EFFECTIVE COMPUTER-MEDIATED INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION FACTORS: THE INFLUENCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE, SOCIAL CUES, AND ACCOMMODATIVE BEHAVIOR IN INTERCULTURAL ONLINE EXCHANGE

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Abstract

As the world becomes more and more connected through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the cultural context in which ICTs are utilized becomes more important. While it is true that computer mediated communication (CMC), such as Facebook, can transcend geographic barriers, they do not necessarily transcend cultural barriers. Easy connection does not necessarily guarantee effective and appropriate intercultural communication. Therefore, this paper examines the factors that may influence effective communication in intercultural computer-mediated settings—Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) and accommodative social cue behavior.

Thirty-three undergraduate students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and 33 students (Banking and Finance Majors) enrolled in an English for Finance class at Phayao University in Thailand participated in a four-week online exchange via Facebook. Students were given simple tasks each week (e.g. introductions, word associations, comparative expressions, good-byes) and asked to interact with their partner via wall posts on a closed Facebook group page created specifically for the project.

The findings of this study indicate that ICC predicts how you rate your partner’s communication effectiveness and self-communication effectiveness. In addition, non-verbal social cues are used in combination with non-physical social cues in intercultural CMC environments to increase clarity and understanding, and increase rapport with one’s partner. Furthermore, less structured/open-ended activities should be utilized in online intercultural learning environments to provide participants more opportunities to connect with their partner in more agentic ways. Finally, measuring ICC and accommodation in online environments are influenced by the environment, mediums used to communicate, speaking partner, language, motivation, and type of task performed.
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Chapter One: Introduction

As the world becomes more and more connected through Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), the cultural context in which ICTs are utilized becomes more important. While it is true that computer mediated communication (CMC), such as Facebook, can transcend geographic barriers, they don’t necessarily transcend cultural barriers (Cho & Lee, 2008). Easy connection does not necessarily guarantee effective and appropriate intercultural communication. Therefore, understanding the factors that may influence effective communication in CMC environments becomes more important as we become more connected globally.

Within face-to-face (FTF) settings, the measure of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) has traditionally been used to gage the competence or intercultural sensitivity of employees being sent to work abroad in order to predict how successful they may be in adapting to new cultural settings and interacting with new cultural counterparts (Humphrey, 2007). Measures of ICC are numerous and typically consist of lists of skills, abilities, and attitudes that lack integration across lists (Spitzberg, 1994). Models of ICC (Ruben, 1976; Byram, 1997; Risager, 2007; Kuhlmann & Stahl, 1998; Ward, 2001; Bennett, 2004; Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Spitzberg, 2009) highlight the need to capture more than just participant self-report, but rather actual behavior through observation. The importance of ICC is also relevant within the context of CMC as those working in businesses, organizations, and academia are frequently asked to communicate with intercultural overseas partners to collaborate on projects via CMCs. Furthermore, CMCs provide educational opportunities for intercultural learning via online mediums. However, in implementing online intercultural educational projects, one must consider the differences between FTF and CMC environments and its impact on intercultural online learning.
There are major differences in communicating via CMCs versus FTF. Although some theories that predate the CMC era proposed that social cues are “filtered out” of CMC environments (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976; Daft & Lengel, 1984; Siegal & McGuire, 1984; Culnan & Markus, 1987), others posit that users adapt the textual affordances of a medium to meet their need for social cues, so that CMCs can actually enable users to be more social in ways that FTF communicators cannot (Walther, 1996). According to Hollan and Stornetta (1992), we should look at distinctive characteristics of the ICT rather than trying to imitate FTF interactions. Similarly, Licoppe and Smoreda (2004) posit that ICTs are a new resource for connected presence rather than a substitute for FTF interactions. With this in mind, it is important to remember to examine the distinctive affordances of a particular medium to discover what particular characteristics may help encourage “intersubjective meaning-making” (Suthers, 2006), especially within the intercultural learning environment in which this particular study takes place.

In addition, since social cues are essential in helping to establish common ground (Verhulsdonck, 2007), how they are adapted for online environments is important. Common ground (Clark & Brennan, 1991) is the knowledge that participants are aware they have in common. Establishing common ground helps in establishing trust and a shared identity amongst participants. This trust or shared identity is otherwise known as “social capital” (Resnick, 2002) and is a side effect of social interactions that helps to encourage future interactions. In sum, social cues are important for effective communication. Our ICC can influence how we adapt our communication or social cues to our intercultural partners. Those who have higher ICCs may be more aware of how their communication or use of social cues may be perceived by their intercultural partner and may make adjustments accordingly.
According to Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) (Giles, 1971), individuals may engage in convergent or divergent behavior in order to, among other reasons, gain social approval, play up distinctiveness, or facilitate understanding. Within an intercultural online setting, for example, partner A may utilize more laughter cues to match partner B’s use of laughter, or partner A may express more empathy or concern for partner B if they sense their partner is worried. In sum, CAT theorizes that partner A may accommodate their communication/social cues to partner B in order to accomplish the goals of communication accommodation—clarity, understanding, and maintenance of face and relationships. Perceptions of communication effectiveness, however, are influenced by culture. In particular, Thai perception of communication effectiveness focuses more on maintaining social harmony and relationships rather than accomplishing a specific task (Komin, 1990). Therefore, CAT provides a lens with which to examine communication effectiveness from both Western and non-Western perspectives and allows for examination of communication effectiveness through accommodation of communication and social cues.

1.1 Statement of Purpose

Overall, in order to examine the effectiveness of intercultural communication via CMCs, we must examine more than just the cultures in which they are used, but the individuals from these cultures. According to Scollon and Wong-Scollon (2001), “Cultures do not talk to each other; individuals do” (p. 138). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the individual factors—ICC and accommodation of social cues—that may influence communication effectiveness in intercultural CMC environments. Communication effectiveness is broken down into understanding and clarity and face considerations. More specifically, this study examines
the intercultural exchange of Thai and U.S. students via Facebook wall posts. This study puts forth the following hypotheses: (Please see conceptual model of hypotheses, Figure 1, p. 75).

H1: ICC of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of 1a) “ego’s understanding and clarity as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” and 1b) “ego’s ability to show face considerations as rated by ego’s intercultural partner.”

H2: ICC of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of the degree of accommodation toward one’s intercultural partner.

H3: Degree of social cue accommodation of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of 3a) “ego’s understanding and clarity as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” and 3b) “ego’s ability to show face considerations as rated by ego’s intercultural partner.”

H4: ICC of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of 1a) “ego’s understanding and clarity as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” and 1b) “ego’s ability to show face considerations as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” through degree of social cue accommodative behavior.

In addition, by examining the influence of the type of task and the online medium on measuring ICC, accommodation, and communication effectiveness, implications are provided for measuring ICC in online environments. In addition, through examination of the actual intercultural exchange, suggestions are provided for how to foster better learning environments in online intercultural exchanges. Furthermore, the coding of types of accommodative social cues allows us to observe the types of social cue accommodative behavior used within social vs. structured-work-focused environments and examine what types of social cue behavior may lead
to better rapport with one’s partner. Finally, an open-ended question asking participants to reflect on their overall exchange experience provides additional information that provides added interpretation to the findings of our main hypotheses and informs future studies in computer-mediated intercultural communication.

1.2 Summary

**Purpose of study.** With easier connection to global partners via CMCs, effective and appropriate online intercultural communication is important for maintaining positive intercultural relationships. The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the potential factors—Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC); accommodative social cue behavior—that may influence the effectiveness of communication within intercultural computer-mediated exchange. This study provides important implications for the types of interculturally competent behaviors that may influence communication effectiveness, and the measurement of ICC in online environments, which is an important component within intercultural interactions. Further implications are provided for the use of social cues in social versus structured-work-focused environments.

**Procedure.** Thirty-three undergraduate students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and 33 students (Banking and Finance Majors) enrolled in an English for Finance class at Phayao University in Thailand participated in a four-week online exchange via Facebook. Altogether, 16.7% of the participants were male and 83.3% were female (both Thai and U.S.). The average age of participants was 21 (SD=2.17). Students were given simple tasks each week (e.g. introductions, word associations, comparative expressions, good-byes) and asked to interact with their partner via wall posts on a closed Facebook group page created specifically for the project.
After each interaction, participants took a communication effectiveness survey that measured their perception of their own communication effectiveness and their partner’s communication effectiveness using a Likert scale, and measured their perception of the quality of the communication as a whole using a semantic differential.

**Data Analysis.** The exchanges for tasks two and four were captured off of Facebook using NVIVO Ncapture. Tasks two and four were chosen because task two captures first interactions and task four captures the interaction mid-project. In addition, task two and four comprised of different types of activities (social vs. structured-work-focused). Exchanges were coded for ICC, degree of accommodation, type of accommodation, and type of social cues used in accommodation. The Intercultural Competence Assessment Project (INCA) was adapted to code the Facebook exchanges of intercultural partners along six variables: tolerance for ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, respect for otherness, empathy, communicative awareness, and knowledge discovery. The INCA method was chosen because it provided a tool for the measurement of actual behavior. Behavior (rather than internalized intentions) is used by others to determine interlocutors’ intercultural competence (Lustig & Koester, 1999). Degree and type of accommodation was determined by three coders, and the type of social cues was open coded from the accommodation categories. A multiple regression and mediation test using structural equation modeling, Baron and Kenny’s causal steps, and bootstrapping of confidence intervals were conducted using interval data resulting from ICC coding, degree of accommodation, and communication effectiveness surveys to analyze the conceptual model of ICC influencing communication effectiveness through accommodative social cue behavior.

**Results.** Overall, the results indicate that ICC is a significant predictor of how you rate your intercultural partner and self-communication effectiveness, but not a significant predictor of
how your intercultural partner rates your communication effectiveness. Therefore, H1, which predicted that one’s ICC would be a positive predictor of 1a) “ego’s understanding and clarity as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” and 1b) “my ability to show face considerations as rated by my intercultural partner,” was not supported.

