make a conclusion about participants' intercultural abilities, but I used it to facilitate participants' discussion of intercultural issues.

The first data source in the data collection process was ethnographic interviewing. The eight participants were interviewed at the outset of the ten week-long conversation partner experience, at the midpoint, and then nearing the end of the experience. During the interviews, I built my questions from Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interviewing process of grand tour questions and tried to gain an understanding of each person's experiences; then I tried to confirm the meaning with interviewees by reviewing my understanding with them in follow-up interviews. As soon as possible following each interview, I wrote in an interview journal and described body language and contextual factors that would be imperceptible from the recordings alone. The interviews were initially transcribed using an outside

transcription service, and then I reviewed and made modifications to increase the

accuracy of the transcriptions. Finally, I listened to the recordings and analyzed them

for general meaning in order to guide my questions in the next round of interviews. I

have included the interview questions here:

Figure 3.2. Interview Questions

General Questions
1. Tell me about your life before you came to our university.

2. I'm curious about how people got involved in this Conversation Partner program. Tell me how you decided to do this program.

3. Before your first meeting, did you have any expectations? Tell me about them.

4. How did you feel when you met your partner?

5. Tell me about your Conversation Partner.

6. How do you feel your conversations are going so far?

7. Tell me about the topics you have been talking about.

8. Tell me about what makes your conversations easy?

9. Tell me about what makes your conversations hard?

10. What challenges have come up in the conversation?

11. What have you learned about your partner?

12. What do you think you have learned about your partner's culture?

13. What do you think your partner has learned about your culture?

<u>Questions about Cultural Intelligence (CQ)</u>
Preface: We are now going to talk a little about the CQ assessment. I am actually trying to learn more about this tool myself and I am hoping that your results and these discussions can help me do that. I took it myself and was surprised by some of the results. My boss and I scored really differently on it. I am not using this to test you in any way. There are no right or wrong answers. Each score means something different for different people.

- Tell me about your experience taking the Cultural Intelligence Assessment.

     (Explain results to interviewee)

- What do you think about your results?

- Do you think that your results are reflected in your conversations with your partner so far? (If yes, how?)

Given that I would be interviewing at the beginning, middle and end of the Conversation Partner experience, I member checked and brought my findings back to participants to see if they agreed with the preliminary analysis I made from my data collection. Having three interviews with each participant allowed me time to clarify my understanding of what they were saying.

As a way to triangulate the conversation partners' experiences of the interaction and, in Scollon et al.'s (2012) words, provide more "neutral observations" I also conducted discourse analysis of two recorded meetings from each of the four pairs as the second data source. During these conversations, the participants discussed their experiences taking the CQ assessment. The recordings of the conversations complement the interviews in that they allow me to get a sense of the students' interactions together from a different perspective. These recordings were made in the fourth week and the tenth week of the program. I gave my recorders to the students and had them record two of their conversations without my being present. Three of

the pairs recorded two conversations and one pair recorded three conversations. In

Figure 3.3, I have included the questions participants were given in order to guide

their discussion of the CQ Assessment.

Figure 3.3. Instructions for Recorded Conversation

You can talk about any topics you want, but also make sure to take some time to
discuss the following questions:

- What was your experience taking the Cultural Assessment?

- What do you think about your results?

- Do you agree/disagree with them? Why?

- Specifically, CQ drive: Do you agree with your score? Why/ why not?

- CQ knowledge: Do you agree with your score? Why/ why not?

- CQ strategy: Do you agree with your score? Why/ why not?

- CQ action: Do you agree with your score? Why/ why not?

    -Just turn the recorder on at the beginning of the conversation and turn it off
    when the conversation is over

    -Don't worry about awkward moments or times where you don't know what to
    say; there is no right or wrong approach

Analysis

Throughout the process of my data collection and analysis, I strove to be as

self-reflective as possible, being critical of my own moves as a researcher. Carbaugh,

Nuciforo, Molino-Markham & van Over (2011) discuss the notion of discursive

reflexivity which refers to our need as researchers to be critical of our own discourses

and how "communication is forming our sense of our experiences with people's

communication practices in the field" (p. 154). I take the stance of their research and

therefore, take this communicative reality into account in order to avoid having a

"singular naïve cultural reading" (p. 155). Carbaugh et al. (2011) discuss the cultural stance that researchers always bring to their research. They state, "An ethnographer's self-reflexivity in communication research involves awareness of the fact that a researcher him or herself typically uses, unreflectively, a certain cultural stance for conduct" (p. 162).

In ethnography, it is critical that analysis begins with a very close description of the setting and the context (Creswell, 2007). The next chapter, Chapter IV, will do just that in order to provide background on the Conversation Partner Program at this particular university. Thus, given the ethnographic focus of this study, the particular setting and the contextual influences were prioritized in the analysis process.

My goal was to leave myself as open as possible in order to see what emerged from the data. Blommaert and Jie (2010) discuss the complexity of any research and that it is inherently chaotic, especially when working with all of the data at once. Blommaert and Jie (2010) explain, "People contradict each other, and just when you think you found the key to the whole thing, the whole thing changes again. The plan has to be revised over and over again…" (p. 24). I found this to be true in my analysis process and I went down a variety of paths to see whether it was a good fit and then modified my process along the way. My initial plan was to use Cultural Intelligence to frame my analysis of the data, but then after doing a preliminary analysis of interviews and conversations using that frame, I realized that I was trying to force the data to fit into that structure and some of the most interesting points did not align with the framework of Cultural Intelligence. I realized that I needed to return to my

original plan of letting the data and specifically the thematic categories emerge from the data.

I listened to and read through the interview data many times, taking into account some initial codes and passages that were particularly noteworthy. Saldana (2008) recommends that the coding process can begin right away and it is not necessary to wait until everything has been organized and presented into a particular form. Saldana (2008) discusses Liamputtong & Ezzy's (2005) coding advice of breaking the document into three columns, one for the actual transcript, the second for preliminary codes and the third for the final codes. I followed this practice in my process. Throughout my coding process, I kept my theoretical frameworks in mind to determine what points were important to take note of. For example, given the focus on critical intercultural communication, I paid particular attention to instances where power issues came up. Those were the preliminary themes in the second column and then I read through all of those points again to see how they fit into more general themes. Lastly, I looked across partners within the themes to see if there was any overlap in terms of what students had to say. For example, I learned that the challenges for all of the participants were about the same and that there were cultural stereotypes involved in many of the participants' comments. When there were at least two students who were saying similar things, it helped me come to conclusions about my final themes and this will be explained in more depth in the interview chapter.

With the conversation data, I followed a similar strategy and listened to it all and read through it many times. Keeping the theoretical frames of the discourse approach to intercultural communication (Scollon et al., 2012) and critical

intercultural communication (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) in mind, I looked at what was happening in the exchange to see if anything seemed to reflect or contradict the chosen models. As I reviewed the transcriptions of the recordings, my goal was to give a "faithful representation of the data" (Cameron, 2001, p. 35). I let the discourse analysis process be open and exploratory, but I used Deardorff's (2006) model and Scollon et al. (2012) to narrow my analysis focus and keep my research questions in mind. In particular, I used Deardorff's (2006) model of intercultural competence, defined in the review of the literature, to ask whether in the action of their interaction the participants showed an ability to think from another's perspective in the interaction. Also, using Scollon et al. (2012), I explored the ways that participants showed involvement with one another and whether one partner seemed to let the other partner lead or whether they were both engaging actively with one another. In order to explore their involvement, I counted initiations for each partner and then I looked at what types of initiations they were making. This strategy of looking at initiations and then specifying type is something that is done quite frequently in analysis of classroom discourse in order to show the degree to which the students are the teacher is sharing classroom authority with the students. Oyler (1996) discusses her study in which students' types of initiations were coded during an in-class read aloud. She explains that moving away from a teacher initiation and student response model allows for students to assert their authority and knowledge, as well as learn more from each other. Given that I am interested in whether the domestic student controlled and facilitated the whole conversation or whether the international student initiated actively as well, this method of analysis was a useful window into involvement.

Lastly, in terms of analysis of the conversation data, to complement the initiation analysis, I was also looking at what each partner says in the interaction to show that that he/she is the leader or that he/she is deferring to his/her partner in the interaction.

Limitations

One strength of this ethnographic study is that it is open and exploratory, taking into account a wide variety of possibilities, truly listening to what the participants bring to the interactions and interviews. That being said, this open approach can be viewed as a limitation as well, given that any of the themes that emerge would be worthy of further, more in-depth analysis and focus. Thus, this study and the findings below could lead to a variety of other questions that would be interesting to explore in greater depth.

Another strong point of this study is just how contextual the data are; the data are located in a specific context and that context is described and explained below. However, since the data are so connected to the specific context and there are only eight participants in this study, the findings from this study are not necessarily applicable to other contexts where the program and students have different characteristics and experiences.

Lastly, language emerges as a limitation in this study. All interviews and conversations were in English and the Chinese participants are all in the process of learning English. While they are taking Advanced ESL Classes, they are still not entirely fluent and one could imagine that they might have opened up more or contributed differently if the interviews had been conducted in their native languages. It would be useful in a future study to explore this question and ask the same questions

in their native languages. There also were some language miscommunications both in the interviews and during the conversations. Some of those could have been avoided with translation or an interviewer who was fluent in the participants' languages, Mandarin and Cantonese.

Conclusion

Thus, through a close exploration of the interviews and conversations, the data led me to answer my research questions, always keeping my theoretical frameworks in mind. An exploratory ethnographic study was the best fit for this study as listening to the participants and bringing their contextualized experiences to the forefront was critical.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT

Introduction

In qualitative research, particularly ethnographic research, understanding the specific context of a study is a critical step in analysis and a key to understanding the data. Paying particular attention to the context allows one to make sense of what is going on and the specific nature of it. In this discussion of the context, I describe the setting of the university, as well as the specific program, the participants, and the setting for the conversations and interviews.

Setting

Private University in the Northeast

The setting for this study is a private university in the Northeast where there has been an increasing enrollment of international students. The majority of the Chinese international students who attend this institution, and who are a focus of this study, have high financial resources. According to a *World Education Services* (2012) report, over 60% of all Chinese international students studying in the United States have high financial resources. Additionally, 85% of affluent Chinese plan to send their children overseas for educational purposes. As for the domestic students, according to "U.S. News and World Report" (2013), they show more of a financial need overall, represented by the fact that 95.7 % of domestic undergraduates apply for need based financial aid and 69.9% of them receive it. This university is also less selective than some universities, with an acceptance rate of 69.8%. The campus where

the research was conducted is located right in the downtown of a small northeastern city.

Conversation Partner Program

More specifically, this study's setting is the Conversation Partner Program, through which international and fluent speakers of English are expected to meet for one hour per week over a ten week period. It is important to note that most of the time these fluent speakers of English are domestic students, defined as students living in the United States and not studying abroad, but occasionally the fluent speakers of English are international students themselves, coming to the university as fluent English speakers. In this study, I refer to the students involved in the Conversation Partner Program as domestic students because most of the time, the fluent speakers in the program are domestic students, and the four fluent English speakers who participated in this study are all living in the United States and can thus be defined as domestic students.

The program is a project of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Department, an independent academic department within the university that provides intensive English courses to prepare international students for their majors of study. Many universities require that students take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in order to be accepted at the university. At this particular institution, the TOEFL test requirement is waived if a student enrolls in and passes the courses in the university's ESL program. The Conversation Partner Program has been designed to give language learners experience speaking with fluent speakers of English in order to further their language learning.

The Conversation Partner Program is an integral part of the ESL Advanced Oral Communication curriculum. Advanced Oral Communication is one of the four courses that international students have to take if they have not passed the TOEFL exam prior to enrolling at this university. All Advanced Oral Communication ESL professors are required integrate the program into their courses and guide participants to explore various topics and learn from cultural differences and similarities. They do this by giving various assignments to their students, asking them to write or give presentations on their discoveries from conversations with their conversation partners. Additionally, on a weekly basis, students turn in summary reports documenting what has been learned from their partners and how the conversations are going overall. The students receive grades on these reports and then these grades are reflected in their final grade for the course. There is the assumption that through interaction in English outside of class their communicative English will improve and they will be increasing their fluency which is one of the objectives of the course.

The domestic students' professors, on the other hand, are not required by the university to participate in this program and instead they volunteer to participate in the program. The ESL Department recruits faculty to offer the Conversation Partner Program to their students. Most of the professors who volunteer to offer the program to their students teach Public Speaking courses, but some teach History and Sociology courses. The professors offering the Conversation Partner Program to their students integrate the experience into their courses in a variety of different ways. The domestic students' professor in this study is a history professor; he has been a consistent strong

supporter of the Conversation Partner Program and was willing to offer the option of participating in this study to his students.

The domestic students participating in this project are volunteers. In the case of this study, this option to work with international students on a weekly basis was one of the two options that the history professor presented to the class. He gave students the option of writing a paper about various historical sites or of teaching the international language learners through this teaching project. The four domestic students in this study all chose the teaching project on the history of the local area. Essentially, the domestic students were required to research various sites and then they were supposed to accompany their international student partners to the sites and when they were visiting the sites, they were supposed to then teach the international students about the various places. In the case of the students who signed up for this study, however, because they were engaged in the interviews with me, they did not complete their class assignment to take the students to all the professor's assigned sites. This was not brought to my attention until the end of the term and I am not sure about the reasons why they did not do their project. I do wonder if the professor was more lenient with students on their class requirements because he knew that I was requiring more time from his students for their participation in this study. The students also did not have to write the reflection paper that would have been required of students had they chosen to research various historical sites and not participate in the Conversation Partner Program.

Similarly, the international students mentioned to me that their ESL professor very rarely engaged with them about their conversation partner experience and did not

assign any specific tasks to them. While ESL professors are expected to actively

structure the learning in this program, in reality, the extent of professor involvement

varies from professor to professor; some remain very hands off and others get quite

involved trying to assess the learning that is going on for students. Thus, for both the

international and domestic students, the relationship between international and

domestic students was unstructured, without the reflection components that often

accompany the conversation partner experience.

Neither of the professors provided the participants with a detailed structure for

their conversations; the only structure that participants followed was my assignment to

discuss their results on the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) inventory. As was mentioned in

Chapter III, the methodology chapter, this CQ inventory was a means to get the

students talking specifically about interaction across cultures. The hope is that this

exploration of an unmonitored, unstructured experience will provide insight into how

to advise faculty and staff in program development and structure; in other words,

knowing what happens when there is a lack of structure should provide a starting point

for the development of structure.

Description of Participants

There were eight participants in the study. Four of the participants were from

China and four of them were from the United States. All four domestic students were

female, while two of the international students were female and two were male.

Below is an overview of the pairs, including who was in each pair and whether they

were domestic or international students. In the analysis chapters that follow, some of

the specific characteristics of these students will be explained in further detail,

referencing what they said in interviews and conversations. All names have been changed. As the international students all used their English names in their interactions with me, I have given them English names in this study.

Figure 4.1. Conversation Partner Pairs

Pair	Domestic Student	International Student
Pair 1	Debbie	Isabel
Pair 2	Valerie	George
Pair 3	Becky	Kate
Pair 4	Violet	Derek

Pair 1: Isabel and Debbie

Debbie (paired with Isabel) is a White undergraduate in-state student who grew up in a very homogenous community, relatively close to the university, but has travelled quite a bit through her experience doing Taekwondo. She was living with her family while going to school and had a job at a place helping children with special needs. Her family had not travelled that much and had no interest in leaving the United States. Debbie described herself as a quiet girl who doesn't always know how to start conversations or share information about herself. She signed up to do this program because she saw it as an opportunity to travel without leaving the university. She expressed an interest in travelling and sees this program as a way to continue that interest. When asked about why she was interested in doing this particular program, she said, "I think it's from traveling to different countries. Like I think all the people on the Taekwondo team on, like, just getting to know them and then, like going to

different countries, getting to know them and stuff like that" (Interview 1, lines 613-617)

Isabel (paired with Debbie) is from Zhengzhou, China (central China) and she studied near Toronto, Canada, before coming to this university. She saw herself as quite outgoing and chatty, with an interest in getting to know people from other cultures. She said that she had always been interested in getting to know others from different places. She explained that she still preferred to spend time with people who are from China, but she said she was interested in learning about others.

Pair 2: Valerie and George

Valerie (paired with George) is a Portuguese American student from the local area who was very involved in her Portuguese community. She explained that her Portuguese language and culture were a big part of her life and had been important in her life over the years. While she went to a very diverse high school and interacted with students from many different cultures, her experience and role in her own community were what she talked most about. She also talked about wishing she had more money. She was also living at home while in college and had a job at a local Portuguese restaurant, which took a lot of her time and took away from other things she would have liked doing.

George (paired with Valerie) is from Harbin, China (northern China), but went to high school in Beijing. He had travelled a lot with his family inside and outside of China, and explained his wide variety of travel experiences during his interviews. Despite his experiences travelling, he had very limited interaction across cultures, as when he and his family travel, most interaction they had with the community was with workers in

65

restaurants and hotels. George had recently broken up with his girlfriend and was struggling with this challenging situation.

Pair 3: Becky and Kate

Becky (paired with Kate) is a White undergraduate who grew up in a small town a few hours away from the university in another state. She never had any experiences interacting across cultures growing up; the only example of an interaction across cultures that she could remember was her experience learning from her aunt who works with children with special needs. She described her high school as lacking in diversity. Her parents were both pilots and would come back with stories of learning about various cultures abroad, but mostly those were experiences going abroad and visiting tourist attractions. At the time of the study, she had a couple of international friends whom she had made during her time in college, but coming to this university and experiencing the diverse campus was a striking contrast to her experience growing up. Initially, she was looking forward to interacting with Kate and getting to know her but then over time she grew frustrated that Kate was often late for their meetings.