However, additional findings reveal that ICC is a significant predictor of how you rate your partner’s face and understanding and how you rate your own face and understanding. In addition, H2, which predicted that ICC would be a positive predictor of one’s degree of accommodation toward their intercultural partner, was supported. Finally, H4, which predicted that ICC would positively predict your intercultural partner’s rating of your communication effectiveness through accommodation, was not supported.

The findings also reveal significant difference between tasks in terms of ICC and accommodation scores. Furthermore, U.S. participants scored significantly higher in ICC and accommodation than Thai participants in task four.

**Conclusions and Implications.** Overall, the findings of this study indicate that high ICC in intercultural online exchanges does not necessarily lead to greater communication effectiveness. In fact, in a social online environment, greater effort to participate and discover more about your intercultural partner can actually lead to less perceived communication effectiveness (understanding, clarity, face considerations). In a structured-work-focused online intercultural environment, positive participation, respect and empathy can lead to a feeling of greater understanding of your intercultural partner; while, trying to explain things in different ways, defining terms, posing questions, and trying to resolve misunderstandings (communicative awareness) can lead to a feeling of misunderstanding.
Additional findings indicate that the environment, mediums used to communicate, speaking partner, language, motivation, and type of task performed must be considered when measuring ICC in CMC environments, rather than focusing on skills, knowledge, and behavior as it has popularly been measured in the past. Furthermore, non-verbal social cues are used in combination with non-physical social cues in intercultural CMC environments to increase clarity and understanding, and increase rapport with one’s partner. Social cues were also found as important for fostering positive face with one’s partner in online environments. Finally, less structured/open-ended activities should be utilized in online intercultural learning environments to provide participants more opportunities to connect with their partner in more agentic ways.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review guides our study on the influence of ICC and accommodation of social cues on communication effectiveness in computer mediated environments. Therefore, it is reasonable to focus on literature that has the most relevance to guide us in this examination. Literature that informs our independent variables—intercultural communication competence, and accommodation of social cues—as they relate to the area of computer mediated communication are considered relevant for this study. Furthermore, literature that informs our dependent variable—communication effectiveness—as it relates to the context of this study (culture and CMC) are considered relevant for this study. In addition, the first two sections of the following literature review provide information on Thai and American culture, and Facebook, which are necessary in understanding the context/setting of this study. In sum, the following literature review consists of the following sections: Culture (culture and communication effectiveness, Thai vs. Western effectiveness); Facebook (use, affordances, statistics by country) and Social cues in CMC (types of social cues); Accommodation (measuring accommodation); Intercultural communication competence (models and measurements). This is followed by a section addressing the implications of the literature as a whole.

2.1 Culture

Before we can begin to talk about intercultural communication, we must first have an understanding of what culture is. Although there are many definitions of culture, for the purposes of this study, culture is defined as,

“A set of human-made objective and subjective elements that in the past have increased the probability of survival and resulted in satisfaction for the participants in an ecological
niche, and thus, became shared among those who could communicate with each other because they had a common language and they lived in the same time and place” (Triandis, 1994).

This definition highlights culture as “human-made” or non-biological; thus, emphasizing that culture is learned. Furthermore, the definition emphasizes subjective elements, such as values, beliefs, and behaviors. Finally, Triandis calls attention to the symbol system of language that not only enables us to share culture, but implies a system of rules such as cultural norms/practices. These norms and practices have been examined through various different cultural frameworks, for example: Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions (individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, masculinity), and Hall’s (1976) high and low context cultures, and polychronic/monochronic time. However, B.J. Hall (2005) espouses both the benefits and hazards of studying intercultural communication. According to Hall (2005), hazards include: oversimplification (ignoring exceptions), overgeneralization (all people from a certain culture are the same), and exaggeration (making differences between group larger than they actually are). In fact, these critiques have often been applied to Hofstede (1980) and Hall’s (1976) cultural dimensions. While Hall and Hofstede may be useful for analyzing specific forms of cross-cultural communication, such as examining the cultural differences in graphical elements displayed in web advertisements (Wurtz, 2005), they are not suited for the examination of intercultural interaction. Furthermore, according to Hewling (2006), online participants may generate a “third” culture during their intercultural interaction and polarities such as Hofstede and Hall’s dimensions do not capture this type of interaction. Therefore, although culture is a topic of this study, cultural dimensions are not used to predict the behavior of participants within this study because they are not suited for the interactivity of online exchange. However, Hall’s
benefits of studying intercultural communication include: personal empowerment, freedom from ignorance, and productive relationships. Thus, it is the hope that through analysis of intercultural interactions more productive relationships or communities may result.

2.1a Culture and communication effectiveness. This study examines communication effectiveness through the lens of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). According to CAT, accommodative strategies are used to understand and be understood, maintain face and relationships, direct flow of conversation, and maintain interpersonal control. The two main goals of CAT can be viewed as: 1. Understand and be understood and 2. Maintain face and relationships. Both direct flow of conversation and maintaining interpersonal control can be conceived of within these two goals. For example, a directed flow of communication pertains to the quality of communication, which is needed for understanding (Gudykunst & Shapiro, 1996), and maintaining interpersonal control is related (depending on individual and culture) to maintaining face and relationships (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2003). Therefore, effective communication in this study is viewed as communication where an individual is: 1. Perceived to have both understood their partner and been understood by their partner and, 2. Maintained face and relationships.

However, perception of communication effectiveness is also influenced by culture. An individual’s concern for effectiveness is related to a desire to achieve a particular goal through the use of communicative acts (Kim & Wilson, 1994). From a Western perspective, communication effectiveness has been related to trust, intimacy, and satisfaction (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987). Furthermore, from this perspective, it has been found that people perceive themselves to be competent based on perceptions of their own effectiveness, and they perceive others to be competent based on the appropriateness of their behavior (Canary & Spitzberg,
However, depending on your cultural orientation, there are strikingly different views about what constitutes an appropriate communication strategy needed to achieve a conversational goal (Kim, 2004). For example, high context individuals may place greater importance on such goals as relationship and face management than lower context individuals who may focus more on clarity (Setlock, Fussell, & Neuwirth, 2004). Therefore, it is difficult to use conventional “Western” measures as indicators of effectiveness because effectiveness is construed differently depending on culture (Setlock & Fussell, 2010). That being said, individuals within cultural groups may also have different ideas about appropriate communication strategies. So, we cannot assume that all individuals from a particular culture will prefer a specific conversational strategy. However, in order to adapt/develop a measure of communication effectiveness that may be applicable for both Thai and American culture, the Thai cultural perspective in relation to Western culture needs to be explored.

Literature focused on non-Western forms of communication has had a tendency to focus on cultures such as China and Japan (East Asia), and some Korea and India (East and Southern Asia). However, little attention has been paid to countries of Southeast Asia (Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Burma) (Pfhal, Chomngam, & Hale, 2007). Pfahl, et al. argue against approaches that use “Asia” as a monolithic term in which the study of one East Asian country is used to understand all Asian cultures. They call for a micro approach in the examination of communication in which generalizing within contexts rather than across contexts is practiced initially. Pfahl, et al. suggests using Komin’s (1990) nine Thai value orientations for understanding interpersonal communication within Thai society. Komin’s nine Thai value orientations offer the following concepts that characterize the Thai value system. These concepts are in order from most significant to least significant:
1. **Ego-orientation** - Related to the Thai concept of “Kreng Jai,” which is consideration for the feelings of others.

2. **Grateful relationship orientation** - Being grateful for those who offer you help or favors and reciprocating kindness.

3. **Smooth interpersonal relationship orientation** - Desire for harmonious relationships characterized in concepts such as “jai yen” (Calm attitude), “mai pen rai” (Never mind), and “Arom dii” (good feeling/good mood/no extreme emotions).

4. **Flexibility and adjustment orientation** - In order to maintain smooth personal relationships, one needs to remain flexible.


6. **Education and competence orientation**

7. **Interdependence orientation** - Smooth interpersonal relationships and flexibility are the focus of this orientation.

8. **Fun-pleasure orientation** - Life is something that should be enjoyed. Thus, you should do things in life that are “sanuk” (fun).

9. **Achievement-task orientation** - Ranked lowest in the value orientations, Komin (1990) found that Thai’s generally valued maintaining good relationships over devotion to work.

These values were more recently reconfirmed by Pfahl et al. (2007) in their examination of Thai friendship, in addition to more universal values of sincerity, honesty, and trust that were articulated as important for friendship by Thai participants. As a whole, these value orientations
highlight the significance of maintaining good interpersonal relationships within Thai culture. They also point to unique attitudes within Thai culture. Although studies that examine general east vs. west perspectives help point to the need to examine communication effectiveness in way that acknowledges culture (Setlock & Fussell, 2010), Pfahl et al. highlights the importance of examination from a micro perspective. Therefore, the following findings will further explore Thai communication effectiveness considerations as they relate to Western practices. (Note: the term “Western” is used for studies that utilized participants from the United States, Australia, and Europe. These studies found commonalities between the participants from these countries and therefore used the term “Western” in light of these commonalities).

2.1b Thai and Western effective management. Thai and Western management styles differ in terms of professional values, decision making processes, style of management, and overall management practices (Singhapakdi, Rallappalli, Rao, and Vitell, 1995) According to Holmes and Tangtongtavy (1996), the Western management paradigm does not necessarily apply within a Thai context specifically due to different views on power, deadlines, management practices (e.g. work delegation, rewards, evaluation, teamwork, motivation, and accountability), and loyalty. In addition, Fisher (2003) found that there are differences in the way that effective performance is perceived between Thai and Western managers in terms of Intercultural experience, where intercultural experience was seen as less important to effectiveness by Thai managers than Western managers because Thailand was viewed as being very unique to Asia. In addition, Thai and Western managers differed in their perspective of task effectiveness (achieving the objects of the project), in which Thai managers viewed the task effectiveness as important, but not as much as their Western counterparts, and Thai managers saw contextual effectiveness (issues related to the process) as more important than the Western managers.
Overall, these types of differences tell us that Thai and Westerners differ in their perspective of effectiveness, where Westerners seem more concerned with the final outcome and Thais seemed more concerned with the context or process.