Kate (paired with Becky) is a Cantonese speaker from Chongqing, China (southern China) and came to the United States very disgruntled with the Chinese education system. She spoke quite negatively about her experiences in China and in particular mentioned how competitive the education system is. She, like George, had not had much intercultural interaction prior to her study in the United States. The only experience that she could recall when asked about her interaction across cultures back home was when she learned of her friend's father being gay. Other than that interaction, she couldn't think of any other intercultural experiences she had had. Due

to her lateness, her partner, Becky, became really frustrated with her, but Kate did not seem to notice this. Originally, she wanted to be paired with a Thai or Japanese student and wasn't particularly interested in being paired with an American. She expressed this preference again in her last interview.

Pair 4: Violet and Derek

Violet (paired with Derek) is a Black American undergraduate from New Jersey who had had a wide variety of intercultural experiences in her own family of Caribbean descent, within her friend groups and through studying abroad. She also had a lot of experiences being different than most of the people around her and referred to those experiences a lot in our communication. For example, she referred to her experiences in her Latino majority high school and that she knew everyone who was not Latino, in addition to many Latinos. She expressed openness to communication across cultures and interest in doing this program as a way to welcome and integrate the international students to the university. As she was reflecting on her participation in the program, she said, "It's trying to get to learn the other person. And, you know, kind of open your mind to a different culture and a different background. And if you're not willing to do that, you are in the wrong program" (Conversation 2, p. 7). She also talked about empathy for the international students and was the only one, out of the study participants, to express this in her interviews with me.

Derek (paired with Violet) is a Cantonese speaker from Guangzhou, China (Southern China) and came to study at the university after studying at a high school in San Francisco, CA. Like Isabel, he had some intercultural contact in his previous experience studying abroad, but the interactions were limited and lacked depth. Most

commonly, it was interaction in passing and there was not close contact with any of the international students from other communities. Derek said, "Yeah, like, when I meet, when I go to the bathroom, I saw a Spain student, he comes from his room, and I say, hi, how are you doing?" (Interview 1, lines 1480-1487). Derek also was not that interested in getting to know an American student at the outset of the Conversation Partner Program, but then he expressed interest in continuing to get to know Violet after he had met with her. Like the most of the other international and domestic students, he expressed some prejudiced views. For example, he talked about how he was scared of black people but not Violet because she was a student at the school. "Yeah just have the feeling, and they talk different they talk like gangs" (Interview 3, lines 701-709).

Setting for Interviews and Conversations

Interviews

I conducted three interviews with each participant for a total of twenty-four interviews. Twenty-three of the twenty-four interviews were conducted in my second floor office which is space shared with a colleague, but the colleague was never present during the interviews. The office is located in one of the main classroom buildings on campus. There is a large window overlooking the street where students are always walking by. There are a couple computers in the office. My desk is facing the window and there is ample space for at least two chairs behind the desk, so we both sat next to each other behind the desk. I always provided snacks and drinks to participants as a way to help make it more likely that they would feel comfortable and would want to come back. One time I emailed all the participants before their

interview appointments and took sandwich orders. I was pleasantly surprised that all

students put in a specific order for a sandwich and then came on time to their

appointments.

I offered to meet students in other locations, but it seemed that meeting in the

office was most convenient for participants because it is close to where the majority of

their classes were held. I was also able to keep the door closed with very few

interruptions during the interviews. The one exception was the time I met Derek, one

of the international students, at a local restaurant at his request; it was really difficult

to transcribe that recording because the music was playing so loudly in the

background. I also felt he was distracted by the people coming and going around us.

Thus, it ended up that a quiet space was better in that we could hear one another and I

could also hear the recording on playback and we were not distracted during the actual

interview.

Conversations

Most of the recorded conversations of student pairs took place in Starbucks. I

had given recorders to the students and told them to record a conversation and return

the recorder to me. I did this once at the beginning of the term and a second time near

the end. Aside from these instructions, the students had the freedom to choose the

location of their conversations and most (6 of 9), with the exception of three

conversations, ended up being in the same downtown Starbucks. The downtown

Starbucks is located close to one of the main classroom buildings. There is a constant

flow of students, faculty and staff in and out of the Starbucks, and often a line out the

door. The conversations ranged in time from about twenty minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes.

The three conversations that did not take place in Starbucks were Violet and Derek's two conversations and Becky and Kate's third conversation. Both of Violet and Derek's conversations took place as they were walking around the downtown area. In the first one they walked to the State House and then around the nearby mall and during the second conversation, they took the bus to a nearby street with a lot of stores and restaurants and talked as they walked around there. Becky and Kate's third conversation took place in Becky's dorm room.

Conclusion

Thus, in this chapter, the setting of the university and the Conversation Partner Program, along with a description of the participations and the setting for their conversations and interviews were discussed. In ethnographic research, the meaning of activities and knowledge are situated in a context and it is impossible to decontextualize the activities or the knowledge. Blommaert and Jie (2010) discuss the paramount importance of context in ethnography and that the only way to truly understand a situation is through examining the context concurrently. This chapter has aimed to explain some of the contextual elements involved in this study and there will be references back to them throughout the other chapters.

CHAPTER 5

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Introduction

The eight participants, four domestic students, and four international students were each interviewed three times, bringing the interview data set to a total of twenty-four interviews. The tables below show month and week of term, length and location for each interview.

Figure 5.1. Date, Length and Location of Interviews

Round 1 Interviews			
Interviewee	Month/Week of Term	Length (minutes)	Location
Violet	December 2012/Week 3	44.08	My office
Becky	December 2012/Week 3	53.42	My office
Valerie	December 2012/Week 3	47.18	My office
Debbie	December 2012/Week 3	25.57	My office
George	December 2012/Week 3	42.12	My office
Derek	December 2012/Week 3	43.22	My office
Kate	December 2012/Week 3	44.33	My office
Isabel	December 2012/Week 3	28.10	My office

Round 2 Interviews			
Interviewee	Month/Week of Term	Length	Location
Violet	January 2013/Week 7	33.11	My office
Becky	January 2013/Week 7	30.12	My office
Valerie	January 2013/Week 7	34.27	My office
Debbie	January 2013/Week 7	26.48	My office
George	January 2013/Week 7	25.49	My office
Derek	January 2013/Week 7	32.29	Restaurant
Kate	January 2013/Week 7	36.57	My office
Isabel	January 2013/Week 7	39.18	My office

Round 3 Interviews			
Interviewee	Month/ Week of Term	Length	Location
Violet	February 2013/Week 10	35.24	My office
Becky	February 2013/Week 10	32.22	My office
Valerie	February 2013/Week 10	48.25	My office
Debbie	February 2013/Week 10	23.01	My office
George	February 2013/Week 10	33.47	My office

Derek	February 2013/Week 10	37.22	My office
Kate	February 2013/Week 10	39.57	My office
Isabel	February 2013/Week 10	34.28	My office

I chose to conduct interviews asking about participants' experiences because one of

my main research questions was to learn about what participants say regarding their

experiences in the program. These interviews were then triangulated with the

conversation data which are described and analyzed in Chapter VI. I developed my

interview questions based on Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interviewing process of

grand tour questions and tried to learn about each person's experiences; then I

member-checked to confirm the meaning with participants by reviewing my

understanding with them in follow-up interviews. The interviews were open-ended

and conversational. Feminist researchers support the idea that interviewers should

approach interviewees looking to engage with them and converse openly and freely.

When the goal of interviewing is "access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in

their own words rather than in the words of the researcher," feminists argue that it is

necessary for the interviewers to self-disclose information about themselves and strive

to form relationships with their interviewees (Reinharz, 1992, p. 19). Reinharz (1992)

also references Oakley's (1981) insights about the egalitarianism essential to the

feminist approach to interviewing. Reinharz (1992) states, referring to Oakley's

(1981) model of feminist interviewing, "She advocated a new model of feminist

interviewing that strove for intimacy and included self-disclosure and 'believing in the

interviewee'" (p. 27).

During these conversational interviews, we covered topics such as background

information, expectations for the program, perceptions of their partners, challenges in

the program, topics discussed and culture learning. To delve more specifically into intercultural interaction and participants' comments about it, I also asked questions about the Cultural Intelligence assessment. As was mentioned above, this part of the interviews ended up being less significant in this study, as I felt that the participants were able to discuss their views on intercultural interaction without the outside model as a guide.

I modified and adapted the coding process along the way to better fit the data that were emerging, the research questions and the theoretical frameworks. Much of what the students had to say during the interviews fit within the five thematic areas of motivation, expectations, comments about self, comments about other and challenges. Arriving at these themes required repeated inspection of the transcripts. It was a learning process and not always smooth, given the number of themes and directions that the data took me initially. For example, I was initially planning to use the Cultural Intelligence framework for my analysis, so I coded my data using its categories. I found in the process that it was forcing the data into categories that did not always make sense given what the participants said during interviews. I decided to abandon that framework as a way to structure my analysis because I wanted to let my participants' comments guide the direction of my analysis.

Within each thematic category, the analysis focused on power dynamics involved in the interaction, reflecting the critical intercultural communication theoretical framework (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) and Scollon et al.'s (2012) discourse approach to intercultural communication. According to Halualani and Nakayama (2010) and Scollon et al. (2012) all intercultural communication involves

73

uneven power dynamics, across various dimensions. For example, even though an international student language learner might be in a less powerful position as compared to a domestic student in regard to language, that same international student may be in a more powerful position due to his/her socioeconomic status. In addition to issues of power, however, other comments that the students emphasized are included, considering in this exploratory, emergent design listening to the participants and letting them guide the focus of the research is of critical importance to this study.

Motivation

The first theme that emerged from the interview data is the students' motivation for getting involved in this program. The four domestic students, Debbie, Valerie, Becky and Violet, had self-interest in volunteering to do the Conversation Partner Program. As they talked about the program, they were wondering how they could benefit from participating in it. For Debbie and Becky, it was an opportunity to "travel without travelling." Becky said, "So for like, the idea of interacting with someone else from a different culture gives me insight into a different country. It gives me, like the traveling without the traveling" (Interview 1, lines 871-873). Debbie discussed her experience travelling for Taekwondo competitions and she talked about how she loves traveling and getting to learn from the places she has visited. When asked about why she was interested in doing this particular program, she said, "I think it's from traveling to different countries. Like I think all the people on the Taekwondo team on, like, just getting to know them and then, like going to different countries, getting to know them and stuff like that" (Interview 1, lines 613-617). Valerie discussed her interest in the international students' fashion and money

74

along with the fact she will get credit for her participation in the program. Valerie said,

> Because I love, you know, where they come from. My mom always told me little secrets about admissions that they pay for college and like maybe they're myths, I don't know, but, they pay for college in cash. I just learned from my conversation partner that they buy their cars from- with cash. (Interview 1, lines 533-539)

In contrast to the others, Violet, the student with the most extensive intercultural experience in her background, in addition to wanting to build her resume through this experience, was the one student who talked about her empathy for the international students, her desire to welcome them into the community and her curiosity about learning about other cultures. She expressed a seemingly genuine interest in learning about the international students' experiences. Violet said,

> I like to learn about people and their different backgrounds, because then I have something to compare with mine, and then hearing about them. And compare and see what they do, see what I do, see if maybe I'd like to do some of what they do or question as to why it's like that and whatnot. And even if they're Hispanic, because I have some Hispanic friends, I have some Asian friends, or even Caucasian, it doesn't matter. Like, I like to know because, you know, it makes—I'm curious about it. (Interview 2, lines 1132-1148)

In contrast to the domestic students who chose this Conversation Partner Program project from a variety of options, all four international students were required to participate in this program for their class credit. This program requirement was

built into the Advanced Oral Communication curriculum and it was just assumed by faculty and staff that the international students would want to participate in this program for English and culture learning benefits. Three of the international students mentioned being required to do this program as their motivation for participating in the program. George, Kate and Derek said that they are not necessarily interested in learning about American culture. Kate said that before she joined the program she had been hoping that her partner would be from Thailand or Japan because she is more interested in learning about those cultures as compared American culture. Kate said, "Before I joined this program, I more wish my conversation partner from Japan or Thailand" (Interview 1, lines 608-609). When Derek was asked about whether he was interested in learning about American culture, he said, "I don't really care, like, who. It's just, speak English. Like, it doesn't matter where you're from" (Interview 1, lines 554-556).

They partly attributed their lack of interest to their course obligations and time constraints. George said, "Because our work in our class is busy and I don't have enough time to want to know each other" (Interview 1, lines 818-820). In contrast to the three others, Isabel described herself as an outgoing person and expressed an interest in getting to know people from other cultures, no matter where they are from. Isabel said, "They kind of help me to improve my English. And depends on American student they will speak about different sides, you know? The different options to tell me" (Interview 1, lines 527-530). That being said, Isabel, like the other international students, also talked about how she prefers making friends with "my kind of, same color" (Interview 3, 858-861) and she also talked about how her desire to participate in

a program like this depended on how busy she was. All four of them said that the only benefit to the program is to help their language skills. When George was asked about the purpose of his involvement in the Conversation Partner Program, he said, "To be happy and help me improve my English" (Interview 1, lines 193-195). Kate said, "I think it's a good chance to exercise my speaking. And, you know, my… When I talk, I have a really terrible accent" (Interview 1, lines 111-112).

Some of what I learned from students in regard to their motivation reflects and builds on the research in the field, while other points diverge from the literature. Evident in my literature review, there is some research on how close extended intercultural contact does make one more likely to make more culturally sensitive attributions (Vollhardt, 2010) and have increased intercultural competence (Jon, 2013). Violet, the African-American Caribbean student with the most intercultural experience, in addition to wanting to build her resume through this experience, was the only student who talked about her empathetic desire to welcome the international students into the community; she also shared that she was genuinely curious about learning from the international students' experiences. The other students, showing mainly self-interest as motivation for participation in this program, were not likely to develop intercultural competence through this experience. As Deardorff's (2006) model demonstrates, curiosity and openness are necessary for intercultural competence development; based on the interview data, these attitudes seemed to be lacking and instead the students have more self-focused interest in participation in the program.

Expectation

The second theme that emerged from the data was students' expectations for what was going to happen prior to meeting with one another. Three of the domestic students, Debbie, Valerie and Becky all thought that the experience interacting with the international students was going to be easy. When asked about her expectations, Debbie emphasized that it would just be talking and getting to know a person; she said, "I was just, like, we were just talking and just I got to know her. That's kind of what I expected" (Interview 1, lines 270-273). Valerie attributed her expectation that it will be easy to her experience interacting in Portuguese and across different cultures and said,

> I was like well this is going to be easy. I communicate with people who like, my Portuguese is, I can read and write and speak a lot of stuff in Portuguese. But there's frequent times that when I work in a Portuguese restaurant, we have Spanish people come in, we have Italian people come in, and they don't speak English at all" (Interview 1, lines 581-584).

Throughout conversations with me, these three students reported that their experience was easy overall. When asked about what would make it easier or harder, Becky said, "I really don't know what would make it easier or harder. I think it's just been very straight line-ish" (Interview 1, lines 498-501).

Violet, on other hand, was not sure what to expect as she did not know how the international students would perceive her as a Black woman. She referenced a couple of stories about how, as a Black woman, she always had to think about whether someone would be racist when she interacts with them. Violet said, "She's Asian.

Are they going to look at me weird? Because literally, in my mind I'm like, okay, I'm

Black. There's no hiding it. Are they going to look at me weird?" (Interview 1, 812-

816). Violet's comments provided a contrast to how the other domestic students were

just able to express positive and optimistic views in their reflections on their

interactions.

Similar to the domestic students, three of the international students, Isabel,

George and Derek all talked about how they expected the experience to be easy and

they had that expectation confirmed. Isabel, George and Derek talked about

communication across cultures as nothing special for them and that it was not difficult.

Derek said, "I would like to meet her again. It was like, you know, it's okay for me.

Like it's nothing special or anything. Like I enjoyed the talk and conversing. I like to

talk to her. Like we are similar" (Interview 2, lines 481-485). While Kate did not say

that interaction across cultures was going to be easy, she did talk about how she felt

that she and Becky were similar, and that they had many topics to discuss. Kate said,

"I think, for me, I don't think we more really, really lot different because I think the

age like me. We just have some same concepts so…" (Interview 1, lines 280-281).

The expectations of both the domestic and the international students that this

experience would be easy shows, according to Deardorff's (2006) model, that the

participants were not apt to develop intercultural competence in their communication;

it shows a shallow understanding of communication and the role that culture could

potentially play. In the model, there is a need for "deep understanding and knowledge

of culture" in order for intercultural competence to develop. Throughout my

conversations with the participants, as they reflected on their communication overall,

they felt that it had been easy overall and their expectations were confirmed. This also reflects Geelhoed, Abe and Talbot's (2003) research on an international peer program, examining domestic students' experiences. They found that most of the students in the program expressed comfort with interaction across cultures and that only one student expressed apprehension. Violet, in this study, was the only participant who did not think that the interaction was going to be easy and she expressed apprehensiveness about how she would be perceived because of her racial identity. She shared stories about how she was always thinking about her racial identity when she approached interaction with anyone across different cultures. This clearly shows how the idea of race intervenes into intercultural communication. Intercultural communication, as Scollon et al. (2012) and Halualani and Nakayama (2010) explain is not an equal exchange of ideas between people engaged in an interaction. There is always a power dynamic at play and Violet's questioning how she would be perceived due to her race demonstrates this; when she enters any interaction, she has very different expectations, as compared to the White domestic students, due to her experience having encountered racism in the past. Jon (2012) in his study examining power dynamics between Korean students and international students studying abroad in Korea explained that this area of power dynamics in international domestic-student relationships is an under researched area. In this study, Violet's experience as a Black woman, approaching the interaction with more hesitancy and fear about how she would be received reflects the importance of including issues of race into the international student literature and much more exploration into this topic is needed.