2.1c Thai and American effective communication. The following studies indicate that Thais and Americans evaluate effective communication differently. For example, the implications that rhetorical sensitivity had on intercultural communication effectiveness between Thai and American university students were examined (Knutson, Komolsevin, Chatiketu, and Smith, 2003). The theory of rhetorical sensitivity suggests principles that can be used for the development of effective communication behaviors and defines three types of communicators: noble selves (maintain personal goals without adapting to others), rhetorical reflectors (adjust themselves to the wishes of others), and rhetorical sensitives (combines concern for self with concern for others). Khutson, et al. examines Thai and American rhetorical sensitivity and predicts that Thais will have higher levels of rhetorical sensitivity (H1), and rhetorical reflection (H2) than Americans due to Thai cultural values of harmony and concern for others and lower levels of noble self than Americans (H3). H2 and H3 were both supported; however, H1 was not supported. Khutson, et al. believe that H1, which predicted that Thais would have higher levels of rhetorical sensitivity (combines concern for self with concern for others), was not supported due to the instrument, which asked a generally conflict avoiding culture (Thais) direct questions on handling criticism and conflict. The authors believe that the scale should be adjusted for Thai cultural values. Furthermore, the nature of the self-report questionnaire used requires that participants openly express high self-opinions, which is generally unacceptable in Thai culture. Scales should allow for cultural variation and not require Thai participants to answer according to American cultural values.
Knutson (2004) further argues for the importance of using measurements that are cross-culturally valid in his ethnographic approach to the examination of Thai culture after discovering futility of using a Western measurement on Asian communication patterns. Knutson uses metaphoric analysis to examine a series of vignettes used to describe Thai communicative episodes. Knutson posits that a combination of ethnographic and scientific methodology is an appropriate means of dealing with Thai and American cultural differences.

Chaidaroon (2003) examines positive factors for Thai communicative competence in terms of three main factors of communicative competence: knowledge, performance, and motivation. The author describes a personal incident that led to this research in which they were asked to join an informal college soccer team upon their arrival in the U.S., of which they did not feel comfortable joining:

“So I said to my friend, “I will try my best to show up at the game.” The day after the game, my friend came to talk to me again and he seemed very upset. He asked me why I did not go to the game as promised. I was speechless as I thought he should have known that I was reluctant to accept his invitation in the first place…my indirect answer did not seem to be an appropriate response to my friend. The effective communication strategy that I used while I was in Thailand did not work here at all” (Chaidaroon, 2003, p. 295).

Chaidaroon finds that what is competent behavior in Western settings is not necessarily considered competent behaviors in Thai settings. For example, Thai competent behavior includes: Shyness, awareness of hierarchical structure, reluctance to ask for favors, being “Kreng Jai” (extreme consideration for others), and humility. Furthermore, according to a survey
conducted by Sriussdaporn-Charoenngam and Jablin (1999), Thai business people perceived the following behaviors as communicative competent behaviors: avoiding conflict, emotional control, tact, politeness, modestly, displaying respect, and using the correct title to address others. Overall, Thai interaction appears to be more concerned with maintaining relationships than accomplishing a specific task (Komin, 1990). These findings corroborate with the earlier findings on Thai and Western differences in management effectiveness, in which the process was found as more important than achieving the task itself (Fisher, 2003).

Dilbeck, McCroskey, Richmond, & McCrosky (2009) examined Thai self-perceived communication competence within four particular contexts: public speaking, meetings, small groups, and dyads. They found that Thai participants perceived themselves as most competent when in small groups and with acquaintances, somewhat competent in meetings or with friends, and least competent when in public speaking settings or talking with strangers. These scores were slightly lower than American scores, who were more competent speaking with friends (dyads) than with acquaintances. This study tells us that both Thai and American participants feel least confident when speaking in public settings/with strangers. However, Thai participants perceive themselves as more competent when in small groups when the pressure is taken off of them as the sole communicator. Thai participants even expressed feeling only somewhat competent in a friend (dyad) communicative setting. This study points to the need to examine communicative competence in other settings, such as online settings where feelings of self-perceived competence would likely change because of differences in reviewability of the message, and typed vs. spoken language in online settings.

In sum, there are cultural differences in what is perceived to be communicative effective behaviors. Thai communicators generally emphasize social harmony, whereas Americans
emphasize clarity. These differences should be taken into consideration when measuring communicative effectiveness in an intercultural setting.

2.1d Measuring communication effectiveness. A focus on social harmony vs. a focus on clarity can also be found within studies on other Asian cultures. For example, in order to account for different conversational strategies in different cultures, Kim and Wilson (1994) identified five conversational constraints: Concern to avoid hurting the hearers’ feelings, concern for minimizing imposition, concern for avoiding negative evaluation by hearer, concern for clarity, and concern for effectiveness. Kim (1994) found that cultural variability influences perception of importance in three of the five conversational constraints. The findings indicate that mainland Americans place more importance on clarity than participants from Hawaii or Korea, and Koreans place greater importance on face-maintenance (e.g. avoidance of hurting hearer’s feelings; minimize imposition). The findings were attributed to Koreans being predominantly collectivist, and mainland Americans being predominantly individualistic. In later research, Kim, et al. (1996) examined the relationship between culture, individual values (independent and interdependent self-construals), and perceptions of conversational constraints. Kim, et al. (1996) proposed a mediation model, which examined these relationships and was generally consistent with the data. The findings indicate a relation between culture-level individualism and collectivism and individual-level cultural orientations (self-construals), which were related to perceived importance of conversational constraints. Individual-level cultural orientations were found as strong predictors of the corresponding perceived importance of conversational constraint.

Although Kim’s findings pertain to perceived importance of conversational constraints in request making and compliance, the findings have implications for the operationalization of
“communication effectiveness” within this study because the findings tell us that particular communicative goals may be manifested differently in different cultures, such as Thai and American culture. Furthermore, Kim’s conversational constraints can be applied to both Thai and American culture as they take into consideration both components of social harmony stressed in Thai culture and clarity stressed in American culture. They will be adapted for this study to measure communication effectiveness as it is manifested in the main goals of CAT: 1. Understanding (clarity and effectiveness), and 2. Maintaining face and relationships (feelings, avoiding imposition, avoiding negative evaluation). Furthermore, there is a difference in effective communication in CMC compared to FTF. According to Tidwell and Walther (2002), mediated participants who asked more questions were perceived to be more effective than those in FTF situations who asked more questions. Therefore, there are certain characteristics of an interaction that is perceived as more effective in online environments than in FTF environments, such as inquisitiveness. In terms of measuring communication effectiveness, scales created with the intention of being used in FTF environments may not be as effective in measuring online communication. At the time of this study, there has not been a scale developed specifically for intercultural computer-mediated communication effectiveness. Therefore, an open-ended question asking participants to explain the effectiveness of the exchange was utilized to provide insight into possible influences the medium (Facebook) may have had in their ratings of effectiveness. This information will be used to aid in the interpretation of the results, and provide suggestions for the development of communication effectiveness scales better geared for both intercultural and computer-mediated environments. (Please see methods section for more information).
2.2 Facebook

There are numerous studies on Facebook covering issues ranging from identity construction to privacy issues. For the purposes of this study, a focus is placed on use and affordances of Facebook, and statistics of Facebook use by country.

2.2a Use and affordances of Facebook. Facebook is an online social network application where users can create profiles, view the profile of others, post pictures, and gather and connect to friends (Papacharissi, 2009). According to a longitudinal study conducted by Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfeld (2008) on the changes in use of Facebook from 2006 to 2008, in general, people use Facebook to maintain existing relationships that were initially formed offline rather than creating new relationships online. Over the three year period, this finding remained fairly consistent. However, new users were more likely to use Facebook to meet new people than old users. Changes in Facebook use were associated with new features being introduced (e.g. news feed; photo sharing); changes in stages of life also influenced a change in Facebook use (e.g. as participants got older, they found less of a need to seek out as many friends on Facebook as possible). Furthermore, users’ type of activity changed from very pro-active (e.g. initiator) to more habitual (e.g. passive Facebook checker) behavior after a few years.

In terms of frequency of use, a study on the evolution of activity between users found that interaction between infrequent users was triggered by site mechanisms (e.g. Facebook’s birthday reminder prompted activity that likely would not have happened otherwise). Furthermore, in general users interacted less and less over time (Viswanath, Mislove, Cha, & Gummadi, 2009). From a uses and gratifications perspective (Blumler & Katz, 1974), using Facebook for social connections gratifications led to an increase in use frequency, and those who used Facebook for
content gratifications spent more time on Facebook (Joinson, 2008). Thus, type of use and frequency of use is very much influenced by motivation and site affordances. For example, in addition to your personal profile, all users have a “wall” in which they can post messages and pictures and other users can post messages to them. However, what makes Facebook unique is that other people can post pictures of a profile owner and link it to that profile owner’s account. (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008). Thus, (unwanted) pictures or postings not created by the profile owner can still be linked to them, which in a sense gives others more control over an individual’s image than other more “rigid” sites. According to Papacharissi (2009), “technology not only in social networking sites but in other online social spaces functions architecturally, suggesting particular uses or highlighting technological affordances” (p. 216). Thus, Facebook’s architecture affords flexibility. The social networking site’s structure of loose behavioral norms leaves it up to the users to create their own by constructing behavioral cues through the network provided tools.

For example, as mentioned earlier, the unique architecture of Facebook links other individuals to a profile owner’s account. Thus, these other individuals, or “friends” as they are called on Facebook, can post messages or pictures that can be linked to the profile owner. According to Walther et al.’s (2008) Facebook study, people make judgments about an individual based on the posts of their friends and the attractiveness of their friends. Thus, positive social evaluations of an individual were consistent with whether posts were viewed positively or whether they had attractive friends. Thus, due to utilization of the unique affordances of Facebook, impressions can be formed of individuals based off the physical attractiveness of not only themselves, but of their friends.
Facebook’s flexible architecture is a sharp contrast to strictly administered social settings of sites such as LinkedIn and ASmallWorld, where users must conform to social norms and the environment does not allow for much self-presentation. This flexibility actually provides opportunity for users to utilize nonverbal communication (e.g. physical attractiveness) to make impressions and form impressions of others in a way that’s not possible on more “rigid” sites. Papacharissi (2009) believes that future studies on the architecture of online spaces need to look at how affordances are uniquely interpreted and appropriated by individuals.

Thus, Facebook provides us with a flexible forum that allows for users to create their own social norms based off of what is afforded and is not limited to the social norms of the system. While a number of Facebook studies exist, they largely examine interactions of same-cultured individuals; thus, there is a need for Facebook studies that examine the interaction between individuals of different cultures.

2.2b Cultural appropriation of affordances. According to Vatrapu (2010), different cultures appropriate affordances of the interface differently. For example, American and Chinese participants were provided an Asynchronous interface through which to collaborate. The interface provided them with multiple ways to take actions (affordances) in order to solve the problem of a disease outbreak. In terms of the actions taken, “on average, American participants...created more evidential relational links, made more individual contributions and were more likely to discuss information sharing and knowledge organization strategies than their Chinese counterparts” (Vatrapu, 2010, p. 7). This demonstrates that in intercultural online collaborative environments, certain cultures are more likely to “speak out.” Therefore, activities used in online intercultural collaboration should design activities that will highlight the strengths of both cultures.
Specific to Thailand, in Hongladarom’s (2001) analysis of a Usenet news group, the author states that “Thai cultural attitudes do affect computer-mediated communication in a meaningful way” (p. 308). According to Hongladarom (2001), members of the newsgroup openly discuss forbidden topics, such as the personal character of the royal family and criticism of the government. Participants wished for a more open community that is still in tune with their cultural identity. In terms of cultural appropriation of affordances, the discussion threads provide examples of mixing Thai words within mainly English posts. Thus, the contributors do not only seek to be understood by the wider global community but also seek understanding from their own close-knit communities. Foreigners who participated in the discussion thread could not understand the Thai expressions mixed with English; thus, also demonstrating how a cultural in-group can appropriate technological affordances to exclude cultural out-groups. This type of communication, according to Carey (1989) is called “the ritual view,” in which communication is not just a means of transmission of information, but a part reaffirming the community’s identity. Thus, from this perspective, within intercultural interaction, certain affordances can be utilized to perpetuate an in-group identity (e.g. In terms of CAT, this could be viewed as an example of non-accommodation/divergence). According to Hongladarom (2001), an outsider could feel just as lost in the Thai newsgroup as they would in a Thai town. Thus, “cyberspace mirrors real space and vise-versa” (p. 322).

Furthermore, Zorn (2005) points out that technology is often designed by those of different cultural background than the users; thus, users may interact with technology or have a different understanding of codes or practices than originally assumed by programmers. The following Table 1 summarizes nonverbal appropriation of affordances on Facebook as obtained from the first week of exchanges of a pilot study conducted to inform our analysis.
Table 1

Appropriation of Affordances of Nonverbal Behavior on Facebook

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<th>Kinesics (Body Movement and Gestures)</th>
<th>Paralanguage (Nonverbal cues that accompany verbal messages) (e.g. rate, accent, pitch, laughter, turn-taking)</th>
<th>External Visualizations (Dress, Food, colors, environment, etc.)</th>
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<td>Posting Pictures Posting Videos</td>
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2.2c Facebook stats from Thailand and the United States. Facebook currently has more than 800 million active users and more than 70 languages available (Socialbakers, 2013). Although Facebook is the most popular social media site in the United States, 75% of its users are outside of the United States. This includes Thailand, which has over 18 million users, which is over 27% of their population and over 72% of their online population. Facebook is currently Thailand’s most popular social media site. It surpassed the popularity of the country’s first social media site, Hi5, due to Facebook’s gaming function. Games such as Farmville, Café World, and
Restaurant City are highly popular amongst Thai Facebook users. Out of current Facebook users in Thailand, the largest age group is between the ages of 18 to 24, followed by users who are between the ages of 25 to 34. The male to female ratio is 49% male and 51% female (Socialbakers, 2013).

In the United States, there are currently over 168 million Facebook users. The highest concentration of Facebook users in the United States is between the ages 25 to 34 followed by users between the ages of 18 to 24. The ratio of male to female users is 46% male and 54% female in the United States (Socialbakers, 2012). These statistics support the use of college aged students (generally between the ages of 18 to 24) for this particular study.

Due to the changing nature of statistics on social media sites like Facebook and the time required for journal publications, the previous data was taken from Socialbakers. Socialbakers, which launched in 2008, has become a leading global social media analytics company with customers in over 75 countries. It is also the most cited source for global Facebook data (Socialbakers, 2012). The most recent data found on Facebook statistics in journal articles reported the number of Facebook users (registered members) at 19 million as of March 7th, 2007 (Walther, et al., 2008), while a book on Facebook reported 600 million active users as of November 2010 with 143 million active users in the United States and 75% of its active users outside the United States (Kirkpatrick, 2011). These statistics were taken from the Facebook Global Monitor, which is published by insidefacebook.com. The last report found from Facebook Global Monitor was from 2010.
2.3 Social Cues in CMC

Social cues are verbal or non-verbal clues that guide social interactions. Within CMC they have been known to “aid in the formation of impressions of individuals” and work to decrease the psychological distance between those communicating (Tanis & Postmes, p. 5, 2003). There are generally two perspectives in regard to social cues and computer mediated communication.

The first perspective finds that computer mediated communication filters out many cues that are present in FTF communication and substituting CMC for FTF will result in predictable changes in intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. This perspective has been supported by theories that predate CMC but have still been applied to the phenomenon, such as social presence theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976), information richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984), and Kiesler, Siegel and McGuire’s (1984) “lack of social context cues” stance. Culnan and Markus (1987) refer to this perspective as the “cues-filtered-out” framework. This position focuses on the nature and amount of cues and the resulting CMC effects. For example, according to Rutter (1987), “Cuelessness leads to psychological distance, psychological distance leads to structured-work-focused and depersonalized content, and structured-work-focused depersonalized content leads in turn to deliberate spontaneous style and particular types of outcomes” (p.4). Thus, Rutter (1987) points out using a specific medium of communication can result in decreased social cues, which can influence the amount of psychological distance between those communicating.

The second perspective views CMC through “social dynamic media theories.” This perspective argues that an individual’s communication behavior is influenced by the social and
organizational systems and environmental factors (Rhoads, 2010). For example, Fulk, Schmitz, and Steinfeld (1990) believe that the capabilities of CMCs depend on the user’s evaluation of it, which is influenced by one’s social network. In addition, Derks, Bos, & von Grumbkow (2007) found that participants used more emoticons in socio-emotional contexts than in structured-work-focused contexts, indicating that social context influences the use of social cues like emoticons in CMC environments. Walther (1992) posits in his social information processing theory (SIP) that users use certain communicative content and style of CMCs to affect socio-emotional dynamics. In other words, individuals adapt the textual affordances of a medium to meet their need for social cues. Walther (1996) further argues that CMCs can actually enable users to be more social as “this over-reliance on minimal cues is more pronounced when participants have no physical exposure to one another, as in CMC; they’re deindividuated” (p. 18). He argues that “not only do CMC senders overcome the limits of the media to express personal cues, they may actually do so in ways that FTF communicators cannot” (p. 19). For example, users of CMC tend to ask more questions and disclose more information than FTF communicators (Farrer & Gavin, 2009). In support of Walther’s SIP theory, Tanis and Postmes (2003) found that social cues can influence impression formation such that reducing ambiguity of a person can lead to a higher degree of intimacy and greater quality of contact, and the inclusion of social cues (e.g. picture and biographical information) influences positive impression formation. Their findings are consistent with SIP in that social cues can foster rapport between people. Furthermore, Tanis and Postmes (2003) also confirm the Social Identity Model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE) (Reicher, Spears, Postmes, 1995), which posits that in the absence of social cues, like in CMC, group characteristics tend to be attributed to individuals as people are deindividuated. When no social cues were available, participants preferred working
with in-group members (Tanis & Postmes, 2003). Therefore, social cues do not necessarily disappear in CMC contexts, but are utilized in different ways such that the amount that they are used in CMC environments can influence the exchange. According to Walther, Loh, and Granka (2005), regardless of the medium (CMC or FTF), participants can achieve the same amount of affective communication (emotional and interpersonal). Hollan and Stornetta (1992) suggest looking at distinctive characteristics of the ICT rather than trying to imitate face-to-face interactions. Similarly, Licoppe and Smoreda (2004) state that ICTs are not a substitute for face-to-face interaction, but rather, a new resource for connected presence. Hewling (2006) posits that because of particular online interaction, online class participants can generate a “third” culture that is unique to online interaction. Furthermore, technology used to aid Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) should be designed to encourage intersubjective meaning making rather than trying to imitate FTF learning situations (Suthers, 2006). Suthers (2006) proposes specific lines of investigation in order to examine unique opportunities to encourage intersubjective meaning making. These lines of investigation will be used in the discussion section to suggest ideas on adapting affordances of Facebook to encourage learning through online intercultural interaction. CMC can be seen as having unique affordances that may not be possible within face-to-face environments. This study follows the second perspective of social dynamic media theories in that social cues, such as nonverbal behavior, don’t necessarily disappear in CMC interactions, but rather, are manifested in different ways.

2.3a Types of social cues in CMC. In Fogg’s (1999) study on computers as social actors he identifies five primary types of social cues: physical (face, eyes, body, movement), psychological (personality, preferences, feelings, empathy, humor), language (spoken language, language recognition, interactive use), social dynamics (praise, taking turns, cooperation), and social roles
(teammate, opponent, friend, teacher, authoritarian). However, as Fogg's study focuses on human computer interaction rather than computer mediated communication between humans, only some of his categories apply to this particular study, such as 1. *Physical*, 2. *Psychological*, and 3. *Social dynamic cues*. These social cue categories can be grouped as *physical* and *non-physical* social cues. Physical cues consist of nonverbal communication (kinesics, paralanguage, proxemics), and non-physical cues consist of psychological (feelings, empathy, humor), social dynamics (praise, cooperation), and language (text). However, these categories of physical and non-physical are not mutually exclusive. Nonverbal cues such as laughter can indicate the psychological cue of humor. Thus, social cues cannot be examined separately (as physical and non-physical), but must be examined in terms of how one influences the other. The following sections provide more information certain types of social cues (e.g. nonverbal) and its relation to CMC.