<center>**Comments about Self and Comments about Other**</center>

The participants also discussed the ways that they saw their own roles in the communication and the ways they viewed their partners' roles in the communication.

Comments about Self

In the actual interaction, all four domestic students talked about how they saw themselves as having high intercultural ability as well as an obligation to lead and guide the conversation. As will be seen in the conversation data, to be described in Chapter VI, there is a lot missing from their intercultural ability, but this greatly differs from their perception of it. Valerie talked about her ability to communicate with people and how she went to a diverse high school; she said, "So, we always had an interest in that and I've always been because I went to a very diverse school. I kind of have that ability to communicate with people" (Interview 1, lines 566-568). When asked about topic generation, Debbie talked about how she felt she had to be the one to come up with the topics, otherwise she and her partner would just be sitting there saying nothing. Debbie said, "Because if I didn't or whatever, it's kind of we're just sitting there, literally" (Interview 2, line 731). Violet, while still seeing herself as the leader and topic generator, showed more awareness of stereotypes and societal norms, and also more empathy for Derek. Violet talked about her experience studying abroad and how she took note of how it must feel for international students to be studying in the United States. She said, "And then when we went over to France, it was like we can no—we were no longer the norm. It was the tables turned when in America, you say oh, international students, but when we went over, we were the international students" (Interview 3, lines 661-668). She also reflected on her conversation after it

<center>81</center>

had taken place and thought about how she could have done things differently. Violet said, "But then I look back and I'm like, duh, I could have asked this" (Interview 1, lines 633-634).

All four of the domestic students saw themselves as being the leaders, obligated to lead; they also claimed that they demonstrated high intercultural ability. Violet, once again, was the only one who expressed more awareness about stereotypes and the need for reflection on one's own behavior in intercultural interaction. As will be described in Chapter VI, three of the four domestic students do not in fact demonstrate high intercultural ability in their conversations with one another, a reality that greatly differs from how they described themselves. Those in powerful positions often have an ability to not see power dynamics at play, especially their control over the conversation. De Turk (2010) discusses how participants in her study of intercultural dialogue who came from powerful positions put themselves in positions where they saw themselves as the ones in authority. De Turk (2010) references Jackson's (2002) study on "ready to sign contracts" and talks about how those in power often try to control the situation from their own worldviews and see no need to shift their own worldviews. In other words, the domestic students who saw themselves as having high intercultural ability were not approaching this interaction questioning their own views or putting themselves in positions where they needed to learn something. They saw themselves as the ones with the knowledge and did not think about what they could learn from really listening and trying to learn from their partners' perspectives.

In terms of how they perceived themselves, the four international students, Isabel, George, Kate and Derek, all talked about how they shared openly with their partners during the conversation. Isabel said, "We bring the topics and I bring some topic to her and she brings it" (Interview 1, lines 192-195) and then she went on to say in another interview when asked about her thoughts on coming up with topics, "I think it's fun to me" (Interview 3, lines 1577-1578). Derek talked about how he was able to share with his partner and he tried to share things that will be interesting for her. He said, "I try to tell her my whole experience. I mean I try to speak with her. I try to speak similar kind of things with her" (Interview 1, lines 1356-1358). This provides a contrast to the way that their domestic partners see them; as mentioned above, their partners see them as not opening up and sharing with them.

These students discuss how they see themselves as engaged and open, sharing actively with their partners; they do not express feeling disempowered in the interaction and in contrast, they share that they are able to open up and share with their partners. Hsieh (2007) and Min-Hua (2006) found that female Chinese students often felt disempowered when the domestic students assert themselves in communication with them. In these studies, the international students felt as though they couldn't express themselves due to the domestic students' dominance. This finding about international students sharing with their partners along with their confidence about how everything is going point to the notion that they may not be quite as disempowered as the literature suggests.

Three of the international students, Isabel, George and Derek, preferred spending time communicating with people who were similar to them, rather than

reaching out to American students who they felt were more challenging to talk with. George said, "Actually, it's hard to stay with them all the time. I think all the Chinese will stay with Chinese, here, where we feel comfortable" (Interview 1, lines 894-897). As mentioned in regard to their motivation, Isabel, George and Kate talked about schoolwork as a priority interaction across cultures. While Kate did not specifically mention that she preferred spending time with people similar to her, she did talk about, as mentioned above, not being that interested in reaching out to or learning about American students. This mirrors Volet and Ang's (1998) study of international and domestic students' views on intercultural group work. They found that students, if given the choice, will prefer to stay with their own national or cultural group. My results are consistent with these findings, as the participants in this study reported feeling more of a sense of belonging with people who they considered to be similar to them.

Comments about Other

In terms of how they viewed their international partners, all four domestic students talked about how they thought that their international partners did not open up and share with them; however, Violet thought that Derek did open up more with her over time. Valerie, the domestic student, mentioned that she felt she was not able to get George, the international student, to open up partly due to his depression following his breakup with his girlfriend. Valerie said, "I'm not getting enough out of this guy. He's depressed as heck. We need to lighten his mood or something. I don't know" (Interview 2, lines 1525-1528). Becky talked about how her partner, Kate, did not open up about personal things which made the conversation challenging at times, but

84

Becky was understanding of this and said that in the same situation she was not sure how much she would have been opening up either. Becky said, "She didn't really open up much. But, she was very open with me, as much as I would be open with a person I just met" (Interview 2, lines 492-494). This view of international students not sharing is reflective of the group work literature where the domestic students blame some of their group work challenges on their international partners for not opening up with them in the interaction (Baker & Clark, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Li & Campbell, 2008).

Debbie, Valerie and Becky all expressed stereotyping in this process of engagement. Becky grew very frustrated with Kate over the course of this project because Kate was often late and Becky felt as though Kate was not being respectful of her time. By the end of the experience, Becky discussed her thoughts on how the Chinese international students must not be that interested in getting to know them because Kate was not showing up on time to meetings and her lateness did not improve even after Becky expressed her frustration. Becky said, "Yeah, it's just funny because, like, Kate said a couple of times that, like, it's the American students who don't go out of their way to talk to the Chinese students. But I feel completely the opposite way at this point" (Interview 3, lines 525-533). This faulty inference about all Chinese students is based on Kate's experience with one Chinese student being late. Debbie and Valerie both expressed stereotypes that they had heard from others. Debbie talked about how she had her expectation that international students would be quiet confirmed in her conversations with Isabel. Valerie talked about how all international students have money; this was one of the reasons why she was so

interested in getting to know international students. She said, "I just learned from my conversation partner that they buy their cars from- with cash" (Interview 1, lines 533-539).

In addition to talking about international students as being quiet and not likely to share in their interactions with them, domestic students also talked about international students in terms of their socioeconomic status. As referenced in Chapter IV, many international students do come to campus with more than adequate funds for their time abroad, allowing them to not only pay for their education, but also travel around the United States. Three of the domestic students mentioned that they perceived their international student partners to have a lot of money. Valerie talked in an interview about a comment that she made during one of her conversations with George, "I noticed that, you know, you guys have the best cars around" (Interview, lines 831-834). Debbie also made a comment about the car that her conversation partner's friend drives; she said, "He has the most expensive car. It's like the nicest car I've ever seen" (Interview 2, lines 1000-1001). Violet also discussed the socioeconomic status of the international students; she said,

> Of course you know, I'm always wanting more money. I remember I was coming out of the library and I saw this really nice car and I just kind of looked at it. I'm like I guarantee you an Asian is going to come out of that car. And sure enough, an Asian comes out. (Interview 3, lines 1398-1408).

Most Chinese international students do come to United States' higher education campuses with the financial resources necessary to function well in higher education (World Education Services 2012 Report). This provides a contrast to some of the

domestic students, a few of whom are represented in this study, who have to hold jobs and live at home in order to afford their education. This is important in that it shows, from a critical intercultural communication perspective, how students do not perceive themselves in completely cultural terms and instead, power-laden dimensions, such as socioeconomic status, influence how students view and approach one another. In Jon's (2012) study of power dynamics between international and domestic students in a Korean context, he found that the economic power of students' home countries played a role in how students perceived each other and the relative amount of power that they were able to assert.

Two students, Valerie and Becky, both mentioned gender in regard to their international student partners. Valerie says that if George had been a woman she thought they would have had more to talk about and Becky said that she felt that she had a lot to talk about with Kate because they were both women. When asked who her ideal conversation partner would be, Valerie replied "Um it would be a girl" (Interview 3, line 2661) and she attributed this to the fact that she would have more to talk about with a female. Similar to the point about socioeconomic status, this demonstrates that students saw one another not only in regard to their cultures, but also, sometimes more significantly in their minds, in regard to their genders and other parts of their identities that are not related to their country of origin (Jon, 2012).

All four international students said that their partners liked to talk and that they were outgoing. Isabel, Kate and Derek all emphasized how similar their partners were to themselves and Isabel, Kate and Derek emphasized that they were similar because of being the same age and all in college together. Kate said that being the same age

meant that they have similar concepts; she said, "I think for me, I don't think we more really, really lot different because I think the age like me. We just have some same concepts" (Interview 1, lines 280-281). While George did not emphasize his similarities with Valerie, he did state that he believed communication across cultures is the same no matter where one is from, deemphasizing the role of cultural differences in communication. George said, in talking about communication across cultures, "Same wherever they come from. Just like talking with Americans" (Interview 1, lines 789-790). These students focused on what is similar, rather than emphasizing cultural differences; this again connects to the notion that they see intercultural communication as easy, showing that it seemed as though their knowledge of intercultural dynamics, according to Deardorff's (2006) model, was limited.

The international students demonstrated prejudice when talking about their partners and other non-Chinese people. Isabel talked about how White people, as compared to Black people, are "normal." Isabel said, "And I know some Black people they are very normal Black person, seem like, White" (Interview 3, lines 1192-1197). George talked about White people being lazy and said he would rather have a Black partner because he thought Black people were funny and would make him laugh. He also talked about his prejudice toward Korean students. When talking about getting to know the Korean students at the university, George said, "No, I don't want to know them" (Interview 1, lines 999-1000). Kate similarly discussed her strong dislike of Korean students; she said, "I think, to be honest, I think Koreans are a little bit strange" (Interview 3, lines 947-948). Derek expressed that he is usually scared by

Black people, but that he was comfortable with Violet as a partner because she was a student. Derek and George both had stereotypes confirmed in this conversation partner experience. In his final interview, Derek expressed that he thought Violet was similar to most Americans and most Americans were similar to one another. When I asked him to provide an example, he said, "Because she liked to talk and joke around" (Interview 3, lines 1582-1583).

These expressions of prejudice showed how the international students position themselves in the United States' context; while the literature suggests they are disempowered in language and in other areas with the American students (Hsieh, 2007; Min-Hua, 2006), these expressions of prejudice show that they are also expressing narrow views, asserting their views in this context. Hsieh (2007) and Min-Hua (2006) explain that international students are often voiceless in their interactions in the United States; these expressions of prejudice contradict that notion, showing that they are expressing dominant views. Gresham and Clayton (2011) found that the challenges that came about in a *Community Connections* program included racist attitudes of international students toward other international students on campus.

Similar to the female domestic students, the two male international students, Derek and George, also said that they would have preferred male partners because they would have had more to talk about. Thus, perception of what characteristics accompany each gender intervened into the conversation partner experience; rather than seeing this as a purely cultural exchange of ideas, students thought in terms of gender, race, socioeconomic status and other constructs they already had well-defined beliefs about. As with the domestic students, gender came up for the international

students and both of the males thought that they would have had more to say with a male partner. This is consistent with what was said above about the role of other aspects of identity, like race and socioeconomic status, which are integrated into students' comments about intercultural communication. Scollon et al. (2012) discuss the notion that national identity is not necessarily going to be the most salient difference between people interacting across differences and it is important to note that other parts of their identity might be more significant depending on the situation. Signorini, Wiesemes and Murphy (2009) discuss the importance of moving away from national identity as the most critical difference in intercultural communication, as it might not be the difference having the most influence on the interaction at a particular time.

Challenges

All four domestic students mentioned language as being the main challenge in communication and, other than that, they felt that the interaction was easy. Becky claimed the conversation would get much easier once they were in the middle of it, but the only challenge was the language barrier; she said, "And by the time like we got to the middle of the conversation, she was starting to like interject more and like ask me personal questions. There were some points where we kind of, we would have like a language barrier" (Interview 1, 412-418). Debbie, Valerie and Becky all mentioned time as a challenge; finding a time to meet and coordinating with one another, all while trying to balance other responsibilities was a big challenge for them. Those three students all have jobs in addition to school and Violet is in the process of searching for jobs and going on interviews. Valerie said, "Like I've been having to

cancel because my job is just horrible" (Interview 2, lines 1698-1701). All four students also mentioned the challenge of getting the conversation going and keeping it going. Violet said, "The difficult part was trying to get one rolling, definitely. It was like trying to push a stone boulder down a hill" (Interview 1, lines 453-454).

Like the domestic students, all four international students perceived language and coordination of time to be challenges. All four international students also mentioned humor as challenging because of the difficulty expressing and perceiving humor across different contexts. George said, "Just telling a joke. Our Chinese don't feel that it's funny, but they think it's funny" (Interview 1, lines 299-301). George brought up nervousness as a challenge as well. George said, "Actually, it's a little bit nervous. I'm very nervous. And, uh, we talked English, so it's kind of difficult to communication" (Interview 1, lines 289-292). Other than those challenges, there was an emphasis on how the conversation partner experience has been easy overall.

These challenges reflect some of what I found in the literature. Gresham and Clayton (2011) found that time coordination, communication and finding things to talk about were all challenges that the students reported in regard to their experience in a similar program. Campbell (2011) also found that time coordination was one of the challenges described by participants in a buddy program, pairing international and domestic students. Lastly, the challenge of humor across cultures has been found in other studies of international students; in Harrison and Peacock's (2009) study of domestic and international student interactions in the UK, the students in focus groups reported humor to be challenging across cultures.

Conclusion

Through rereading and listening to the interviews multiple times, the themes of motivation, expectations, comments about self, comments about other and challenges emerged across all interviews. There were some power-laden dynamics, like race, socioeconomic status and gender, that emerged and these will be discussed and reflected upon even further in Chapter VII. In addition, given the exploratory emergent nature of this design, comments that were emphasized by students are highlighted in this chapter and quotations were selected to reflect what the students actually said. These participants' generalizations provide one set of views into what was happening and analysis of the conversations themselves presents another perspective into the conversation partner experience.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF CONVERSATION PARTNER CONVERSATIONS

Introduction

Complementing the interview data, the conversational data collected for this study are the more "neutral observations" required in an ethnographic study (Scollon et al., 2012). As mentioned previously, Scollon et al. (2012) describe the four types of ethnographic research: members' generalizations, neutral observations, individual member's experience and observer's interactions with members (p. 20). Rather than focusing this study only on the comments made by participants about their experiences and my observer's interpretation, this study examines what transpired during conversations between the Conversation Partner Program participants, by exploring the actual interaction of partners engaged in intercultural communication. Given that this is an exploration of what is actually happening in the communication itself, it can be considered relatively more neutral as compared to the reported experiences of participants and interpretations made by me, the researcher.

As described in Chapter III, audio recorders were distributed to each of the four pairs and the students were requested to record two of their conversations. One of the four pairs, Becky and Kate, recorded three conversations, bringing the conversation data set to a total of nine conversations. Here is a table of the month and week of term, length and location for each conversation.

Figure 6.1. Conversation Date, Length and Location

Conversation	Month/Week of Term	Length	Location
Becky (D) and Kate (I) 1	December/Week 1	48:22	Starbucks
Becky (D) and Kate (I) 2	January/Week 4	30:20	Dorm room
Becky (D) and Kate (I) 3	February/Week 10	23:41	Starbucks
Debbie (D) and Isabel (I) 1	January/Week 4	25:02	Starbucks
Debbie (D) and Isabel (I) 2	February/Week 10	31:09	Starbucks
Valerie (D) and George (I) 1	January/Week 4	29:31	Starbucks
Valerie (D) and George (I) 2	February/Week 10	31:01	Library
Violet (D) and Derek (I) 1	January/ Week 4	1.09:01	Walking to the State House, mall and around inside the mall
Violet (D) and Derek (I) 2	February/ Week 10	51:53	Walking around local streets in downtown and taking a bus

*D = domestic student; I = international student

Similar to the interview analysis process, I listened to these conversations and read the

transcripts multiple times. I considered several pathways for analysis before I chose

the final codes. For example, as with the interview data, I considered using the Cultural Intelligence framework to guide my analysis of the conversations, but then I decided that it limited this exploratory study to bring in such a specific framework. Maintaining openness and listening to what participants brought to the study were goals of mine and forcing the data into the Cultural Intelligence framework seemed to contradict those goals.