### 2.3b Nonverbal cues.
Nonverbal communication greatly influences our verbal communication. Knapp and Hall (2010) provide two important points in order to discuss the role of nonverbal communication in human interactions, saying that, “1. While we are in the presence of another person, we are constantly giving signals about our attitudes, feelings, and personality, and 2. Others may become particularly adept at sensing and interpreting signals” (p.4). A loose definition of nonverbal communication is provided as “communication effected by means other than words, assuming words are the verbal elements” (p. Knapp & Hall, 2010, p. 5). Goffman (1959) sees nonverbal behavior as the unintentional form of feeling. This idea is furthered by Bennett and Castiglioni (2004) who posit that since nonverbal communication has not been reified like verbal communication, it is less likely to be used intentionally. Furthermore, they discuss nonverbal behavior as “behavior given off,” and “behavior given off” should be treated
as given form to feeling in culture. However, what makes the use of nonverbal behavior distinct in online environments is that, depending on the type of nonverbal behavior, it tends to be more intentional because users must actively type in certain nonverbal cues (e.g. emoticons).

However, even in online environments, users are still sometimes unaware of the effect their nonverbal behavior on others. In terms of intercultural interaction and ICC, this study posits that social cues, such as nonverbal behavior tends to be more unintentional (e.g. using social cues without thinking how it might affect the receiver) for those with less awareness or lower ICC and more intentional (e.g. using social cues with some thought as to how it might affect the receiver) for this with higher ICC. Thus, ICC would lead to more intentional use of nonverbal behavior. This is related to Bennett and Bennett’s (2004) idea of self-awareness needed for awareness of others and Fontaine’s (1994) idea of presence—a heightened awareness needed for success in new environments/ecologies such as new intercultural encounters. Knapp & Hall further point out that, “separating verbal and nonverbal behavior into two separate and distinct categories is virtually impossible” (Knapp & Hall, 2010). This study examines the nonverbal as a part of an overall examination of social cues that includes their relation to verbal messages.

### 2.3c Cultural uses of nonverbal cues in CMC

According to St. Amant (2002), CMC lacks contextual cues that are essential for people from certain cultures to determine how to interact in certain communicative situations. St. Amant (2002) believes that this situation results in frustrated participants who cannot determine what is acceptable behavior and consequently remain silent or say very little so as not to offend anyone. However, cues may not necessarily be missing, but simply manifested in a different way. Thus, certain non-verbal substitutes are developed online out of a need to use them. The following section examines the use of nonverbal cues in CMC in terms of three types of nonverbal behavior: Kinesics (facial expressions, body
movement, gestures), Paralanguage (cues that accompany verbal messages—rate, accentuation, pitch, laughter), Proxemics (function and regulation of interpersonal space in different cultures), plus an additional external visualizations category.

Kinesics. Kinesics includes things like facial expressions, body movement, and gestures. There are five functions of kinesics behavior (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). These include: emblems (a gesture with a specific meaning on its own), illustrators (gestures that support a verbal message), affect displays (facial expressions), regulators (coordinate turn-taking), and adaptors (involuntary actions). In face-to-face environments, kinesics can be used to reinforce a message, substitute for a verbal message, increase the level of intensity of a message, or regulate the flow of messages. This is most obviously seen in the use things like hand gestures or facial expressions.

It is useful to begin by analyzing how kinesics/gestures are utilized in CMC in general. For example, Vulhulsdonck (2007) believes that losses in effective communication may be due in part to the difficulty in achieving common ground (Clark and Brennan, 1991). Common ground, which is a construct that arises from Clark’s contribution theory, is basically the knowledge that participants are aware they have in common. Vulhulsdonck posits that nonverbal gestures (e.g. nodding, thumbs up) can help in the establishment of common ground. Furthermore, gestures may help improve memory through the reduction of cognitive load and the freeing up of memory space (Goldwin-Meadow, 2003). Overall, Verhulsdonck (2007) sees gestures as having three main functions: First, they help establish social presence, which can reduce “flaming”—hostile/insulting behavior in online interactions. Second, they increase common ground by aiding in an understanding of intentions, and third, they reduce cognitive load. Verhulsdonck’s (2007) study emphasizes the importance using and understanding gestures.
within virtual environments in order to help establish common ground, which is vital within intercultural communication/distance communication. Establishing common ground helps in establishing trust and a sort of shared identity amongst participants. This sort of trust or shared identity is otherwise known as “social capital” (Resnick, 2002) and is a side effect of social interactions and helps to encourage future interactions. Clark and Brennan (1991) identify certain media cues that can be extended to further establish common ground within distance collaboration environment. These cues include elements of co-spatial (co-presence, sequentiality, simultaneity), co-temporal (visibility, audibility, contemporality) and other media cues (e.g. email communication) that include the asynchronous affordances of revisability and reviewability.

Within CMC environments, the most obvious use of kinesics is found in the use of symbols such as emoticons (graphical representations of facial expressions). According to Kayan, Fussel, & Setlock (2006), North Americans consider emoticons as less important than Indians and East Asians. They relate these findings to Hall’s (1976) ideas of high context and low context cultures, where North Americans (Low Context) rely more on words, and Asians (High Context) tend to rely more on visual cues and other contextual information.

Other studies have focused on cultural specific uses of emoticons, such as Japanese use of emoticons (Yanbi, 2006); while others examine whether emoticons can be culturally neutral (Park, 2012). For example, Park’s (2012) study found that American emoticons focus on the mouth while Korean emoticons focus on the eyes. Furthermore, emoticons were culturally neutral (recognized by either culture) unless they used language/cultural specific characters. Similarly, Yun, Deng, and Hiscock’s (2009) examined whether subjects from one culture could recognize the identity of the subject expressing a particular emotion (facial expression) from a
different culture than those from the same cultural background in a 3D environment. Through the use of five of Ekman and Friesen’s (1971) six universal emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, and surprise) and Americanized visual stimulus, cultural background was found to impact identity perception but had little effect on emotional perception. Thus, Yun, et al. (2009) found that emotional recognition is independent of culture. However, these findings focus on differences between different cultures’ use of technology and does not examine intercultural interaction.

In sum, the studies examining the cultural use of Kinesics in CMC environments tend to focus on cross cultural differences rather than interaction and are largely survey based. Thus, there is a need for more studies focused on intercultural interaction in more naturalistic settings.

**Paralanguage.** Paralanguage refers to nonverbal cues that accompany verbal messages (which would not exist without an existing verbal message), which include things like: rate, accent, pitch, laughter, and turn-taking. Examples of turn-taking can be found in Moore, et al. (2007). Moore, et al. (2007) recommends the Virtual Environment (VE) called “There” which lets participants see messages letter-by-letter as they unfold, which helps with turn-taking. This style of word-by-word chatting more closely resembles real life speech, so players are able to see the reasons for long pauses in conversation. According to Massey, Montoya-Weiss, Hung, and Ramesh (2001), since high context cultures need more continuous feedback, Asian participants, who tend to have higher context, have low satisfaction in asynchronous interactions. Turn-taking might be afforded in CMC environments with the use of systems similar to the virtual environment “There” that utilizes continuous feedback.
Furthermore, according to Kayan, et al., (2006), Americans tend to use multiple windows in IM conversation more than Asians, which supports the idea that there is a greater need to focus on just one speaking partner in high context cultures. Consequently, Americans tend to be more comfortable with interruptions and conversing with multiple people in different windows at one time. Furthermore, in text-based chat, interrupting is a common occurrence as participants sometimes start typing before the other is finished due to issues of visibility and feedback. Cultural social protocols such as turn-taking and interrupting can contribute to the effectiveness of the conversation.

Finally, besides paralanguage in terms of turn-taking, paralanguage can also be seen in terms of accent (emphasis). Aside from more obvious uses of accent, such as all caps for emphasis, questions at the end of sentences or subject headings can be used to soften messages (Savignon & Roithmeier, 2004). Furthermore, the use of laughter cues (LOL, Ha Ha) can soften messages and be used as fillers in-between sentences.

This study utilizes wall-posts to analyze paralanguage. Therefore, the analyses will primarily focus on accentuation (emphasis), and laughter since an analysis of turn-taking requires more synchronous interaction.

**Proxemics.** Proxemics deals with the function and regulation of interpersonal space in different cultures. According to Hall (1966), individuals have four different types of spatial zones. These include: intimate space (contact to 18 inches), personal space—used for casual conversation (1 1/2 to 4 feet), Social space—used for strangers of business transactions (4-12 feet), and public space—used for formal meetings of lectures (12-25 feet). Those from high-contact cultures favor high sensory exposure, and thus, require more personal contact; whereas,
those from low-contact cultures favor low sensory exposure, and thus, require less personal contact. According to Barnlund (1975), Hall (1976), and Watson (1970), high contact cultures include: the French, Italians, Latin Americans, Russians, Arabs, and Africans; those from low contact cultures include: Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans (East-Asians), and those from moderate contact cultures include U.S. Americans, Canadians, northern Europeans, Australians, and New Zealanders. However, it’s important to remember that proxemics, just like other aspects of culture, lies on a continuum, and therefore, not all individuals from a specific culture necessarily fit into a certain category of high, moderate, or low contact. Although understanding proxemics in terms of certain categories helps with the sense making process and overall understanding, we must keep in mind throughout this analysis that it is not static.

Proxemics is played out much differently in CMC than it is in face-to-face environments. For example, According to Licoppe and Smoreda (2004), “The delay between the event and the announcement of the event is, as it were, a statement of the tempo of the relationship, and thus of relational proximity” (p. 323). Thus, nonverbal cues, such as proximity, can be seen not as an imitation of actual face-to-face physical proximity, but in terms of how much “space” or time there is between the actual event and when an announcement is sent. Similarly, proximity can be seen in how much “space” there is between receiving a message and sending a reply. Cultural differences in time perception may play a role in proximity as well. Hall (1959) identifies two notions of time, polychronic and monochronic. Those who follow a monochronic time function (e.g. most Americans) do things in a linear fashion. Thus, they tend to stick to schedule and tend to get irritated by things that throw off their schedule. Those who adhere to polychronic time do not place priority in adhering to a linear schedule. Thus, those from polychronic cultures tend to
be less annoyed by delays (Rose, Evaristo, & Straub, 2002). Therefore, there may be differences in the times in-between responses that are considered acceptable.

Proximity can also be seen in Thorne’s (2003) discussion on Americans developing friendships with their French peers over email. The Americans expected they would develop more trusting relationships with their French counterparts through direct contact; however, what Thorne (2003) calls an “illusion of proximity” informed the Americans expectations that they could develop closer relationships. This “illusion of proximity” was afforded by the Americans through frequent everyday use of the internet, where their French counterparts had very limited use of the internet.

To further stress the importance of space even in CMC environments, Reeves and Nass (1996) point out that people in all cultures and most species use space to communicate their feelings about the current situation. Reeves and Nass (1996) wondered how people would react if their personal space was violated with the use of pictures. They predicted that close-up shots of faces would be more intensely evaluated (using adjectives), would afford more attention (slower reaction time), and would be more easily remembered than shots that were further away. Their findings reveal that participants rated closer faces more intensely, reacted 10 percent slower, and had better memory recognition of closer faces. Due the extensive mixture of faces, the results were not attributed to particular facial characteristics. However, what does this have to do with space? According to Reeves and Nass (1996), “Viewers evaluate faces on a screen, and they prepare to respond to the faces, in the same ways that they would for actual people” (p. 47). Therefore, when it comes to space, technology should allow viewers the ability to get as far or as close as they want (e.g. the ability to get close by zooming in or withdrawing by zooming out); thus, creating a feeling of life like interaction (Reeves and Nass, 1996).
In sum, there are a number of factors that may play into proxemics of CMC. In particular, a “relational proximity” may be felt in the time it takes to respond or send out certain messages (Licoppe & Smoreda, 2004), and “illusion of proximity” can create an image of CMC being able to afford close relationships with others due to frequency of use (Thorne, 2003), and how close or distant a visual image may seem to be may have an effect on people’s judgment of space (Reeves and Nass, 1996). Due to the nature of the data (asynchronous wall posts) this study does not examine proxemics. Future studies should examine proxemics in terms of response latency and presence.

*External visualizations.* In addition to kinesics, paralanguage, and proxemics, other forms of nonverbal communication include living environment (colors, decorations, workplace environment), clothes (amount, color), food, smell, and time (Hall, 2005). On Facebook, with the exception of time and smell, these are usually manifested through the posting of pictures and videos. Thus, for the purposes of this study, other forms of nonverbal communication will be termed “external visualizations.” For example, findings indicate that within mobile text interfaces, Asian participants desire more visual elements than Finnish participants (Choi, Lee, Kim, & Jeon, 2005). More specifically, when being interviewed about the elements of a menu, Finnish participants expressed a preference for text and numbers over icons and colors when searching; while, Korean and Japanese participants expressed the importance of icons, colors in order to help them understand a menu.

2.3d Summary and implications: Social cues, culture, and CMC. Much of the literature on social cues, culture, and CMC focuses on nonverbal behaviors. While nonverbal cues are an important part of social cue behavior, social cues also encompass psychological (personality, preferences, feelings, empathy, humor) and social dynamics (praise, taking turns, cooperation) as
outlined by Fogg (1999). Both physical and non-physical social cues influence each other and cannot be studied in isolation. Furthermore, the literature points to the popularity of cross-cultural examination of cultural differences and to the popularity of using cultural dimensions from Hall and Hofstede to examine cultural uses of CMC. While these frameworks may be useful in analyzing specific forms of cross-cultural communication, they are limited when it comes to analyzing intercultural interaction in CMC. For example, Wurtz (2005) found that while Hall and Hofstede’s dimensions seemed useful in developing graphical website advertisements, they were less suited in predicting actual CMC usage. Furthermore, “Cultures do not talk to each other; individuals do” (Scollon & Wong-Scollon, 2001, p. 138). Therefore, it is problematic to examine intercultural interaction based on cultural polarities. According to Hewling (2006), online class participants can generate a “third” culture that does not fit neatly into Hall/Hofstede’s polarities (e.g. individualism/collectivism, high context/low context). Therefore, utilizing Hall/Hofstede’s cultural dimensions to analyze culture on CMC is limiting because it looks at culture as static and therefore may be more useful in studies of cross-cultural comparisons rather than intercultural, which concerns itself with the individuals involved. What it does tell us is that, from a cross-cultural perspective, social cues are used differently—pointing to the need to examine how these cues are used within interaction (Hewling, 2006). Table 2 summarizes the findings of nonverbal intercultural communication in CMC from this section.
### Table 2
Nonverbal Intercultural Communication in Computed Mediated Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Nonverbal Behavior</th>
<th>Manifestations</th>
<th>Implications for Intercultural Issues</th>
<th>Relation to Cultural Models/Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kinesics:</strong> Facial expressions, body movement, and gestures</td>
<td>Emoticons</td>
<td>Kayan, Fussel, &amp; Setlock (2006), North Americans consider emoticons as less important than Indians and East Asians.</td>
<td>Hall’s (1976) high context and low context cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paralanguage:</strong> Nonverbal cues that accompany verbal messages (which would not exist without an existing verbal message), which include things like: rate, accent, pitch, laughter, and turn-taking.</td>
<td>Continuous feedback Multiple windows in IM (talking to multiple people at the same time) Questions at the end of statements to soften message (Savignon &amp; Roithmeier, 2004). Use of subject headings to soften message (Savignon &amp; Roithmeier, 2004).</td>
<td>Asian participants have low satisfaction in asynchronous interactions. (Massey, Montoya-Weiss, Hung, and Ramesh, 2001) Americans tend to use multiple windows in IM conversation more than Asians (Kayan, et al., 2006; Nardi, Whattaker, &amp; Bradner, 2000).</td>
<td>High context cultures need more continuous feedback. There is a greater need to focus on just one speaking partner in high context cultures. Thus, Americans tend to be more comfortable with interruptions and conversing with multiple people in different windows at one time (Kayan, et al., 2006; Nardi, Whattaker, &amp; Bradner, 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proxemics:</strong> Function and regulation of interpersonal space in different cultures.</td>
<td>Frequent Contact Time between receiving and responding to messages (e.g. a feeling of closeness or lack of).</td>
<td>American participants expected to develop trusting relationships with French counterparts through direct contact. However, cultural differences in access to ICTs to aid this communication was influential (Thorne, 2003). “relational proximity” (Licoppe and Smoreda, 2004).</td>
<td>“Illusion of Proximity” (Thorne, 2003) Theory of Proxemics (Hall, 1976) Monochronic vs. Polychronic time (Hofstede)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Visualizations</strong></td>
<td>Visual Elements (icons; pictures)</td>
<td>Asian participants need more visual elements than Finnish participants (Choi, Lee, Kim, &amp; Jeon, 2005),</td>
<td>High Context/Low Context Cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Accommodation

Originally called Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) was originally formulated to explore the sociopsychological parameters behind what speakers do in their speech behavior. It viewed communication as managing both interpersonal and intergroup relationships. The central idea of the theory was that speakers accommodate their communication patterns with the goal of maintaining and creating positive personal and social identities. CAT “predicts the motivated communicative processes of convergence and divergence; thus, making it an objective theory that highlights subjective dimensions of intercultural interactions” (Gallois, et al., 1995, p. 124).

2.4a Intercultural applications of CAT. CAT was developed for intercultural contexts by Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles, and Coupland (1988; 1995). The initial goal of this endeavor was to develop one Communication Accommodation Theory that was applicable to intercultural settings and combined the propositions of SAT and Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (ELIT). As CAT looks at managing both intergroup and interpersonal relations, it seems fitting that much attention has been paid to CAT in terms of the cultural variables of individualism/collectivism (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). For example, collectivists have a tendency to identify more strongly with the ingroup and make clearer distinctions between themselves and outgroups; whereas, individualists tend to have soft boundaries that are sometimes a result of fuzzy ingroup/outgroup identities. Therefore, individualists may react to convergence from an outgroup member more positively and may reciprocate in kind. However, collectivists may react to convergence more negatively due to harder group boundaries and consequently diverge. The model presented by Gallois, et al. (1995) takes into account cultural considerations such as these and views cultural variability as a macro-contextual factor.
CAT is based on three general assumptions: 1. Communicative interactions are embedded in a sociohistorical context; 2. Communication is about both exchanges of referential meaning and negotiation of personal and social identities; 3. Interactants achieve the informational and relational functions of communication by accommodating their communicative behavior, through linguistic, paralinguistic, discursive, and nonlinguistic moves, to their interlocutor’s perceived individual and group characteristics. (Gallois, Ogay, and Giles, 2005, p. 136-137). The assumptions listed above helps to highlight CAT’s scope (what it does; what theory it relies on). Essentially, CAT theorizes two things: 1. Communication is motivated; 2. Accommodative strategies are goal oriented and used to: Understand and be understood, maintain face and relationships, direct flow of conversation, and maintain interpersonal control.

Giles, Coupland, and Coupland (1991) identified three dimensions of accommodation: psychological (motivational), linguistic (communicative), and subjective (perceived) versus objective (actual behavior). Although an individual may be divergent on some of these dimensions and convergent on others, CAT emphasizes the importance of subjective and psychological dimensions. However discrepancies between psychological and subjective dimensions and linguistic and objective may point to important insights for miscommunication. This study focuses on the influence of ICC on objective accommodation (actual accommodation) rather than subjective (perceived) accommodation.

There are different ways of accommodating. For example, accommodation is a process where those interacting regulate their communication in order to appear more similar to those they are interacting with. However, non-accommodation, which is a process where those interacting regulate their communication in order to appear more distinct from those they are interacting with, can take on many forms. For example, Over-accommodation—overly
accommodating in order to increase similarity or understanding (e.g. speaking slowly and loudly to foreigners), counter accommodation—remaining distinct through divergent or hostile moves, and under accommodation—remaining distinct through maintenance and lack of empathy, are examples of non-accommodation.