Finally, after considering various possibilities for analysis, I chose to explore intercultural competence in action and involvement in the interaction, explained in depth below. In this chapter, first I will review who the pairs are and a little bit about what they did and talked about; then I will explain the two main themes of intercultural competence in action and involvement in the interaction that emerged from the conversation data, supported by students' comments and the theoretical frames of this study. Finally, I will go on to explain the conversation charts I created and the features of the charts that are particularly interesting according to the theoretical frameworks of this study and the discoveries from the interview data. This is an exploration into an area where there has not been much research and given the open-ended nature of this study, much of what is said regarding the conversation chart beyond the average utterances per turn and the initiation counts is quite speculative and more research needs to be conducted to examine some of the speculative claims made.

Relationships between Conversation Partners at Program Completion

Prior to an explanation of the themes of intercultural competence in action and involvement in the interaction, I present an overview of the conversation partner

relationships, emphasizing the nature of their relationships at the end of the program. In the sections that follow, there are reflections on some of the discourse features of their communication with one another so it is helpful to first remind the reader of the unique dynamics between each pair. Contextual dynamics, specific to each pair, including individual circumstances, topics discussed and gender, undoubtedly influenced each pair's communication. These dynamics will be referenced during the analysis of conversations.

Valerie, domestic student, and George, international student, met only four of the expected ten meetings. Sickness and schedule challenges prevented them from meeting as often as they planned to. During their fourth and final meeting, Valerie and George met in the library. During this visit, George, the Chinese student, convinced Valerie to sign his form for more times than they actually had met because he wanted to get a better grade on the project. Valerie agreed to do this. Over the course of their four meetings with one another, they did not learn much from one another about each other's countries and mostly focused on George's breakup with his girlfriend and things that George and Valerie were planning to buy. Valerie explained that she felt as though she was George's counselor and that she thought that he seemed so sad all the time and George expressed a lack of interest in spending time or getting to know Valerie, or any Americans.

Becky, domestic student, and Kate, international student, met weekly over the course of the ten weeks. They ended their relationship on a difficult note, as Becky was very frustrated with Kate for her having been late to so many of their meetings. When they first started meeting, Becky said in her first interview that they would end

up being friends, but then Kate started showing up late and Becky got frustrated. At the outset of the program, Kate expressed in an interview that she was not that interested in getting to know Americans. They did talk about some topics related to their home countries, but often moved on quickly to new topics. Especially as Becky's frustration with Kate developed, their conversations became much choppier and they did not talk in depth about any one topic. Becky explained in her final interview with me that she was frustrated with Kate's lateness and wondered whether all Chinese students act in a similar way.

Debbie, domestic student, and Isabel, international student, also met weekly over the ten weeks. While they both spoke positively about their experiences communicating with one another, they also shared that they had communication challenges. Isabel said that she wanted and tried to share with Debbie, but she did not feel as though Debbie was interested in learning about her. Debbie expressed that she felt a lot of pressure to lead the conversation and thought that Isabel did not seem to be sharing a lot with her. At the end of the communication, neither one claimed to have learned anything meaningful about the partner's country or culture.

Violet, domestic student, and Derek, international student, met weekly over the ten weeks. They often went on walks during their meetings together and this talking while walking definitely influenced their communication in that they were often talking about what was around them. Violet was often acting as a tour guide, showing Derek around the city and sharing stories about local businesses. Initially, Derek was not interested in getting to know Violet, but then over time, he expressed an interest in getting to know her and felt as though he had learned a lot from her by the end. Violet

was initially apprehensive about how Derek would react to her; she feared that he might react negatively to her as a Black person. Following that, however, the pair did end up getting along quite well and definitely talked more deeply about topics, such as cultural and linguistic differences, than the other three pairs.

Intercultural Competence in Action and Involvement in the Interaction

Three of the pairs, as is evident from the interview data summarized below, showed in their interactions with one another that they were not likely to develop intercultural competence and all eight partners showed involvement in the interaction and claimed expertise at various points.

Intercultural Competence in Action

During the interviews, both domestic and international students did not seem to express curiosity about communication across cultures, a necessary attitude for intercultural competence to develop (Deardorff, 2006; Bennett, 2009). Bennett (2009) attempts a definition of what this curiosity entails. She explains that "for curiosity to thrive, the first action is suspending assumptions and judgments, leaving our minds open to multiple perspectives" and the second action "is to increase our tolerance of ambiguity, an essential characteristic for working effectively across cultures" (p. 128). The participants claimed that the communication was easy and that they were good at participating and interacting with one another; this, as was explained in Chapter V, does not point to them being inquisitive or curious about the perspectives of their partners, nor does it suggest they are aware of the ambiguous nature of communication across cultures. Thus, it became clear that, with the exception of Violet, the Black student of Caribbean descent who reported the most intercultural experience, the

students were not making comments that showed they were likely to develop intercultural competence.

Thus, from the interview data, it seemed that the domestic and international students, with the exception of Violet, at times, were not exhibiting evidence that they were likely to develop intercultural competence in their interactions with one another. These conclusions from the interview data were based on students' comments about their experiences alone and thus, an exploration of the conversation data helps to triangulate those student comments and provide a different analysis angle into what was happening in regard to intercultural competence in the interactions.

All too often the models of intercultural competence that exist are focused on individual levels of competence, without looking at what happens when people are actually communicating with one another. Deardorff (2009) explains, "Competence is still largely viewed as an *individual* and *trait* concept and is almost always measured accordingly, despite repeated calls for expanded and more relational perspectives toward competence" (p. 45). In addition, there is a need for more research into what behaviors "look like" in various contexts. While there are speculations about what might happen when two people communicate across cultures, research into what actually does happen is needed. Deardorff (2009) states, "One key area for further research includes what appropriate behaviors 'look like' in different cultures and in different contexts, such as professional fields" (p. 268).

Thus, there is a call for research into intercultural competence concepts in actual interactions between people in specific contexts. There has been some context-specific, relational research conducted on intercultural learning between Spanish and

English speakers in email exchanges; O'Dowd (2003) examined the characteristics of emails when intercultural learning was taking place and characteristics of emails when it was not. For example, intercultural learning was associated with emails in which participants brought in personal connections, asked questions of their partners' beyond just the required tasks and took into account the socio-pragmatic rules of their partner's language when writing in that language. While there has been some limited research into the discursive features of intercultural competence in email exchanges, there is no prior research on discursive features of intercultural competence in face-to-face conversations. Through an examination of the conversations between the U.S. domestic students and Chinese international students, I have tried to identify discursive features associated with taking the other's perspective, the only element that all intercultural competence models have in common (Deardorff, 2009). From the conversational data, I identified three discursive features that seem relevant: assumptions, evaluative comments, and lack of follow-up. Identifying these features involved reading through and listening to the conversations multiple times and taking notes on instances where the partners made comments showing they were trying to see from the other person's perspective and on instances where the conversation partners did not seem to be seeing from their partner's perspective. These three discursive features will be defined and explained here along with examples from students' comments in their interactions with one another. Following a discussion of the discursive features of these interactions, Violet and Derek's conversations will be further explored, given that they seemed to be characterized by more empathy and willingness to learn.

Assumptions.

The first area in this theme of seeing from the other perspective is making assumptions. As mentioned previously, Bennett (2009) explains that in order for "curiosity to thrive," a requisite attitude for the development of intercultural competence, one has to suspend judgments and ask about what the other person is trying to say. Bennett (2009) suggests that being open to different perspectives involves asking "What do I see here? What might it mean? What else might it mean? And yet again, what might *others* think it means?' (p. 128). As I read through and listened to the conversations, I took notes about how both partners were making comments that seemed to be expressing curiosity about their partners' situations and experiences. Rather than approaching the interaction with the inquisitiveness that Bennett (2009) explains is necessary in intercultural competence development, a lot of the time, students did not seem to be listening to their partners and instead of suspending judgment, they were making comments that seemed to make assumptions about what their partners meant by certain comments. In other words, from the comments they made in interactions with one another, it seemed that they were often just projecting what they *assumed* to be the case from their perspectives. Rather than listening and trying to figure out what their partner's reaction was going to be, both partners seemed to be coming to conclusions about what their partner was thinking and feeling, based on their own ideas about it.

Here there will be several examples featured of this recurring phenomenon of making assumptions in their conversations with one another. In the excerpts from the transcripts, I have put the comments I am referring to in bold. In Becky and Kate's

second conversation, Becky, the domestic student, is explaining that she relates to the challenge of learning languages as a result of her experience learning Spanish. Kate, the international student, then shared ideas that Americans are closed off to international students and Becky responded with her analysis of the situation.

Becky: We'd speak it in the classroom. But I wouldn't use it when I'd leave class. So I could write it really good, but to speak it, it was hard because I'd have to translate it in my head like, "Okay, I want to say this. How do I say it in Spanish?" And then I would speak it instead of just being able to talk. So it's kind of hard.

Kate: But I'm a little feel some American just have a – sorry, with people from other country.

Becky: Yeah. They, they like almost judge them.

Kate: And just like if I'm, if I am in a restaurant with my friends, there's many Americans in the, around us, there's no people want, like, recognize new, new people from another country. (Conversation 2, p. 27)

Although it may be that Becky's rephrasing is what Kate meant, it may not be; she is assuming she knows what Kate's very vague statement refers to. In their first conversation, Kate quickly turns to her own perspective without a full understanding of Becky's comments. Becky described her experiences interacting with people from other countries.

Kate: Do these schools have a few Japanese students? Do you learn Japanese?

Becky: I have one friend from South Korea. And then I have another friend

> **from Taiwan. But I don't think I know any Japanese students. I'm trying**

> **to think.**

Kate: Yeah. I think, I don't, I don't like the Koreans.

Becky: No? So do you know where, where do you want to go next, not next Friday.

> In two Fridays. (Conversation 1, p. 16)

Rather than listening and learning more from Becky about her friend, Kate jumped right to her own perspective about Koreans, showing that she was not showing inquisitiveness about Becky's thoughts and instead focused on her own. Thus, while more frequent for the domestic students, this example shows Kate, the international student, interpreted from her own perspective without asking for clarification on what Becky was saying.

In Valerie and George's first recorded conversation, there were a variety of instances when one partner was trying to show they empathized with the other, but in fact they were exhibiting this tendency to make assumptions and be self-focused rather than trying to understand the other person's utterance. Valerie, the domestic student, gave George, the international student, relationship advice because he had just broken up with his girlfriend and Valerie perceived George to be devastated by the experience. This conversation begins with Valerie asking George whether his ex-girlfriend had rejected him after he had expressed interest in getting back together with her.

Valerie: And she said no?

George: Yeah.

Valerie: What a loser. You know, you don't know what you have until it's gone.

        Always remember that. So you never know. She might realize she

        missed out on a good thing. But there's a lot of girls here.

George: Yeah. But I'm still missing her very much. (Conversation 1, p. 15)

    Valerie always seemed to have the answers for George and was quick to

assume that she knew how he was feeling and what he was thinking without actually

asking him about it.

    In the example below, George also made assumptions about Valerie in their

conversation together. In the beginning of this portion of the transcript George is

repeating the information that some restaurants in China do not close at all and stay

open all night.

George: Yeah. No close.

Valerie: In Portugal, the restaurants – well, they only serve lunch at 12:00. And

        then they stop serving food after 2:00. And then they only start serving

        dinner around 6:00. And the stores, every store closes between 12 and 2.

George: That's boring. Yeah.

Valerie: Every store closes between 12 and 2, which sucks, because, like, if I got visit

        and I'm hungry. So I'll eat earlier because I'm not used to eating so late in the

        afternoon. (Conversation 1, p. 25)

In this situation, it seemed that George was making the assumption that he got it and it seemed that he was trying to agree with Valerie without fully knowing what her perspective was on the situation. This example is also an example of the next category, the tendency for students to make evaluative comments prior to having a full understanding of what is being said; George made an evaluative comment, "That's boring", before knowing what Valerie's interpretation of the situation was.

Evaluative comments.

There are a variety of instances of the tendency to make evaluative comments showing agreement, disagreement or approval without a full understanding of what is being explained. This is another discursive feature, like assumptions, which I used to determine whether the partners were suspending assumptions in order to exhibit curiosity. As mentioned above, this suspension of judgment is characterized by questions and comments to learn more, not quick evaluative comments. Thus, as I noticed students making evaluative comments before having a full understanding of what their partners were saying, I identified this discursive feature as another feature that could be associated with the lack of development of intercultural competence. For example, the following transcript section is from Debbie and Isabel's interaction.

Debbie: So they must have big classrooms?

Isabel: Big classroom. Yeah.

Debbie: That's interesting. I didn't know that. That's cool.

Isabel: So how do you think of the international students? (Conversation 1, p. 7)

In this interaction, it is not clear what Isabel actually thought of the big classrooms, but Debbie assumed Isabel thinks that it's a positive thing. Isabel made a similar evaluative comment in her communication with Debbie. Prior to this excerpt, they were talking about how Isabel was surprised that she did not lose power during the storm.

Isabel: Because I paid not a lot.

Debbie: Really?

Isabel: But I know you live with your parents, right? That's cool.

Debbie: Yeah, I don't have to pay rent, so that is good. I save some money. But we
     lost – like we didn't really lose power. It just kind of, like, went off and then
     went right back on. (Conversation 1, p. 14).

Before knowing what Debbie thought about living at home with her parents she made the assumption that it was nice for Debbie possibly because that was how she would feel in the situation.

These quick evaluative comments could also be a way to keep the conversation moving forward and to fill the conversation space. The domestic students talked in the interviews about how they felt they were responsible to keep the conversation going. They also could be trying to be polite by not asking too many questions. The international students could also be making these evaluative comments for the same reasons as the domestic students or, since they are in the process of learning language,

they could be making these evaluative comments because they were something that they knew how to say and they wanted to show that they were involved in the interaction. Asking questions that dig deeper into a topic is a skill that in some situations requires more skillful manipulation of language.

Lack of follow up.

In addition to the self-focused assumptions and the evaluative comments, a third discursive feature that seems relevant to the development of intercultural competence is asking follow up questions and making follow up comments on what was said previously. In order to be inquisitive and proceed in an interaction without making judgments, it is necessary for people to follow up with or acknowledge what a person said. It is important to point out that some of this lack of follow up in these conversations may have been due to language miscommunications. If a conversation partner was not sure about what his/her partner said, he/she was not going to be able to follow up effectively. That being said, I identified many instances when students did not follow up with one another even when they appeared to understand what was said. This phenomenon took place in all of the conversations, but here there are a few examples highlighted from three of the pairs. In Becky and Kate's second conversation Becky quickly jumped to another topic, without asking any follow up questions or comments, when Kate talked about how she does not like the education in China.

Becky: What made you, like, decide to come all the way to (this state) just for school? Did you, like, why didn't you go to school in China? Instead you wanted to come here?

Kate: My, I think I don't like Chinese college.

Becky: You didn't? No? Okay. How did you find this university?

Kate: Some, my, my best friend just come to this school for my father and I found this school, have a, the major that I like. (Conversation 2, p. 16)

Kate also lacked follow up at times and after Becky was talking about her plan to ride horses, Kate did not follow up with her.

Becky: What are you going to do for the rest of the day? Do you have any plans?

Kate: Not yet.

Becky: No? I'm going to go ride my horses. So that's all I do all weekend. We have a team through the school, so we go and we compete with other schools. But not right now because it's too cold. So we have to wait until the spring when it gets a little bit warmer.

Kate: Do these schools have a few Japanese students? Do you learn Japanese?

Becky: I have one friend from South Korea. And then I have another friend from Taiwan. But I don't think I know any Japanese students. I'm trying to think.

In Violet and Derek's conversation, Derek brought in connections to his hometown at several points and rarely did Violet follow up with what he brought to the conversation.

Violet: My theory is drivers in [this state] drive with an intent to kill pedestrians because a lot of them will not stop. They will play this game with you keep driving faster to see if you'll stop. If you keep going the car will go by.

Derek: Really? (Laughter) Kind of similar to my hometown if you walk.

Violet: It's like they don't want you to cross the street. The chances of hitting a person do you really want that lawsuit on your hands. Just let them pass by don't bother yelling at them.

Derek: This area is kind of unclear. (Conversation 1, p. 7)

Instead of following up with Derek on his hometown connection, she went on to talk about her own topic and did not ask Derek about what he brought to the conversation. Derek also lacked follow up at certain points and his limited knowledge of English, both production and reception, definitely played a role in their communication, possibly leading to a lack of follow up; as emphasized above, if conversation partners did not understand one another, they would not be able to follow up effectively. In their second conversation, Violet talked about her familiarity with Anime characters from the Chinese zodiac and then Derek started talking more generally about Chinese history and what he thought about it. It is not clear exactly why he lacked follow up

here, but one can speculate that language comprehension as well as a focus on one's

own topic could both be underlying the confusion.

Violet: So let's see. I have some homework. I have to look up what animal I am.

Derek: Yeah, me too, I have a bunch of homework.

Violet: I actually haven't watched that Manga in a while, the one where the

characters represent a character on the Chinese Zodiac. It's actually not

a bad anime/Manga. It's actually really good. I just never finished

reading it. It's very interesting though.

Derek: Yeah, Some, some of the history in China is interesting. Yeah, it's like,

check out some of it. But not all of it, because so many.

Violet: So many.   (Conversation 2, p. 22).

In Debbie and Isabel's conversation, there was also a lot of choppiness and lack of

follow up; Debbie talked about how she wants to go back on vacation because she had

a lot of a fun and Isabel did not follow up on that comment.

Debbie: Yeah, it is. I only went once to New York.

Isabel: Really?

Debbie: Yeah. But I want to go back because it's lots of fun.