Overall, CAT proposes that “All things being equal, accommodative behavior is attributed internally, evaluated positively, and results in positive future interactions with the other person…likewise, non-accommodation is attributed internally, evaluated negatively, and results in negative future intentions toward interactions with the other person” (p. 141). However, we know that things are not equal; therefore, things like social norms can dictate how a particular behavior is perceived. Furthermore, behavior coming from ingroup members is viewed more positively than the same behavior enacted by outgroup members. Furthermore, future intentions toward an outgroup are only generalized as interpersonal intentions if the interlocutor is viewed as representative of his or her group.

The evolution of CAT over the past three decades has resulted in a more generic model that can be developed by researchers for specific contexts, which may entreat more variables. Furthermore, “CAT highlights the intergroup aspects of communication, something that many theories of interpersonal communication neglect” (p. 143). Gallois, Ogay, and Giles (2005) believe that researchers need to take the intergroup aspect of intercultural communication into account. CAT allows one to examine interpersonal interaction without neglecting the intergroup aspects at play. In terms of this study, CAT allows us to examine the intergroup interaction of Thais and Americans by looking at the interpersonal characteristics of their Facebook conversations. Furthermore, CAT informs our prediction that ICC can influence communication effectiveness through accommodative social behavior. In addition, the goals of CAT inform our
measures on communication effectiveness (e.g. clarity, understanding, maintaining face and relationships). Overall, CAT provides us with the framework to examine intercultural interaction through the nuances of interpersonal conversation.

2.4b Measuring accommodation. According to CAT, speakers adjust or accommodate their speech patterns in order to increase understanding and maintain positive social relationships. Researchers have attempted to tackle the task of operationalizing the variables in the model. For example, one study attempted to operationalize the variables and test predictive paths while examining the communication accommodation between Australian and Chinese overseas students (Jones, 1994). Students were first asked to rate the appropriateness of the nonverbal behavior of videotaped simulations of conversations between Australian and Chinese students and Australian faculty. As predicted, non-accommodating students and faculty were rated less favorably than those who accommodated. However, the role of those interacting played a part in how interactants were rated. Accommodating faculty members received higher ratings than students who had the same behavior. This portion of the study showed that the labeling of nonverbal behaviors (e.g. as too much or too little) could effectively predict the ratings of appropriateness and consequently the evaluations of the speakers. Thus, accommodation is partially reflected in certain nonverbal behaviors.

The second phase of the study involved conversational partners between Australian and Chinese overseas students and Australian faculty. The conversations were measured for similarity in terms of verbal behavior and nonverbal behavior. The results showed little convergence because convergence most likely already occurred before measurement (e.g. Chinese students had accommodated long-term to Australian students already). However, there was a great difference in nonverbal behavior between how Chinese students interacted with the
Australian students and the Australian faculty members. This most likely demonstrates their home country norms about the level of formality that is appropriate when interacting with faculty rather than interpersonal accommodation.

The results of this study demonstrate the importance of measuring both subjective and objective measures. Furthermore, different types of dyads used the same strategies with different behaviors. For example, female Australian students adjusted their response latency and pause length; faculty members chose topics that they believed the Chinese students would be more familiar with, and the male students used many questions to check for understanding. Overall, this study shows that role, gender, and ethnicity greatly influence perceived accommodation. Thus, considering ethnic/cultural groups is not enough and multiple roles must also be taken into account.

Similarly, other studies that measure social cues, such as nonverbal behavior, have examined similar phenomena that involve accommodation/adaptation of behavior, such as: coordination, nonverbal adaptation, and rapport. For example, the coordination of behavior, which is essential to interpersonal communication, can be captured in two ways: mutual influence (similarities/differences in partners), and mutual adaptation (responding to changes in your partner’s behavior during the interaction) (Cappella, 2005; Bernieri & Rosenthal, 1991; Tickle-Degnen, 1987). Cappella (2005) looks at the use of judgment scales to measure nonverbal adaptation, which is the process of mutually influencing or adjusting to one another. Nonverbal adaptation take form in synchrony, matching, and entrainment (Bernieri, 2005) and can be linked with various outcomes. For example, coordinated action is linked to positive outcomes such as rapport and empathy (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1987; White & Sargent, 2005) and divergent speech tends to be evaluated more negatively (Street, 1982).
Furthermore, rapport can be seen as an indication or outcome of adaptive or accommodative behavior. From Bernieri’s perspective, rapport applies to relationships and not individuals. Thus, when measuring rapport, relational components must be operationalized in terms of the interaction rather than the individual. In Bernieri’s study, participants assessed the interaction with an 18-item rapport questionnaire rather than assessing themselves or their partner. According to Bernieri, two people agreeing that there is high rapport indicates high rapport; whereas, two people disagreeing on rapport indicates low rapport. The study examined which nonverbal composite features are predictive of self-reports. The analyses indicates that expressiveness/animation, physical proximity (moving toward each other), and synchrony/behavior coordination predicted self-reports of positive affect, mutual attention, and coordination. Furthermore, rapport is contextual in that the predictive relationship between nonverbal expression and self-report differ across contexts. For example, eye contact and backchannel responses were not relevant when two people were focused on a common object. This reminds us that context may influence nonverbal relevance. Therefore, nonverbal cues need to be looked at within the context of verbal cues. One cannot be examined without the other.

These studies inform the set up and measures on accommodative nonverbal behavior for this particular study. First, Cappella’s study on coordination involved the use of judgments scales (that use more than one judge and takes the mean of the judges’ scores) to measure nonverbal adaptation, which is adapted and applied to this study when measuring social cue accommodation (see methods). Furthermore, the set-up of Bernieri’s study, which used both self-report and observation of nonverbal composite features, informs part of the set-up for this particular study. Bernieri examined which nonverbal features were predictive of self-reports;
similarly, this study will examine which factors (ICC, social cue accommodative behavior) are predictive of communication effectiveness.

**Coding and data representation.** Three basic distinctions can be made in terms of coding and data representation of accommodative behavior: Categorical (there or not there) versus continuous codes (behavior falls along a metric), codes versus variables (coding pertains to data acquisition and variables pertain to conceptual and data analysis), and degree of inference in coding (Cappella, 2005).

First, in terms of codes, Cappella measured adaptation using continuous codes on a nine-point scale of very strongly agree to very strongly disagree in terms of the following, which are derived from Bernieri, Reznick, and Rosenthal (1988): The partners engaged in simultaneous movement; The partners had similar tempos of activity; The partners’ interaction was coordinated and smooth; The partners matched one another’s behaviors.

Second, in terms of degree of inference in coding, Cappella’s studies (series of three studies) were conducted to understand how to measure coordination in human interaction through behavioral coding of naïve raters. The three studies varied in terms of how much voice cues and facial emotion were available to the raters (e.g. no voice or facial emotion cues were provided in the third study). Cappella found that untrained judges can measure synchrony between partners in segments of conversation. Furthermore, the judges of all three studies were consistent with one another. Cappella’s study indicates that coordination in social interaction can be studied using slices of interaction rather than coding lengthy interactions. Further support (Ambady, Bernieri, & Richeson, 2000; Ambady, LaPlante, & Johnson, 2001; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992) indicates that assessing a minute of behavior has the same or similar predictive
 validity as assessing five minutes or five hours. Thus, more behavior does not equal more information. This provides support for analysis of pieces of the interaction rather than the entire lengthy interaction.

2.4c **Summary: Measuring accommodation.** This study examines the role of ICC in predicting conversational effectiveness through accommodative social cue behavior. Studies on measuring accommodative behavior tell us that first, the context in which accommodative behavior takes place must be taken into consideration (Jones, 1994). Second, continuous codes can be used to measure accommodative behavior (Cappella, 2005). Third, untrained judges can examine the synchrony in social cue behavior of participants in slices of interaction (rather than entire interactions) (Ambady, Bernieri, & Richeson, 2000; Ambady, LaPlante, & Johnson, 2001; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Cappella, 2005). These findings influence the measuring of accommodative social cue behavior in this study. Consequently, this study uses coders to code for the types of accommodative behavior within slices of interaction (25% of the interaction). Coders are also asked to rate the degree of accommodative behavior using continuous codes. Consensus was reached amongst coders during the coding process. (Please see methods section for more details).

2.5 **Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)**

This section will discuss ICC in terms of the following areas: History and evolution of intercultural training and training outcomes, definitions, models, ICC in CMC, summary/conclusions, and measurements.

2.5a **History and evolution of intercultural training and training outcomes.** In order to discuss what ICC is, one needs to understand how the field of intercultural communication has
evolved. In terms of training, the field has moved from country specific information gathering and language learning → Experience/Emotion based (e.g. Hall’s ideas of needing to understand what happens when transformation occurs as a result of intercultural experience) → focusing on individual competence (Pusch, 2003). However, according to Pusch (2003), there is still a need for integration of individual competence and systems (networks) and their transformation. Thus, future research should seek to move attention away from the individual and look at contextual factors as well.

From this individual competence focus, we have seen individual level measurements. For example, in Fowler and Blohm’s (2003) analysis of methods for intercultural training, they identify popular training outcomes as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These training outcomes can be seen in much of the literature on cross-cultural training programs from 1988 to 2000 reviewed by Mendenhall, Stahl, Ehnert, Oddou, Osland, and Kuhlmann (2003). In this review, Mendenhall, et al. (2003) found that the effect of the cross-cultural training (CCT) depends on the type of dependent variable (e.g. CCT is effective in enhancing knowledge but less effective at behavioral change). They concluded that there needs to be more studies that measure behavioral change, performance, and adjustment rather than simply measuring the easier dependent variable of an increase in knowledge, which does not necessarily predict how an individual will react in an intercultural situation (e.g. you may be very knowledgeable about a culture but not able to function interculturally). Further emphasis on the variables of knowledge, attitude, and behavior can be found in Bennett and Bennett’s (2003) discussion on behavior and emotion. According to Bennett and Bennett (2003), there is a lot of emphasis on behavior in intercultural communication; however, behavior cannot be separated from emotion. This can be described as intercultural mindset and skillset, which is defined as "one's awareness of operating
in a cultural context” (Bennett and Bennett, 2003, p. 149) which involves cultural self-awareness (being conscious of one's own culture), frameworks for cultural contrast, and understanding how to use cultural generalizations without stereotyping. This skill set includes: ability to analyze interaction, predict misunderstandings, and come up with adaptive behavior. Thus, three things must work together in order for development to occur: knowledge, attitude, and behavior.