Isabel: Okay. So you want me to answer the questions?

Debbie: Yeah. I think we need to answer the, these questions. (Conversation 1, p. 20)

Isabel was referring to the questions I distributed to them that they were required to answer. In another conversation, Isabel talked about how her parents wanted her to go back to China and instead of following up with her about that, Debbie just brought in a new topic.

Isabel: For me I want to stay here.

Debbie: Stay here?

Isabel: But my parents want me to go back.

Debbie: Yeah. That's fun. What part of China do you live in again?

Isabel: The center. (Conversation 2, p. 4)

Debbie also interpreted Isabel's parents wanting her to go back home to be positive, even though it is not clear this was Isabel's perspective.

Through a close analysis of the conversation partner transcripts, it appeared that overall both partners did not seem to be really trying to see from their partner's perspective during the conversations. While there were some isolated instances where the students were trying to see from their partner's perspective, the points in the conversation where they were not doing so were dominant as I read through the transcripts multiple times. Research has shown that intercultural competence development has to be actively facilitated, including training, ongoing reflection, meaningful interaction and critical assessment of specific measurable objectives (Bennett, 2009). However, these students had not been given training or reflection assignments.

This study is unique in allowing for a close exploration of some specific discursive features related to intercultural competence. For each of these areas, while both domestic and international students are engaging in this behavior, it was discovered as examples were uncovered that there were more instances of this happening from domestic students. One can speculate that this is because, as has been mentioned previously, domestic students were more comfortable speaking in English and at the same the same, they felt responsible to keep the conversations afloat, seeing themselves, as was expressed in the interviews, as the leaders or topic creators in the interaction. More data would be required to confirm these speculations, but at this point it is worth noting that in most conversations, in a variety of instances, both partners were not effectively expressing inquisitiveness about their partner, even if there were relatively more examples of this occurring for domestic students. It is critical to note that there were language miscommunications throughout these conversations and I will continually refer to the possibility that language challenges intervened into each partner's opportunity to see from another person's perspective.

Violet and Derek's conversation: Heightened empathy and desire to learn.

In Violet and Derek's conversations, however, relatively speaking, there was a heightened willingness to try to empathize and learn from other perspectives. Mostly, this came from Violet, but there were some moments when Derek also showed signs of being engaged with more of an empathetic approach to interaction. Violet, like the other students, still made a lot of new topic points, which seemed to be unrelated to previous points, and she also made evaluative comments and assumptions in her communication with her partner. What distinguished her from the others, however, is

the fact that she addressed some more complex intercultural issues and she showed

that she was trying to understand her partner's experiences as an international student

in the United States. Violet discussed her knowledge of the complexity of the Chinese

characters and expressed humbly that she might have been mistaken and might have

been mixing up her information.

Violet: It's a lot of history.

Derek: Yes. Because I, 5,000 years, Yeah.

Violet: When it comes to Chinese culture – I could be completely wrong, and I

might be mixing up this up with Japanese – but the Chinese alphabet has

over 100 characters if I'm not mistaken? Or I think it was a lot more than

that. I don't remember which alphabet it was. It was either the Japanese

alphabet or the Chinese alphabet. But one of them has over, like, 500

characters. And I'm like, "Oh, saying the alphabet must take, like, an

hour because that's a lot." And I know the Chinese language has several

dialects. And I would be lost in all of them.

Derek: Yeah. It's crazy. I don't know. Like each city, I mean, in China, it depending.

But we only have public language is Mandarin. Yeah. (Conversation 2, p. 22)

She then went on to try to delve a little deeper, as compared to the other pairs, into

cultural exchange, and this showed that she was expressing willingness to tackle these

topics in a way that the others did not try to do.

Derek: Yeah. I just chose one answer.

Violet: Yeah. Like I think this one suits me. Because at our last meeting she told us, "Some people said they didn't really like the program." Not like it. They weren't willing to really open their minds to people of different cultures. Like they weren't really open to learn about other cultures and whatnot. And I was like, "Dang. You're in the wrong program." Because I think, I feel like this is what this thing is about, you know? It's trying to get to learn the other person. And, you know, kind of open your mind to a different culture and a different background. And if you're not willing to do that, you are in the wrong program. To me that's one of the biggest things of ignorance. It's like, "You're not willing to accept other people's countries and [unintelligible 00:08:56] about it." Yeah.

Derek: So, so, like how many situations do we need to? (Conversation 2, p. 7)

In the above example, it seems that Violet is trying to express herself and then Derek quickly changed the topic back to a question he had about how many situations they needed to accomplish. I am not sure what Derek was referring to, but it seems that he was not following up on what Violet said and instead changed the topic. The conversation between Derek and Violet definitely had more depth compared to the other conversations that remained focused on day-to-day plans, preferences and what they saw around them. This next example is an example of a point in the exchange where they talked about language, showing that Violet tried to guide the conversation definitely into some deeper cultural topics.

Derek: They switch the word.

Violet: **Yeah. Just the two letters are switched. But that, it's the exact same**

meaning. It's the same word. And that's what makes it easy to learn

some languages if, like, the words are like that. There's a name for words

like that when it doesn't change from language to language. Like it's

spelled the same. There's a word for it. I just cannot remember the word.

And it's going to bother me all day now.

Derek: You're not going to get some lunch? (Conversation 2, p. 28)

Once again, Derek did not follow up with Violet's efforts to bring more depth the

conversation. I wondered whether this was a language comprehension issue or

whether he was not that interested in what Violet was saying. While there definitely

seemed to be more of the in-depth communication and cultural exchange coming from

Violet, Derek did at times seem to also try to delve a little more deeply into topics and

engage on an empathetic level with Violet. Derek talked about how the Chinese

government did not support his language, Cantonese. Derek shared that his regional

culture was not supported by the government.

Derek: Yeah. Near Hong Kong people speak Cantonese.

Violet: Okay. Cool. Yeah. Those are probably the only two I've heard of.

Derek: Yeah. This, too, is, like, a Chinese, the government. They vote for,

like which one is the public language now they have a lot of language.

And then they, like, the final. And they only have Cantonese and

Mandarin. And then they both, like, [unintelligible 00:28:14]. And then there is one, the last one, like a person. That's the last, last vote for Mandarin. Because he thinks Mandarin is, like, well, he doesn't like Cantonese. Yeah, that's what he thinks. (Conversation 2, p. 24).

Violet: Oh Okay. See, I didn't even know they even voted for the national language.

More exploration and understanding of Derek's identity and Chinese culture is needed to understand his comments here, but I think that he is trying to express frustration with the way that Cantonese speakers are treated in China. I also wonder whether Violet being more empathetic and inquisitive fostered this expressiveness in Derek. A closer exploration of Derek's identity, as well as more information about his previous intercultural experiences, could have helped me better understand his role in this interaction. Additionally, as will be referenced in the limitations section of Chapter VII, the discussion chapter, in this study, more knowledge of the power dynamics and groups of people in China would have been helpful in analysis and should be explored in future research.

Thus, there were some recurring features of the communication that showed in many different instances the students did not use follow-ups or other questions to see from each other's perspectives. During the interviews, they indicated that they were confident in their intercultural communication skills and how such exchanges were easy; the students also did not express curiosity in learning from one another. Violet, the student with more intercultural experience and an experience of having been the "other" in a variety of situations, seemed to be empathetic and able to delve deeper into topics than the other students. When thinking about intercultural communication,

and putting college students in pairs or groups together without structured training, learning and reflection, it is important not to assume that they are going to be able to communicate with one another and naturally develop intercultural competence, because the discourse of these students showed, overall, that they do not seem to be listening for and learning from other perspectives. Additionally, it is critical to note that challenges with language differences are always influencing the communication between native and non-native speakers and could be partly responsible for some of these communication challenges.

Involvement in the Interaction

A second theme that will be examined in this analysis of the conversation data is involvement in the interaction. During the interviews, the international student participants discussed that they felt they were engaging actively in the interaction, asking questions and sharing their ideas with their partners. All four of the domestic students expressed that they felt the international students were not actively engaged in the interaction so that leading the conversations was up to them. Violet was the only student who expressed that Derek started to be more engaged in the conversation over time, but she still felt as though she had to be the conversation leader. Debbie explained that she felt like they would just sit there if she did not take the initiative in the conversation. She stated, "Because if I didn't or whatever, it's kind of like we're just sitting there, literally" (Interview 2, line 731). Furthermore, in the literature, there are some studies that suggest international students are silenced in their communication with domestic students and that they disengage from the communication due to language challenges, discrimination and also a cultural

preference for adherence to authority in a traditional classroom setting over group work learning environments (Hsieh, 2007; Leki, 2001; Min-Hua, 2006). Thus, given that domestic and international students seemed to have very different perspectives on their engagement in the interaction, and that the literature speaks to a silencing of international students, an exploration of what was actually happening in the interaction in terms of involvement was worthwhile.

Figure 6.2. Conversation Chart Question Initiations

Conversa-tion	Particip.	Average Turn length (utterances per turn)	Initiation #	Percent of total initiations	question initiation #	% of question initiation
1						
	Becky (D)	3.78	95	51%	61	64%
	Kate (I)	1.86	91	49%	34	37%
2						
	Becky (D)	3.99	145	52%	93	64%
	Kate (I)	1.34	134	48%	42	31%
3						
	Becky (D)	4.06	71	63%	62	87%
	Kate (I)	1.93	42	37%	18	43%
1						
	Debbie (D)	2.75	116	57%	68	59%
	Isabel (I)	1.81	87	43%	42	48%
2						
	Debbie (D)	2.05	105	52%	49	47%
	Isabel (I)	1.51	97	48%	44	45%
1						
	Valerie (D)	3.11	137	70%	82	60%
	George (I)	1.88	59	30%	15	25%
2						
	Valerie (D)	4.28	70	58%	24	34%
	George (I)	1.68	50	42%	17	34%
1						
	Violet (D)	4.08	114	51%	13	11%
	Derek (I)	1.37	111	49%	47	42%
2						
	Violet (D)	4.52	145	52%	19	13%
	Derek (I)	1.5	134	48%	63	47%

Above is the conversation chart representing some of what was found in the conversations between conversation partners. In each section that follows, I will explain the codes represented in this chart and the other charts below and then offer some general comments about the domestic and international students' involvement in their conversations with one another and share some more speculative comments about the types of questions the domestic students and international students were asking. Finally, further analysis into non-question initiations, initiations during which students were making comments and adding new information as opposed to asking questions, was conducted and those codes and comments about them are presented below.

Turn lengths.

The first column in Figure 6.2 lists the average turn lengths, determined by averaging the utterances per turn for each participant per conversation. The domestic students have consistently longer average turn lengths. Other than Debbie and Isabel's conversations and the first of Valerie and George, the average turn lengths are twice as long for domestic students compared to international students. For Debbie and Isabel, and the first conversation of Valerie and George, the domestic student turn lengths are still longer by .5-1 utterance. One can speculate that the longer turn lengths are related to English language fluency and the domestic students' feelings of leadership and responsibility to continue the conversation. It would be interesting to explore these points further to examine exactly what is taking place.

Given their longer turn lengths, one could speculate that they were fearful of silence that might have come if they stopped talking after a shorter comment. Holmes

(2005) discusses the differences between western and eastern communication styles, in particular focusing on students from New Zealand and China. In discussing Chinese students, he notes that silence is respectful and choosing one's words wisely and relying on context in a high-context manner, or relying more on nonverbal communication and context over explicit verbal communication, is often the Chinese way of communicating effectively. Students from New Zealand, like other students from many western countries, communicate in a low-context manner and rely more on explaining every detail and not expecting context to explain what is being exchanged. There is the expectation in western, individualist countries that being highly verbal is more appropriate and is often more advantaged in that context. Holmes (2005) also mentions language challenges as one of the reasons that students may be hesitant and fearful of speaking in interaction with one another; students have expressed nervousness about how they will be received if they are struggling with the language. This is one possible explanation as to why domestic turn lengths are longer, but more investigation into what was actually happening as they engaged in these longer turn lengths might illuminate this point.

   Initiations.

   The second column in the chart presents the number of initiations. Initiations are defined as the questions and statements in which students initiate or begin a new or related point. It was determined that using initiations to explore involvement was a way to look closely at what was actually happening on a discourse level in the conversations. In her study of first-graders' initiations during in-class read-aloud time, Oyler (1996) noted that students who initiate more are asserting their authority and

knowledge. The traditional model is the IRE model (teacher initiates, students responds and teacher evaluates) and Oyler (1996) examines first graders who are breaking out of this traditional model and initiating more, exploring what they do when they initiate and how they go about claiming expertise (Mehan, 1979). Clearly, the context in this study is quite different than Oyler's (1996) study; she was working with young children in the first grade and I am exploring the interactions and engagement of undergraduate students in higher education.

Despite the different contexts, this study has parallels to Oyler's (1996) study in that it is also looking at the types of initiations made by students in order to explore how they go about engaging with one another and sharing authority. In the case of the conversation partners, when the students initiate and bring in a new idea or topic, whether the topics are related to a previous topic or completely new, they are involving themselves in the interaction. Despite the domestic students' longer turns, in most cases, the international students initiated almost as much as the domestic students. In seven of the nine conversations, international students initiated 42% - 49% of total initiations. In two of the nine conversations, international students initiated 30 % and 37% of total initiations. Valerie and George's first conversation was the one that had only 30% of the initiations and in this conversation, Valerie, the domestic student, gave George, the international student, advice about his relationship and kept returning to giving relationship advice, explained in more depth below; this focus on her acting as his counselor put her in a role where she was making more initiations and he was just following her lead. In Becky and Kate's third conversation during which Kate, the international student, had 37% of the initiations, Becky, the

domestic student, was frustrated with Kate's lateness and expressed that to her. Then, Becky proceeded to ask Kate many questions and moved on quickly to new topics and follow up topics without giving Becky much time to respond. Becky expressed her frustration to me in an interview and explained that she felt hat Kate was nervous to communicate with her in that conversation. Despite the exceptions, in most conversations, the international students were showing that they were actively engaged and initiating almost as much, defined as at least 42% of the total initiations, as the domestic students.

Question initiations.

After looking at numbers of initiations, I looked closely at question initiations to see if there were any patterns that emerged. This was a strategy to open the conversation data up even more and look more closely at what was happening between the partners. I chose question initiations to code first as a way to limit my focus and look only at a subset of the initiations to get a sense of what was taking place. Beyond simply knowing that the international students were initiating almost as much as the domestic students, I speculated that coding for what types of initiations they were engaged in could provide closer attention into their participation. In order to explore their involvement, I had counted initiations for each partner and then I looked at what types of question initiations they were making. This strategy of looking at initiations and then specifying their type is done quite frequently in analysis of classroom discourse in order to show the degree to which the students are sharing classroom authority with the teacher. Oyler (1996) discusses her study in which students' types of initiations were coded during an in-class read aloud. She explains that moving

away from a teacher-initiation and student-response model allows for students to assert their authority and knowledge, as well as learn more from each other.

I looked at all of the question initiations and determined that there were four different types of question initiations: new topic questions, follow-up questions, clarification questions and repeat questions. New topic questions were questions that introduced a new topic. For example, Valerie, the domestic student, in her conversation with George, the international student, was talking about fortune cookies and how the cookies are not found in China. She changed the topic to a new topic by asking a new topic question. She said, "I don't know. It's weird. It's very weird. So did you get anything for Christmas?" (Conversation 1, p. 5) Additionally, follow up questions are questions that are related to the previous point that was made. For example, George responded that he bought a new computer for Christmas and Valerie asked, "Is it an Apple?" (Conversation 1, p. 5) This was a question that was related to the previous point. The clarification questions were questions that were asked when one partner did not understand something that was said or when there was a miscommunication. For example, George said the time difference between the United States and China is thirteen hours and then Valerie went on to ask a clarification question, "13 hours?" (Conversation 1, p. 7). It was clear in that instance that either she had not heard George well or she did not know if she had understood him correctly. The last type of question is a repeat question and this was usually asked when one partner had some confusion about the language of what was said and needed it to be repeated or said in a different way. The other partner would then repeat the information. For example, when George did not understand Valerie's question about

what he did New Year's Eve, she went on to repeat it. He said, "I don't know, I don't

have a plan." Valerie then said, "Well, this one has already passed. This was over

vacation. Did you celebrate it?" (Conversation 2, p. 6).

Figure 6.3. New Topic and Follow-Up Question Initiations

Conversa-tion	New topic questions	Percent of new topic questions	Follow up questions	Percent of follow up questions
1				
Becky (D)	19	86%	25	71%
Kate (I)	3	14%	10	29%
2				
Becky (D)	15	100%	60	84.5%
Kate (I)	0	0%	11	15.5%
3				
Becky (D)	24	92%	24	92%
Kate (I)	2	8%	2	8%
1				
Debbie (D)	11	79%	43	60.5%
Isabel (I)	3	21%	28	39.5%
2				
Debbie (D)	5	63%	35	51%
Isabel (I)	3	37%	34	49%
1				
Valerie (D)	19	100%	40	85%
George (I)	0	0%	7	15%
2				
Valerie (D)	1	12%	19	70%
George (I)	7	88%	8	30%
1				
Violet (D)	3	25%	10	19%
Derek (I)	4	75%	42	81%
2				
Violet (D)	2	13%	12	21%
Derek (I)	13	87%	45	79%

Through looking at the two columns shown above in Figure 6.3, one can see

that, for the most part, the domestic students ask more new topic questions and follow

up questions than the international students. This could be because the domestic students were more comfortable in English and thus were able to form their questions with more ease as compared to the international students who were learning how to construct questions. It also could be because the domestic students found the international students challenging to understand and thus would move on to a new topic or a quick follow up question more than the international students.

That being said, in the three last conversations on the chart the international students ask more new topic questions than the domestic students; international students ask 75% - 88% of the questions. Given that in the last three conversations the international students are males, one may wonder whether gender plays a role in their new topic question generation. This again reflects the theoretical framework of critical intercultural communication in that, as was mentioned earlier, there are other issues that intersect and interact with national culture issues in regard to intercultural communication. Tannen (1990) explores the role of gender in communication and explains that we are socialized to speak in certain ways depending on our gender roles. For example, she explains that sixth grade boys, while uncomfortable just sitting and talking in groups, were much more apt to change topics abruptly, as compared to the sixth grade girls. Tannen (1990) also explains that in conversations between women and men, women were more likely to "follow the style of the men alone" (p. 236) and put their own topics and ways of talking aside. Tannen (1990) is careful, however, to explain that we have to be cautious in coming to conclusions too quickly about what is going on in communication between genders. She explains that changing a topic can have a variety of meanings. She states, "Even changing the topic can have a range of

meanings. It can show lack of interest, it can be an attempt to dominate the conversation, or it can be a kind of 'mutual revelation device' – matching the speaker's experience with the listener's" (p. 295). In a later article, Tannen (2001) further explains this concept of the contextual nature of dominance. She says, "Thus, a strategy that seems, or is intended to dominate, may in another context or in the mouth of another speaker be intended or used to establish connection" (p. 150). Thus, the men asking more new topic questions than the women in this study does not necessarily show that the men are dominating in the interaction. The role gender is playing in the conversation partners' interactions needs much more investigation, but it is important to note that based on these initiation of new topic questions, it might be influencing the intercultural interaction.

However, in the first conversation between George and Valerie, Valerie, the domestic student, has a lot more new topic questions (19) as compared to George's lack of new topic questions (0). That conversation between Valerie and George was unique, however, considering it was the one in which Valerie was giving George relationship advice, and George, having just had a break up with his girlfriend, followed along and expressed his feelings in response to Valerie's questions. Having already discussed the breakup with his girlfriend earlier, Valerie then comes back to it again after they had already moved on to a new conversation topic. She said, "That's good. So you got a new computer. You broke up with your girlfriend." George went on to say, "Yeah. That's that makes me crazy that day" and then Valerie proceeded to ask more questions like, "Were you mad?" and "Was it your idea or her idea?" (Conversation 1, p. 15). Thus, she is dominating in terms of new topic and follow up

questions and the contextual factor of George having just gone through a breakup and Valerie acting as his counselor could account for this.

Furthermore, in the first conversation between Violet and Derek, he had four new topic questions and she had three, so, considering how close in number they are, further analysis of other conversations and interviews with participants about this topic in particular would be necessary to confirm that gender is playing a role in new topic question generation.

Additionally, in Debbie and Isabel's conversations, in which Debbie, the domestic student, had more new topic questions than Isabel, the international student, they both had relatively low numbers of new topic question initiations and they were relatively close in number. The greatest difference in their conversations is eight, where Debbie had eleven new topic questions and Isabel had three. Their personalities are a possible explanation for this phenomenon; as mentioned in the participant descriptions above, Debbie is quite introverted and Isabel is much more extroverted. They described themselves as such in their interviews and I also noticed this in talking to both of them. It might be possible to attribute Debbie's lower number of new topic questions, as compared to the other domestic students, to her introverted personality, but again more research would be necessary to confirm this.

For the most part, the domestic students also asked more follow up questions than the international students did, but there were a couple exceptions. For Debbie and Isabel, in one of their two conversations, Debbie, the domestic student, only asked one more follow up question than Isabel, the international student. This is interesting because it also reflects what was happening in their conversations in regard to new

topic questions mentioned above. They were more equal in regard to both their new topic questions and their follow up questions, as compared to the others. One could speculate, again, that their contrasting personalities played a role in balancing the conversation of new topic questions and follow up questions. In this case, since Isabel was asking more follow up questions than the other international students, one could wonder if this could be attributed to her extroverted personality. More investigation into this would be necessary in order to confirm this speculation.

Moreover, in both of their conversations, Derek, the international student, asked more follow up questions than Violet, the domestic student; Derek had 79% and 81% of follow up questions in their conversations. One might wonder whether gender also was playing a role here, but more investigation would be required to confirm this. Another possible explanation is that since Violet is a story teller who expressed herself in stories and as she put it during the interviews, she likes to go on tangents, so it made sense that to interject into this communication style, follow up questions were going to be necessary for Derek. Another possible explanation for Derek's higher numbers of follow up questions could be his experience studying in the United States for high school and his experience taking ESL classes in California. It is possible that this type of question asking was practiced and used in his English education up until this point. His classes in San Francisco may have been more interactive, as compared to the other international students' English experiences. Again, these comments are quite speculative and they would need more investigation and further research to confirm.

Figure 6.4. Clarification Questions and Repeat Questions

Conversa- tion	Clarificat. questions	Repeat questions
1		
Becky (D)	8	9
Kate (I)	19	2
2		
Becky (D)	6	12
Kate (I)	31	0
3		
Becky (D)	6	8
Kate (I)	14	0
1		
Debbie (D)	11	3
Isabel (I)	10	1
2		
Debbie (D)	8	1
Isabel (I)	7	0
1		
Valerie (D)	20	3
George (I)	8	0
2		
Valerie (D)	3	1
George (I)	2	0
1		
Violet (D)	0	0
Derek (I)	1	0
2		
Violet (D)	5	0
Derek (I)	3	2

Figure 6.4 above presents numbers of clarification and repeat questions; the

clarification questions, questions in which one person needed to clarify what the other

person had said, and repeat questions, questions in which one person had to repeat

what was said, mostly occurred in situations where there were language

comprehension challenges or an unclear reference point for the information being

relayed. For example, in Becky and Kate's second conversation, Becky was asking

Kate about the purpose of a workshop she had to go to later that day and at first Kate

did not understand, so she asked for clarification. Becky said, "What's it for" and then Kate asked for clarification, "For? Floor?" and then Becky responded with a repeat question, "No. Like what, what is it about?" (Conversation 2, p. 15). It is clear from these exchanges that language challenges, as were discussed in the interviews with participants, do influence these interactions and there are a variety of instances where clarification is required in order for the interaction to proceed.

Thus, through a closer examination of the types of questions asked, it seems that personalities, gender, language issues and topics discussed may affect their interaction together. All of these areas need further analysis, but point to the complexity of participation in an interaction and the myriad of factors influencing participation and engagement in interaction. Furthermore, it seems from the overall initiation count that international students initiated almost as much as the domestic students, showing that the level of involvement, as reflected in the question initiations of the domestic and international students was similar and domestic students did not dominate the interaction.

Non-question initiations.

After reflecting on and analyzing the question initiations, I reviewed the initiations in one conversation per pair to see what was happening in the non-question initiations. I wondered whether any patterns would emerge through looking at what was happening when they were not asking questions in their initiations, which accounted for a significant portion of their initiations. After doing this, it was found that when they were not asking questions, they were telling related stories, sharing related preferences/opinions, sharing new topic stories, discussing their plans, making

suggestions and claiming expertise. Telling a related story occurred when one of the students told his/her conversation partner a story that was related to the previous point. For example, in Becky and Kate's second conversation, Kate, the international student, shared that she preferred living alone and then Becky, the domestic student, went on to share a related story. She stated, "I've never had to share a room before I came to college. And when I lived in, I lived in (dorm) my freshman year, it was terrible cause, like, the room was, what, half the size of this room with two people in it" (Conversation 2, p. 13). Sharing related preferences/opinions occurs when the partners shared a related preference or opinion with their partners. For example, in the same conversation between Becky and Kate, Becky told Kate that she hoped she would not have to have a roommate and Kate replied with a related preference. She said, "Yeah. I prefer the, I prefer stay at dorm, at my room alone. I don't want to share my room with someone" (Conversation 2, p. 13). Sharing new topic stories occurred when one partner shared a story that is unrelated to a previous point. For example, in Violet and Derek's first conversation, they were talking about how there were so many people at the mall and then Violet went on to talk about a topic that they had talked about the previous week, regarding the "world ending." She said, "This is Christmas shopping, everyone is here. It's a tiny bit later. Remember we talked last week about the world ending. My religion teacher said that the world is going to end on the 23rd. In my mind I'm like if the world is going to end on the 23rd why can't we enjoy" (Conversation 1, p. 9).

The next code of "discussing their plans" was used for when the partners initiated by talking about a plan they have for their days, weeks or months. Lastly,

"suggesting something" occurred when one partner suggested something to another partner and "claiming expertise" occurred when one partner claimed to have knowledge on a particular topic and/or tried to teach his/her partner about his/her knowledge. Initially, I was analyzing each of these codes individually, looking at how often they occur and what was happening when they occurred. I realized that I could look at some of the codes, such as related stories, opinions and preferences, together because isolating them and looking at them individually did not bring out anything that needed to be examined in isolation. In general, what came of looking at non-question initiations was that both the international and domestic students were involved in the interaction and beyond simply being involved, they asserted themselves in the interaction by trying to make suggestions and claiming to have knowledge on various topics.

Figure 6.5. Non-Questions Initiations: Related Stories, New Topic Stories, Schedule

	Total # of NQ Initiat.	Percent of NQ initiat. out of speaker's total initiat	All Related stories/ opinion/ pref.	% of Rel. Stories Opinion Pref.	New Topic Stories	% of new topic stories	Sched + Plan	% of sched +plan
(2)Becky (D)	52	35%	31	38%	1	10%	4	33%
Kate (I)	92	69%	50	62%	10	90%	8	67%
(1)Violet (D)	101	89%	41	51%	16	55%	3	100%
Derek (I)	64	58%	40	49%	13	45%	0	0%
(2)Valerie (D)	46	66%	24	58.5%	6	43%	3	100%
George (I)	33	66%	17	41.5%	8	57%	0	0%
(2)Debbie (D)	56	53%	29	44%	7	58%	7	100%
Isabel (I)	53	55%	37	66%	5	42%	0	0%

This portion of the data, in Figure 6.5, presents non-question initiation counts for Becky and Kate's second conversation, Violet and Derek's first conversation, Valerie and George's second conversation and Debbie and Isabel's second conversation. It mirrors the previous figure on question initiations in that it also shows that the international students are not passively engaged in the interaction and in fact with their non-question initiations they are showing that they are actively engaged in the interaction as they have related stories and new topics to share with their partners. Combining all related stories, opinions and preferences, it appears that the international students are sharing more or just about the same (41.5% and 49% of all related stories, opinions and preferences) as their domestic student partners.

Kate, an international student, with ten new topic stories has more than her domestic partner, who only had one. The other pairs were all more similar in terms of their new topic stories, with George, another international student, having slightly more and Isabel and Derek, the other international students, having slightly less than

their partners. "Slightly more" and "slightly less" is defined as a margin of three or fewer. In other words, George had 57% of new topic stories, Isabel had 42% and Derek had 45% in their conversations. Thus, this shows that the international students, while asking fewer new topic questions overall, as described above, are in fact sharing almost as many or more new topic stories, showing their involvement in the interaction. Lastly, in terms of schedule/plan non-question initiations, Kate was the only international student to talk about her schedule with her partner, and the other international students did not do so. Considering the domestic students did see themselves as the leaders, as was explained from the interviews, this could account for why they initiate "schedule talk" more than the international students, but once again this is just a speculation and would require more investigation for confirmation.

Figure 6.6. Non-Question Initiations: Suggestions and Claiming Expertise

Conversation	Suggestions	% of Suggestions	Claiming expertise	% of Claiming expertise
(2)Becky (D)	6	35%	10	43%
Kate (I)	11	65%	13	57%
(1)Violet (D)	9	69%	32	82%
Derek (I)	4	31%	7	18%
(2)Valerie (D)	3	60%	10	62.5%
George (I)	2	40%	6	37.5%
(2)Debbie (D)	9	60%	4	44%
Isabel (I)	6	40%	5	56%

As was mentioned above, overall domestic students initiated slightly more than the international students. Even though they were initiating slightly more, and their turns were longer, both partners were trying to show their partners that they were knowledgeable leaders and that they had expertise. It is clear from the interviews that

the domestic students saw themselves as leaders and topic creators, as discussed in Chapter V, but in the conversations, it seems that the international students asserted their leadership and knowledge as well. They do this through making suggestions to their partners and through making statements during which they claim to have knowledge on particular topics. In three of the four pairs, domestic students made more suggestions (60 – 69% of suggestions) and in one pair, Becky and Kate, Kate, the international student made more suggestions than Becky (65% of suggestions). Overall, it is interesting to note that both domestic and international students are making suggestions to their partners, showing that they are trying to assert themselves and give guidance to their partners. For example, in Becky and Kate's conversation, Becky told Kate that she would be going to Boston the next weekend. Kate suggests that she go to a specific Chinese restaurant that is delicious. Kate said, "In China Town it's a Chinese restaurant. It's really good" (Conversation 2, p. 42).

Furthermore, three of the four pairs have almost the same amount of initiations in which they were sharing their knowledge or claiming expertise with their partners. "Almost the same" is defined here as "a difference of no more than four," given the numbers on the figure above. Kate, the international student, had 57% of the claiming expertise initiations in her conversation with Becky and Isabel, the international student, had 56% of them in her conversation with Debbie. Valerie, the domestic student, had 62.5% of the claiming expertise initiations in her conversation with George. In Violet and Derek's interaction, on the other hand, there was a more dramatic difference between the international student and domestic student in terms of their claiming expertise initiations. Violet had twenty-five more claiming expertise

initiations than Derek; this meant that she had 82% of them. In their interaction, they

were walking around the city and Violet acted almost as a tour guide to Derek,

explaining things to him and showing him around. This walking context definitely

had an influence on their interaction, with a lot of talk centered on what they were

seeing on their walk and creating the opportunity for Violet to share her knowledge.

There are a variety of examples of the international students showing that they,

too, have knowledge and expertise, accounting for the fact that they are making these

initiations almost as much as the domestic students most of the time. In Valerie and

George's conversation, Valerie gave George a suggestion about what he could do in

order to take his mind off his difficult breakup and then George disagreed with this

advice. Valerie said, "Well, then yeah. You can, like, one day you can hang out with

one friend. The next day you can hang out with another friend" and then George went

on to say, "That will be so terrible" (Conversation 2, p. 18). Rather than just going

along with the assertive advice that Valerie had for him, George disagreed with the

advice and asserted himself and his own agenda. Then, George went on to assert

himself again in the second conversation. He tried to get Valerie to lie for him and

sign his paper for more times than they actually met. When Valerie asked him how

many times she should sign for, he said in a very assertive, dominant way, "It depends

on you" (Conversation 2, p. 4). In this case, Valerie did go along with George's

dominance, signing his paper for more times than they had actually met.

In Violet and Derek's second conversation, they went back and forth about

zodiac astrology and how Derek thought that it is just pretend and only some people

believed in it and Violet asserted that she had fun believing in it and she liked doing

137

so. Rather than just going along with the other person, they both were not afraid to stick with their own perspectives. Derek said, "It's just pretend and maybe you can call it (unintelligible). You can't just, I mean, some people just believe in it" and then Violet went on to say, "I do. Like the Zodiac astrology. I mean, I like to believe in that stuff because I think it's fun" (Conversation 2, p. 13).

Conclusion

In this exploration of the conversation partners' conversations, I focused on the following two areas: intercultural competence in action and involvement in the interaction. These were both areas that came up in the interviews and it was helpful to triangulate the interview data with the conversation data in order to learn more about what was happening in the conversation partner experience. In terms of intercultural competence, through an analysis of the conversation discourse, it seemed that most of the students were not demonstrating an ability to see from their partners' perspectives. The exception to this was Violet, the Black domestic student who had the most intercultural experience and seemed to express more empathy and curiosity about learning about the international student experience. The second theme, involvement in the interaction, was explored through looking at turn lengths and initiation counts for both question and non-question initiations. While international students' turns were shorter and they made slightly fewer initiations overall, they showed that they were actively involved in the interaction and made suggestions and claimed expertise just as the domestic students did. There were also other dynamics, such as gender, personality, language and topics discussed, that may have contributed to participants' involvement in the interaction.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The focus on internationalization and the growing numbers of international students in higher education have not translated to more effective programming for intercultural learning and there is not yet a well-developed research base for understanding what takes place when students engage with one another across differences. Despite the fact that increasing the intercultural competence of students, defined in the literature review earlier, is becoming an educational priority for institutions, there has been little research into how intercultural interaction should best be facilitated (Jurgens & Robbins-O'Connell, 2008). Rather than focusing on how to increase meaningful intercultural interaction for both international and domestic students on university campuses to live up to the internationalization rhetoric, the international student literature tends instead to focus on adjustment issues for international students. All too often, the limited studies in the international student literature that look at both domestic and international students' experiences of intercultural interaction do not take into account the actual interactions that they are engaged in.

Thus, this study addresses a gap in the literature through exploring what transpired when Chinese international and U.S. domestic students interacted with one another and what the conversation partners had to say about their interactions with one another in the Conversation Partner Program. The research perspective was discourse-

specific, relational and situated; as the researcher, I thought critically about the students' contexts, in terms of their own communities, their relationships with one another and their positions in society. I used the discourse approach to intercultural communication of Scollon et al. (2012) along with critical intercultural communication studies (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) to support the need for this research and provide tools through which to analyze the interaction. Both of these theoretical frameworks focused this study on the context-specific dimensions of interaction across cultures. For example, Scollon et al. (2012) explain that one's nationality is not always going to be the most significant difference in interaction across cultures and thinking about one's other communities is critical. Halualani and Nakayama (2010) underscore the power dynamics that also influence communication across cultures.

In order to explore intercultural communication from a discourse-specific, relational and situated perspective, this study investigated the situation and the interaction between conversation partners in the Conversation Partner Program at a private university in the Northeast in order to understand what happened when domestic students from the United States and international students from China interacted with one another. The following questions were examined

1. What transpires in the interactions between conversation partners?

2. What do participants say about their experiences in the Conversation Partner Program?

In this study's design, I triangulated interview and conversation data in order to provide different angles on analysis and see how the interviews and conversations

overlapped and diverged. In ethnography, there is a combination of participant

experiences and interpretations, researchers' observations and more objectives data,

which in this study are the recorded conversations. In this discussion, first I will

provide an overview of the overlapping points between the interview data and the

conversation data, the intercultural competence among participants and their shifting

power dynamics. Then, I will explain some of the limitations of this study, followed

by suggestions for future research and program development.

Conversation and Interview Data Commonalities

Findings from the analysis of the conversations seemed to overlap with

comments students made in their interviews. The first commonality between

conversation data and interview data is that the domestic students and the international

students were not making comments or communicating in ways that demonstrated

intercultural competence in their interactions with one another, with the exception of

Violet, at times. It seemed unlikely, from the conversation and interview data, that

these students were going to develop intercultural competence through their

interactions with one another. Research has shown that intercultural interaction has to

be actively facilitated, through reflection activities, meaningful intercultural

interaction and trainings, in order for intercultural competence development to occur,

and thus, it is not surprising that in this unstructured learning experience students talk

about the experience and engage with one another in ways that seem to demonstrate

that intercultural competence development is not likely to develop in their interaction

with one another. The second connection between the conversation data and interview

data is that the data in both suggested that power-laden dynamics were permeating

intercultural communication. There was not a clear dichotomy between international and domestic students in terms of the power they hold in the interaction and there were a variety of other power-laden issues, such as gender, race and socioeconomic status, which seemed to influence the interaction.

Intercultural Competence Development

I explored participants' intercultural competence development in the following areas. First of all, Deardorff (2006) delineates the necessary attitudes for intercultural competence to develop, and she finds that openness and curiosity are critical across a variety of intercultural competence models. With the exception of Violet, the domestic students did not mention curiosity about other cultures in their interviews with me. For example, Valerie, a domestic student, discussed her interest in the international students' fashion and money along with the fact she will get credit for her participation in the program. Valerie said,

> Because I love, you know, where they come from. My mom always told me little secrets about admissions that they pay for college and like maybe they're myths, I don't know, but they pay for college in cash. I just learned from my conversation partner that they buy their cars from- with cash. (Interview 1, lines 533-539)

The international students also did not display the openness and curiosity necessary for intercultural competence development. Three of them mentioned course credit and requirements as their only motivations for participation in this program and all four of them said that they were not necessarily that interested in learning about American culture. When Derek was asked about whether he was interested in learning about

American culture, he said, "I don't really care, like, who. It's just, speak English. Like, it doesn't matter where you're from" (Interview 1, lines 554-556). Rather than being interested in learning about culture, the international students all focused on their desire to learn language. Thus, based on their comments during interviews, it seemed that domestic students and international students were not particularly curious to learn about other cultures in the context of this study.

This discovery that these domestic and international students were not expressing openness or curiosity about intercultural interaction suggests that domestic students and international students are not necessarily going to be interested in learning about culture at the outset of intercultural programs. Some international students do not come to the university with such an interest, even though much of the literature suggests that they want to find social support opportunities to learn about both language and culture (Foster & Stapleton, 2010). Furthermore, students have been shown to want to spend time with people similar to them; staying in groups of people similar to themselves makes them feel comfortable and provides them with a sense of belonging (Volet & Ang, 1998). As will be mentioned in the suggestions for programming below, this points to the notion that it is important not to assume that the international students and domestic students will be motivated for intercultural group work.

In addition to not expressing interest in learning across cultures, the students did not exhibit much of an understanding of the complexity of cultural differences in their interviews with me. In Deardorff's (2006) model, there is a need for "deep understanding and knowledge of culture" in order for intercultural competence to

develop. Throughout conversations with me, as they reflected on their communication overall, the students all talked about how the experience had been easy overall and that their expectations were confirmed over time. This showed a weak understanding of culture and communication across difference; Deardorff's (2006) model shows that in order for intercultural competence to develop there is a certain level of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary and participants' expressed views that communication would be easy did not indicate that they had the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for effective intercultural communication. As mentioned above, Violet was the only student who seemed to have more knowledge and tried in her conversations with Derek to delve more deeply into certain topics around cultural differences.

The one part of intercultural competence models that all intercultural experts agree on is the ability to see from others' perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). I explored these conversations to see if this particular component, and in particular the inquisitiveness that leads to seeing from other perspectives, were reflected in their communication with one another. Scollon et al. (2012) support the notion that seeing from another's perspective is critical in effective intercultural communication; in their discussion of involvement strategies, they reflect on true involvement in an interaction claiming that one needs to share the same view of the world as another person; they state, "One shows involvement by taking the point of view of other participants, by supporting them in the views they take, and by any other means that demonstrates that the speaker wishes to uphold a commonly created view of the world" (p. 48).

The exploration of intercultural competence in action in these conversations followed a similar method to O'Dowd's (2003) study which explored intergroup

culture learning between Spanish and English speakers in email exchanges. O'Dowd (2003) identified the characteristics of emails that demonstrated that intercultural competence development was happening. Similarly in this study, I was interested in the discourse features of conversations that showed some signs of intercultural competence. I was also curious about discourse features of conversations where intercultural competence seemed to be lacking. In order to focus this analysis, I looked for instances in the conversations where partners seemed to be trying to see from their partner's perspective and instances where they were not. Through a close analysis of the conversation partner transcripts, it appeared that overall both partners gave little or no evidence of trying to see from their partners' perspectives during the conversations. While there were some isolated instances where partners were trying to do so, the points in the conversations where they were not doing so emerged repeatedly, occurring much more regularly.

After reviewing these examples and my notes on the transcripts, I divided examples into three areas: assumptions, evaluative comments and lack of follow up. While conversation partners were trying to show involvement, in actuality, they were making comments that seemed to include assumptions and they did not seem to actually be listening to their partners in order to find this common ground. For example, in Becky and Kate's second conversation, Kate, the international student, shared her ideas about Americans being closed off to international students and then Becky, the domestic student, responded with her analysis of the situation without really hearing what Kate was saying.

Becky: We'd speak it in the classroom. But I wouldn't use it when I'd leave class. So

I could write it really good, but to speak it, it was hard because I'd have to

translate it in my head like, "Okay, I want to say this. How do I say it in

Spanish?" And then I would speak it instead of just being able to talk. So it's

kind of hard.

Kate: But I'm a little feel some American just have a – sorry, with people from

other country.

Becky: Yeah. They, they like almost judge them.

Kate: And just like if I'm, if I am in a restaurant with my friends, there's many

Americans in the, around us, there's no people want, like, recognize new, new

people from another country. (Conversation 2, p. 27)

Although it may be that Becky's rephrasing is what Kate meant, it may not be; she is

assuming she knows what Kate's very vague statement refers to.

They also made evaluative comments before having a full understanding of

what was happening. An example of making evaluative comments quickly occurred

when Debbie quickly gave her evaluation of big classrooms before knowing what

Isabel's thoughts were on them.

Debbie: So they must have big classrooms?

Isabel: Big classroom. Yeah.

Debbie: That's interesting. I didn't know that. That's cool.

Isabel: So how do you think of the international students? (Conversation 1, p. 7)

Lastly, there were also a variety of examples of partners being quick to move to another topic before responding to a comment made previously.

There are several possible reasons for these assumptions, evaluative comments and lack of follow up in their communication. Language miscommunications and a desire to keep the conversation going could both have played a role in each of these areas. While there has been research pointing to the fact that students do not just become interculturally competent or curious when placed in a conversation with culturally different others (Bennett, 2009), there has been very little research into how that actually looks in the actual interaction. The findings in this study about some of the characteristics of the discourse, such as assumptions, evaluative comments and lack of follow up, open a new conversation in the international and domestic student literature in which in-action intercultural communication is being examined. In order to guide students toward effective communication across difference, this closer understanding of what is happening in their communication when there seems to be a lack of intercultural competence development present could be helpful in trainings and in program development.

Violet: Experience Across Cultures and as a Black Woman

Violet, a Black domestic student of Caribbean descent, was the only student who repeatedly exhibited evidence of intercultural competence in her interviews and conversations with her partner. She was the only student who talked about her empathetic desire to welcome international students into the community; she also shared that she was curious about learning from the international students' experiences. Violet said,

I like to learn about people and their different backgrounds, because then I

have something to compare with mine, and then hearing about them. And

compare and see what they do, see what I do, see if maybe I'd like to do some

of what they do or question as to why it's like that and whatnot. And even if

they're Hispanic, because I have some Hispanic friends, I have some Asian

friends, or even Caucasian, it doesn't matter. Like, I like to know because, you

know, it makes—I'm curious about it. (Interview 2, lines 1132-1148)

In the interviews, a lot of what Violet said showed awareness of stereotypes as

compared to the others. In general, she tried to empathize with her partner's

perspective. Similarly, in her recorded conversations with Derek, she often expressed

empathy and interest in learning about his culture and sharing her own. Even though

there were still instances where she made assumptions and lacked follow up with

Derek, she also was expressing an interest in delving deeply into his culture and

communicating empathetically. She openly addressed communication across cultures

with Derek and expressed openness to learning across cultures. Violet said,

Yeah. Like I think this one suits me. Because at our last meeting she told us,

"Some people said they didn't really like the program." Not like it. They

weren't willing to really open their minds to people of different cultures. Like

they weren't really open to learn about other cultures and whatnot. And I was

like, "Dang. You're in the wrong program." Because I think, I feel like this is

what this thing is about, you know? It's trying to get to learn the other person.

And, you know, kind of open your mind to a different culture and a different

background. And if you're not willing to do that, you are in the wrong

program. To me that's one of the biggest things of ignorance. It's like, "You're not willing to accept other people's countries and [unintelligible 00:08:56] about it." Yeah. (Conversation 2, p. 7)

I speculated in the previous chapters about reasons for Violet's heightened desire to learn from the international students' perspectives and her relatively higher level of intercultural competence as compared the other students. Violet's experiences interacting across cultures, as well as her own experiences as a Black female, are two of the possible reasons that she is noticeably more interculturally competent.

Research has shown that close extended intercultural contact, as Violet has had, does make one more likely to make more culturally sensitive attributions (Vollhardt, 2010) and to have increased intercultural competence (Jon, 2013). Furthermore, in Harrison and Peacock's (2009) research on interactions between domestic and international students in the United Kingdom, they found that students who had interacted across cultures previously through s or other opportunities, or students who came from a minority group, were more likely to see value in this experience with international students and they were proactive in trying to overcome challenges. Both of these studies support the idea that Violet's intercultural experience made her more adept in her communication across cultures.

Violet had not only had significant intercultural interaction, she had also lived her life as a Black woman and had been in a variety of situations where she had been the "other" and she had encountered much racism in her life so far. Based on this experience, it seemed likely that Violet would be more proactive in her interaction with her partner and also more aware of what the international students may be feeling

as outsiders to the university. Harrison and Peacock (2009) also explain that people who are part of a minority group are more likely to see value in interaction across cultures and be proactive in overcoming challenges.

Furthermore, an ethnographic approach to research involves an examination of the complexity of a situation. Rather than coming into the research with an established set of truths, ethnography requires that researchers engage with the people they work with and try to understand the world through the perspectives of those they are engaging with. Researchers should begin their queries starting with the experiences of people who are actually experiencing a situation. Blommaert and Jie (2010) explain that "it is not enough (not by a very long shot) to follow a clear, pre-set line of inquiry and the researcher cannot come thundering in with pre-established truths" (p. 12). Later on, Blommaert and Jie (2010) go on to discuss how important it is to analyze people and their experiences within the contexts they are part of. It is impossible to understand people's actions and language apart from their contexts; their viewpoints on their experiences are intertwined with the complexity of the context. While Violet was not the researcher in this situation, she was the interpreter of information, interacting with Derek in the Conversation Partner Program experience. She tried to understand Derek's experience at the university and expressed openness and curiosity about the international student experience. I am suggesting that having experience being "the other" in a variety of situations, Violet apparently showed that she understood Derek's experience at the university and was able to act more as an ethnographer would.

Shifting Power Dynamics across a Variety of Dimensions

Another connection between the interview data and the conversation data is the power dynamics between the international and domestic students. Jon (2012) explains that power dynamics in international-domestic student relationships have rarely been explored. It appears from the interviews and the conversations that there were shifting power dynamics that were contextually based in the conversations between partners. The international student literature often points to the international students' disempowerment; Hsieh (2007) and Min-Hua (2006) examined female Chinese students and found that they often feel disempowered when the domestic students assert themselves in communication with them. However, in the data reported here, there is not a clear dichotomy between the international and domestic students, where international students are disempowered and domestic students are empowered. Some of what has been learned from students in this study point to myriad of other power-laden dynamics, aside from domestic or international student status, that exist in an interaction.

International students are not passive recipients of domestic student power.

Domestic students do seem to try to assert dominance; they described themselves in the interviews as leaders in the interaction with the international students. They explained that they felt they were responsible for keeping the interaction going and that they had to be the topic generators. They perceived the international students to not be opening up in the interaction with them. This reflects the group work literature where domestic students blame some of their group work

challenges on their international partners for not opening up with them in the interaction (Baker & Clark, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Li & Campbell, 2008).

However, the international students were not passive recipients of the power that the domestic students were asserting. They described themselves as active participants in the interaction, sharing with their partners; more exploration in this area is needed, in regard to whether they see themselves as more powerful or what influences their ability to engage and not just be passive recipients. Some of the power dynamics described below could have influenced the students' feelings of power in the interaction, but each of these dynamics needs to be explored in more depth.

The domestic students and the international students all described themselves in interviews as having high intercultural ability. For example, Valerie, a domestic student, talked about her ability to communicate with people and that she went to a diverse high school; she said, "So, we always had an interest in that and I've always been because I went to a very diverse school. I kind of have that ability to communicate with people" (Interview 1, lines 566-568). Members of the dominant group often are not able to see the power inherent in their dominant positions, especially in their control over them. De Turk (2010) explains that participants in her study of intercultural dialogue who came from powerful positions put themselves in positions where they saw themselves as the ones in authority. De Turk (2010) explains, "Often, they tend to frame dialogue about diversity in ways that – however well-meaning – place themselves in positions of authority, serve their own personal interests, and make unreasonable demands of people that they are ostensibly trying to

empower" (p. 578). De Turk (2010) references Jackson's (2002) work on "ready to sign contracts" and talks about how those in power often are trying to control the situation from their own worldview and see no need to shift their worldview. In other words, the students who saw themselves as having high intercultural ability were not approaching this interaction challenging their own views or putting themselves in a position where they were going to learn something. Presumably, entering the "inter" of intercultural communication requires not assuming one knows more than the other person or how to interpret the situation. According to Rowe (2010), "Thus, to engage in intercultural communication is to tread within the abyss of the inter; it is to place ourselves willingly in the 'ability of (not) knowing'" (p. 218). Therefore, approaching intercultural communication as these students do without any apparent questions or self-doubts may have been precluding these students from entering the challenging area of engaging in intercultural interaction. It feels risky to move in and out of spaces that make one feel vulnerable and unsafe at times, but doing so is really the only way that significant learning will ensue. More research is needed to explore the reasons the international and domestic students' feel that they are knowledgeable contributors to the conversations.

During the conversations, international students initiated almost as much as the domestic students even though the domestic students' turn lengths were all longer than the international students'. For the most part, the international students had fewer new topic question initiations, but they had as many or more new topic stories. In contrast to the literature which points to their cultural reticence and their contextual disempowerment, this study points to the notion that these international students were

engaged in the interaction to bring up topics and initiate. Additionally, beyond

initiating at almost equal levels, the international and domestic students were both

trying to show each other that they were knowledgeable and able to teach one another

in their interactions with one another. In Chapter VI, a variety of examples of this

tendency for both partners to assert themselves is explored. This finding provides a

sharp contrast to the disempowerment literature, again showing that there is not a clear

dichotomy between the international students and domestic students in terms of their

relative power statuses.

In addition to students' domestic and international statuses, it seemed that

various dimensions such as race, socioeconomic status and gender appeared to

influence the interaction. Each of these areas will be explained below and it will

become evident that more research into each area is necessary in order to understand

the complexity of their influence on intercultural interaction.

Race.

In contrast to the other students who expected the interaction to be easy and

had that expectation confirmed, Violet shared stories about how she always thinks

about her race when she approaches interaction with anyone across different cultures.

Scollon et al. (2012) and Halualani and Nakayama (2010) emphasize that there is

always a power dynamic at play in communication. Violet's self-awareness of her

race, questioning how she would be perceived, demonstrates this. When she enters

communication, she has very different expectations due to her experience having

encountered racism in the past.   Violet's race and the oppression she has faced affect

her experience of intercultural interaction. Halualani and Nakayama (2010) reflect on

critical intercultural communication's break with the past of research in intercultural

communication by explaining that intercultural communication was assumed to be an

equal exchange of ideas without taking into account unequal power dynamics and

contextual factors which could have a significant impact on one's communication.

We contend that through this body of knowledge, intercultural communication was

proscribed in a very specific way: as a privatized, interpersonal (one to one), equalized

and neutral encounter/transaction between comparable national group members (and

in some cases, racial/ethnic group members within a nation) and as such, in terms of

individual (interpersonal) skill development to bridge equalized differences among

cultures regardless of the context, setting, or historical/political movement. (p. 2-3)

For example, Halualani and Nakayama (2010) explain that in the 1980s and 1990s

academic journal articles about intercultural communication tended to focus on culture

as a nation. They also note that intercultural communication textbooks have often

focused only on an interpersonal approach to intercultural communication, without

examining "the larger macro-micro processes of intercultural communication, or the

ways in which larger structures of power (governmental, institutional, legal, economic,

and mediated forces) intermingle with microacts and encounters among/within cultural

actors and groups" (p. 3). For both domestic students and international students, other

power laden dynamics, such as race, emerge showing how important it is to integrate

these issues into the analysis of intercultural communication. Violet makes comments

that suggest she sees herself as lacking power as she approaches the interaction. She

referenced stories about how, as a Black woman, she always has to think about

whether someone will be racist when she interacts with them. Violet said, "She's

Asian. Are they going to look at me weird? Because literally, in my mind I'm like, okay, I'm Black. There's no hiding it. Are they going to look at me weird?" (Interview 1, 812-816). Violet's role as a Black woman, approaching the interaction expressing more hesitancy and fear about how she would be received, reflects the importance of including issues of race into the intercultural communication literature; much more exploration into this topic is needed.

Additionally, it became clear in the interviews that prejudice was part of how the Chinese students talked about non-Chinese people. As was mentioned in Chapter V, there were some negative comments about Koreans on campus and stereotypes about American students, in particular about Black students. These expressions of prejudice show that they do not arrive in the United States with neutral or unbiased views about those different from themselves; while the literature suggests international students are disempowered in their interactions with the American students, in this study, they expressed prejudiced views, putting themselves above other groups of people. Gresham and Clayton (2011) found that the challenges that came about in the *Community Connections Program* included racist attitudes of international students toward other international students on campus. The domestic students did not express as frequently their prejudices during the interviews with me, but they did all refer to stereotypes that they hold about Chinese students. Violet was the only student to express a general awareness of stereotyping.

Socioeonomic status.

Socioeconomic status also plays a role in domestic students' perceptions of international students and came up in the interviews with the domestic students. They

156

mentioned international students' cars, fashion and money when they described how they perceive the international students. Most Chinese international students did come to campus with the financial resources necessary to function well in higher education and this provided a contrast to many of the domestic students enrolled at this university, a few of whom were represented in this study, who must work and live at home in order to afford their education. This is important in that it shows, from a critical intercultural communication perspective, that students did not perceive themselves in completely cultural terms and instead, in power-laden dimensions, like socioeconomic status (and race and gender, at other points), which play a role in how students view and approach one another. In Jon's (2012) study of power dynamics between international and domestic students in a Korean context, he found that the economic power of students' home countries played a role in how students perceived each other and the relative amount of power that they were able to assert. Future research should be conducted to explore the impact that students' socioeconomic statuses have on the students' interactions with one another, which was not a focus of this current study.

Gender.

Two of the domestic students, Valerie and Becky, both mentioned gender in regard to their international student partners. Valerie said that if George had been a woman she thought they would have had more to talk about and Becky said that she felt that she had a lot to talk about with Kate because they were both women. Similar to the point about socioeconomic status, this demonstrates that students saw one another not only in regard to their cultures, but sometimes more significantly in their

minds, in regard to their genders and other dimensions of their identities (Jon, 2012). The two male international students, Derek and George, said that they would have preferred a male partner because they would have had more to talk about. Thus, perception of what characteristics accompany gender intervened into the Conversation Partner Program experience; rather than seeing this as a purely cultural exchange of ideas students thought in terms of constructs they already have well-defined ideas about. Scollon et al. (2012) discuss the notion that national identity is not necessarily the most salient difference between people interacting across differences and it is important to note that other parts of their identity might be more significant depending on the situation. Signorini, Wiesemes and Murphy (2009) discuss the importance of moving away from national identity as the most critical difference in intercultural communication, as it might not be the difference having the most influence on the interaction at a particular time.

In the conversations, it is possible that gender played a role as well. One exception to domestic students having more initiations than international students was that the male international students in three of four conversations asked more new topic questions (8, 11 and 1 more) than their female domestic student partners. While the differentials are generally smaller than those between the female domestic students and their female international partners (19, 2, 8, 22, 15, and 16 more), this still points to the possibility that gender impacts their numbers of initiations. This again reflects the theoretical framework of critical intercultural communication in that, as was mentioned above, there are other issues that intersect and interact with national culture in regard to intercultural communication. As mentioned previously, Tannen (1990)

explores the role of gender in communication and explains that we are socialized to speak in certain ways depending on our gender roles. Tannen (1990) explains that in conversations between women and men, women are more likely to "follow the style of the men alone" (p. 236) and put their own topics and ways of talking aside. Tannen (1990) recommends we be cautious in coming drawing conclusions about what is going on in communication between genders. She explains, for example, that changing a topic can have a variety of meanings depending on the specific situation. She writes, "Even changing the topic can have a range of meanings. It can show lack of interest, it can be an attempt to dominate the conversation, or it can be a kind of 'mutual revelation device' – matching the speaker's experience with the listener's. Thus, the men asking more new topic questions than the women in this study does not necessarily show that the men are dominating in the interaction, but it is worth exploring further to better understand the intersection between intercultural interaction and gender.

Thus, in both the interviews and conversations, it seemed that the domestic and international students, with the exception of Violet at times, were not showing that they were likely to develop their intercultural competence. Violet, perhaps because of her experience interacting across cultures and her race, demonstrated some intercultural competence. Additionally, critical to understanding what was happening in these interactions were the shifting power dynamics at hand. International students were not passive recipients of the domestic student power and instead they saw themselves as knowledgeable leaders contributing to the interaction. Race,

socioeconomic status and gender all emerged from what students had to say about their interaction experiences and from the analysis of their conversations.

Strengths and Limitations

This ethnographic study, consisting of interview data and discourse analysis of recorded conversations, is a situated inquiry and thus the findings are not readily generalizable to other contexts. That being said, with caution and thought about the contextual differences, some of the learning might transcend this particular context and apply to other programs, but it is critical to take note that there is not necessarily an application to other similar programs. It is my belief, as a qualitative researcher, however, that approaching this study quantitatively, with a fixed set of variables and generalizability to the population, would have limited this study. My goal was to explore intercultural communication from the students' points of views and to see what themes emerged from their perspectives. In a study like this, to have a fixed set of variables or themes would have limited the open exploratory nature of this study.

Another limitation is connected to the exploratory design in that due to being so open to the many different factors involved, no one area could be explored in much depth and there was a lot of speculation and comments about how more research is necessary in one area or another. Each of the power dynamics, race, socioeconomic status and gender, brought up a variety of questions and speculations. For example, I made comments about how the male international students initiated with more new topic questions in several of the conversations, wondering whether gender could have influenced this. It would have been useful to explore more critically and thoroughly

what participants had to say about gender, race and socioeconomic status and how these elements might have influenced the interaction dynamic.

A third limitation emerged from the conversation data analysis. It was briefly mentioned above that both partners showed a lack of empathy, a tendency to make quick evaluative comments and choppy communication, but that the domestic students did these things more often than the international students. It would have been informative to explore this further to see why this phenomenon occurred and what it revealed to us about the conversation partner experience. Similarly, there were longer turns by the domestic students and presumably greater fluency in English is the reason. However, this assumption would need to be tested.

In addition to the wide array of speculations in this study, another limitation is that I as the researcher am not a cultural insider to Chinese culture. While I am aware of what the research says about Chinese international students, I think it would have been useful to know more about the power dynamics involved among different groups in Chinese society. For example, there was some speculation that Derek might be more understanding of Violet due to his experience being a Cantonese speaker in China, where Mandarin is the dominant dialect. However, I am not familiar enough with the cultural makeup of China and the interactions among groups to fully make that claim and it would have been useful to have a cultural insider to Chinese culture comment on and inform this speculation. Additionally, the Chinese students may have been able to open up much more if they had been able to do the interviews in their Chinese dialect; trying to fit their ideas into English, a language they are in the process of learning, is undoubtedly a limitation in this study.

Another methodological consideration is that the conversations and the interviews were influenced by my role as a researcher and the presence of the recorder. Even though none of the students in the study were my students, they were still aware that I am a professor at the university and thus, even as I tried to make the atmosphere relaxed and comfortable for the interviewees, I am confident that they would have acted differently had they been talking to someone who they were truly comfortable with. At the same time, a strength of this study was that I am insider to the institution, the ESL program and the Conversation Partner Program, as it allowed me to understand more about the specific context. Furthermore, when they recorded their own conversations for me, the presence of the recorder definitely played a role; they were aware it was there and it must have influenced their approach to the conversations in some way. One could speculate that they might have been trying to be on their "best behavior" acting as engaged as possible, considering they knew that I was involved in this program.

Lastly, the professors did not structure intercultural learning activities for conversation partners. The history professor allowed the students who participated in my study to opt out of a reflection paper and the ESL professor did not check in with students on a regular basis about what they were learning from their partners. There is the remaining question as to whether the data would have been different were the students to have been in classes with professors who did structure and assign specific learning activities over the course of the term. While I knew that the history professor was giving the students the option of opting out of a reflection paper for participating in this research project, I was unaware that the ESL professor would take such an

unstructured approach. I wonder whether more opportunities for in-class reflection might have promoted changes in thinking or behavior, leaving the students slightly more ready to develop intercultural competence through this interaction.

Future Research

From this study, there are a variety of research pathways to be considered going forward. First of all, it would be meaningful to explore more thoroughly Violet and other students of color, looking at their interactions with international students on campus. Initially, I was going to focus only on White students and then I decided to be more open in my approach and this ended up being a very fruitful move even though I did not originally anticipate this. Violet, with her intercultural experience and her experience being a Black woman, was more empathetic and open and interested in learning about differences, as compared to the other students. The insights gained from Violet's participation in the study point to the relevance of racial identity development in relation to intercultural communication.

Additionally, it would be fascinating to examine more closely some of the power dynamics in the conversations to see how different factors play out in the interaction. For example, there is some speculation that gender is influencing the interaction in various ways, but how exactly this is happening and what participants say about its role in their interaction would be interesting to explore. Also, there were other power laden issues that came up in the interviews, such as race and socioeconomic status, both of which could have been explored in more depth in the interviews and in relation to the actual interactions. For example, in what ways did socioeconomic status come up in their interactions with one another? Furthermore,

there was some speculation about the role that personality plays in these interactions and it would be fruitful to look more closely at the intersection of personality and culture, to see if there are some personality traits that can overshadow other factors involved in an interaction. For example, an extroverted Chinese student might prefer group work even if culturally he/she comes from a context where lectures and authority driven models of education are dominant.

Another area of research that could be explored is topic selection and discussion and what was actually learned from the communication, rather than focusing on intercultural competence in action and involvement as this study did. Looking closely at topics, who chose the topics and what topics were selected would be interesting and has not been investigated in the literature.

Lastly, in this study the students did not have structured training or meaningful reflection activities. While it was a useful exploration to examine unstructured intercultural pair experiences, I also think it would be interesting to examine conversation partner pairs who have participated in structured intercultural training and/or reflection activities. Specifically, do conversation partners exhibit more openness and curiosity for intercultural learning when they participate in various structured activities? Are the interaction dynamics influenced by professor involvement?

Suggestions for Intercultural Program Development

       The following are some suggestions for intercultural program development for international and domestic students in higher education. As mentioned above, given the situated nature of this study, it is only possible to view the findings as suggestive for other contexts, so I have tried to extract some meaningful suggestions that might have implications beyond this specific context.

1. Nationality may not be the most salient difference in interaction across cultures, for there are a variety of other differences that could potentially influence an interaction.

2. As the literature suggests, putting domestic students and international students in groups together is unlikely to lead to intercultural competence development without structured learning (Bennett, 2009).

3. The requisite attitudes for intercultural competence development are not necessarily going to be found in students studying in higher education. One cannot assume that domestic and international students will want to learn about culture. There might need to be particular attention paid to how assignments are structured for students and teaching them how culture does intervene in communication.

4. There may be variations within the domestic student population, such as racial/ethnic background and/or past intercultural experiences, that are relevant to their interactions with international students.

5. Learning to see from another person's perspective should be practiced and modeled by interculturally competent faculty and administrators, so that students can learn strategies for it. Some examples from these conversations of assumptions and

evaluative comments could be used in trainings to discuss and analyze with students as effective strategies are being developed.

6. While some international students are disempowered as the literature suggests, some of them are also engaged actively in interaction, asserting themselves in the U.S. context. There are some ways in which international students express their power as well; for example, Chinese international students often have sufficient economic resources to study in the United States, which became a focus of domestic students' attention and perception of them.

Conclusion

This exploratory ethnographic study opens a new conversation in regard to international and domestic student interaction in higher education. Much of the literature on international students has focused on international student adjustment to higher education, suggesting that social support and communication across cultures, with domestic students in particular, will help ease the adjustment process. The limited studies that do examine international and domestic student experiences of interactions with one another do not examine the actual interactions themselves, nor do they situate the interactions in a specific context.

A discourse approach to intercultural communication (Scollon et al., 2012) and critical intercultural communication studies (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) focus this discourse-specific, relational and situated exploration of Chinese international and U.S. domestic student interaction. In this ethnographic study, interview data and conversation data were triangulated to explain what transpired in the interactions between conversation partners and what participants had to say about their experiences

in the Conversation Partner Program. In particular, the intercultural competence among participants and their shifting power dynamics were the two themes that were explored in depth in this study. Given that there was a lack of structured learning and reflection taking place, it is not surprising that the conversations and interviews showed that participants were not likely to develop intercultural competence in their interactions with one another (Bennett, 2009). The assumptions, evaluative comments and lack of follow-up were features of their discourse showing how they do not seem to be able to see from each other's perspectives, the only criteria that all models of intercultural competence share. Violet, the Black student with significant intercultural experience, was the only student who showed in her expressions of empathy and openness to culture learning that she seemed to exhibit some intercultural competence in her interactions.

Furthermore, in addition to intercultural competence development, the interviews and conversations were explored in regard to the shifting power dynamics between the conversation partners. There was not a clear dichotomy between international and domestic students in terms of the power they hold in the interaction and there were a variety of other power-laden issues, such as gender, race, socioeconomic status and language differences, which seemed to influence the interaction. Looking closely at the interactions in which structured learning is not taking place was a first necessary step in creating intercultural programs that actively foster learning among participants. The discourse features of and the complex, power-laden dimensions involved in unstructured intercultural communication identified in

this study can be used to inform intercultural program development in higher

education and should be explored in future studies.

CONSENT DOCUMENT
Rhode Island College

Situated Intercultural Communication

You are being asked to participate in a research study about communication between conversation partners. You were selected as a possible participant because you are involved in the Conversation Partner program. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before deciding whether to be in the study

Emily Spitzman, an Assistant Professor at Johnson and Wales, is conducting this study.

Background Information

The purpose of this research is to examine the interaction between conversation partners in order to make the program better in the future. The researcher is interested in finding out what happens when partners talk to one another and she is interested in learning about your ideas about intercultural interaction.

Procedures

If you choose to be a participant in this research, you will be asked to do the following things:

- Take the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Assessment
- Be interviewed by Emily Spitzman three times (Week 3, Week 7 and Week 11) of Winter trimester
- Record two conversations with your conversation partner (Week 4 and Week 10)

Risks of Being in the Study

The risks of participating in this research are minimal. You will be discussing your experience participating in this program and thus, the risks involved are the same as you would experience in your daily activities.

Benefits to You

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is completely voluntary. It is not required by your school. You can choose not to participate in this research and it will have no effect on your grades. Also, you can change your mind about participating at any time with no negative consequences.

Confidentiality

The records of this research will be kept private. In any sort of report that might be published, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a secured file, and access will be limited to the researcher. If there are problems with the study, the research records may be viewed by Rhode Island College review board responsible for protecting human participants and other government agencies that protect human participants in research. All data will be kept for three years, after which it will be destroyed.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Emily Spitzman. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any questions later, you may contact her at espitzman@jwu.edu, 401-575-8150. Or you may contact her faculty advisor, Carolyn Panofsky, at cpanofsky@ric.edu, 206 456-8040.

If you think you were treated unfairly or would like to talk to someone other than the researcher about your rights or safety as a research participant, please contact Dr. Christine Marco, Chair of the Rhode Island College Institutional Review Board at IRB@ric.edu, or by phone at 401-456-8598, or by writing to Dr. Christine Marco, Chair IRB; c/o Department of Psychology, Horace Mann Hall 311; Rhode Island College; 600 Mount Pleasant Avenue; Providence, RI 02908.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read and understand the information above, and I agree to participate in the study "Situated Intercultural Communication: Domestic and International Student Interaction". I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time with no negative consequences. I have received answers to the questions I asked, or I will contact the researcher with any future questions that arise. I am at least 18 years of age.

I ___agree ___do not agree to be audio-taped for this study.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____Date:

Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent:
_____

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172

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