Finally, Bennett and Castiglioni (2003) point to the notion that only awareness or knowledge of a culture is insufficient and one needs to also have a feeling for it. “Feeling” refers to an intuitive grasp of a particular situation. This kind of feeling is associated with sensing the appropriateness of a certain behavior. Embodied feeling is the interface between physical sensation and conscious awareness. Furthermore, the key to developing intercultural competence is the intentional use of empathy. We can develop empathy by reestablishing a connection with our bodies so we are aware of our own embodied cultural experience and able to shift body boundaries to forms that draw out the feeling of the other culture. Thus, Bennett and Castiglioni (2003) suggest that ethnocentrism is something that is an embodied feeling/physical state and that through becoming aware of our embodied cultural experience we can transcend into ethnorelativism. This idea changes the way we think about traditional intercultural training, which focuses on cognitive awareness and behavioral actions. It also has implications for how we measure intercultural competence—moving us closer to measuring observed actual behavior/experience rather than relying on paper and pencil methods that moves the respondent out of the embodied cultural experience.

To summarize, the field of intercultural communication/training has evolved from focusing on knowledge based approaches and training outcome variables (e.g. country specific, language learning) to experience or emotion based approaches to an emphasis on individual
intercultural competence. The main variables that have risen from this emphasis on individual intercultural competence are knowledge, skills, and attitude (Blake, et al., 2003; Fowler & Blohm, 2003; Mendenhall, et al., 2003) with some variations of knowledge, attitude, and behavior (Bennett & Bennett, 2003). Finally, Bennett and Castiglioni’s (2003) study on an embodied feeling of culture shifts the focus away from the cognitive awareness and behavioral actions focus of traditional intercultural training and has implications for how we measure intercultural competence.

2.5b Definitions. Although the concept of ICC is used quite frequently in the field of Intercultural Communication, there does not seem to be great consensus as to its definition. According to Spitzberg (1994) the existing models of ICC are fragmented, lack coherence, and typically consist of lists of skills, abilities, and attitudes that lack integration across lists. Thus, Spitzberg believes that we should develop an integrative model of intercultural competence that includes the considerations of theoretical and empirical literature and provides specific predictions about competent behavior.

In terms of definitions, intercultural communication has been defined as "the study of face-to-face interactions between people who are culturally different" (Bennett and Bennett, 2003, p. 149). Moving away from the face-to-face distinction, Gudykunst and Kim (1992) define intercultural communication as “A transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between people from different cultures” (p. 14). Spitzberg (1994) sees intercultural competence as “An impression that behavior is appropriate and effective in a given context” (p. 347). He goes on to say that “communication will be competent in an intercultural context when it accomplishes the objectives of an actor in a manner that is appropriate to the context of the relationship” (p. 347). Thus, Spitzberg emphasizes the importance of the context of the
relationship. Ruben (1976) emphasizes the needs not only of environment but of that particular individual, saying that communication competence is, “The ability to function in a manner that is perceived to be relatively consistent with the needs, capacities, goals, and expectations of the individuals in one’s environment while satisfying one’s own needs, capacities, goals, and expectations” (p. 336).

However, Bennett (2004) takes a different approach by focusing on becoming more interculturally sensitive and thus more interculturally communicatively competent by moving from an ethnocentric stage to a more ethnorelative one (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity—DMIS). Broadly speaking, Bennett & Bennett (2003) define Intercultural Competence as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 149). In terms of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), Bennett (2004) describes intercultural communicative competence accordingly,

“More successful intercultural communication…involves being able to see a culturally different person as equally complex to one’s self (person-centered) and being able to take a culturally different perspective. Thus, greater intercultural sensitivity creates the potential for increased intercultural competence” (p. 10).

Thus, Bennett’s definition is based on one’s ability to actually perceive differences and is therefore influenced by one’s standing on an ethnocentric to ethnorelative continuum. (More information on Bennett’s DMIS model is provided in the next section on Intercultural Communication Models). Finally, after a comprehensive review of the literature (138 articles and books) Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) offer the following definition of ICC: “a complex of abilities
needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (p. 13). *Taken together, ICC can be seen as one’s ability to develop a particular awareness of one’s own and the other’s culture in order to adapt appropriately to culturally different contexts.*

### 2.5c Models of ICC

Various models of ICC exist. Most of these models provide general frameworks that have been used to develop measures. The following section will discuss five major models of intercultural competence that have influenced the development of current intercultural competence measures. These models include: 1. Ruben’s Behavioral Approach to Intercultural Communicative Competence; 2. European Multidimensional Models of Intercultural Competence (Byram (1997) & Risager (2007)); 3. A Culture-Generic Approach to Intercultural Competence (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005); 4. Spitzberg’s Model of Intercultural Competence; 5. Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The components of each model will be discussed briefly and a summary of similarities, differences, benefits, limitations, and implications for the measure of intercultural competence will be provided in the conclusions.

**1. Ruben’s Behavioral Approach to Intercultural Communicative Competence.** Ruben (1976) identified seven elements that help individuals function effectively in intercultural settings: 1. Display of respect; 2. Interaction posture (ability to respond non-judgmentally to others); 3. Orientation knowledge (viewing your own knowledge as personal and not universally valid); 4. Empathy (ability to put yourself in the other’s position); 5. Role behavior (ability to function in a group setting); 6. Interaction management (ability to manage your own interactions); 7. Tolerance for ambiguity (being okay with unexpected situations). These seven elements were
derived from literature and Ruben’s work. These seven elements were used to develop the Intercultural Behavioral Assessment Indices (IBAI) for measuring intercultural competence.

Ruben focuses on behavior rather than focusing on personality or attitudinal variables. Thus, Ruben’s model attempts to link the gap between knowing and doing by comparing what participants say they know and what they actually do (knowledge and behavior). Thus, Ruben believed that one’s intercultural communicative competence ability was best assessed through observation rather than self-reports. It is one of the earliest comprehensive frameworks of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

2. The European camp, a multi-dimensional model. This model was based off of previous foundational models in this area. These foundational models include Byram’s (1997) Five Factor Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which consisted of: attitude, knowledge of one’s self and others, skills of interpreting and relating another culture to your own, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness—ability to make evaluations based off of awareness of one’s own and other’s culture. Byram’s (1997) model was adapted and expanded by Risager (2007) to include both broad individual resources and narrow competency for assessment. However, Risager’s additions mainly consisted of certain linguistic proficiencies such as translation and interpretation. Since Byram’s model takes both attributes of ICC and objectives of Intercultural Learning in foreign language settings into account, it has become the most widely used model in foreign language classrooms.

According to Bennett (1993) and Risager (1998), in intercultural learning, learners should first, develop a contextual understanding of behavior, and second, realize it is not necessary or possible to ignore your own culture. O’Dowd (2003) believes that Byram’s model is
representative of these goals. Based off of these foundational models, Kuhlmann, Muller-Jacquier and Budin developed the Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA), which includes two sets of dimensions (one dimension for the assessor and one for the examinee) and three skill levels for each dimension (basic, intermediate, full). Thus, the assessor is provided with six dimensions: Tolerance for ambiguity, Behavioral flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for others, and empathy. These variables were derived from Kuhlmann and Stahl’s (1998) study in which they asked expatriates to describe “critical incidents” of their overseas encounters. These dimensions appeared in the critical incidents as critical to success in overseas assignments. Byram’s (1997) knowledge discovery dimension has also been added because both one’s acquired knowledge and ability to enlarge one’s realm of knowledge is important when it comes to ICC.

Each of the six dimensions is comprised of three elements: Motivation, Skill/Knowledge, and Behavior. (See figure 7.1). These elements are derived from Ward’s (2001) ABC (affective, behavioral, cognitive) model of intercultural competence. Within this model, individuals must be willing to interact (motivate), have the skills or knowledge to interact (skills/knowledge), which is enacted within the individual’s behavior (behavior). Furthermore, Bennett (1993) believes that ICC is a process that involves developing all three of these components. Thus, “It is possible to conceive of a developmental path from motivation, through skills/knowledge, to behavior, as the outward manifestation of acquired competence in one or more of the elements, and this is what the INCA model proposes” (Pretchl & Lund, 2007, p. 473). In the INCA assessment, the examinee is provided with a simplified three dimensions in which the six dimensions are inherent: Openness, Knowledge, and Adaptability. Each dimension is assessed using three skill levels of basic, intermediate, and full. These levels are characterized through “can do” statements,
which were derived from the National Language Standards of the LNTO, which uses “can do” statements to assess an individual’s language abilities. Thus, with this framework one is able to see the acquisition of proficiency. The benefit of this method is that it captures intercultural competence as a process (e.g. three skill levels) rather than a static state. Thus, one can be seen as moving towards proficiency rather than seen as simply fixed at a particular proficiency. (See Appendix A).

3. A Culture-Generic Approach to Intercultural Communication. More recently, Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) have developed a Culture-Generic Approach to Intercultural Communication. This approach is based on their idea that models should approach identifying the variables of intercultural competence from the bottom up rather than imposing dimensions on individuals from the top down. They believe that previous models are too limiting in terms of being limited to the cultures of those participating. According to Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005), “A better understanding of ICC in day-to-day interactions can be arrived at by exploring how the people who are involved those interactions describe and understand ICC” (p. 143). Therefore, Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) identified themes of intercultural competence through interviewing 37 interculturally competent individuals (e.g. International students and U.S. students who have participated in study abroad programs or international host programs). The participants were asked questions about how they would define intercultural communication, qualities of those who are interculturally competent and aspects of good communication. Ten dimensions of intercultural communicative competence were identified based off of semantic analysis of the question responses. These dimensions include: Heterogeneity, transmission, other-centered, observant, motivation, sensitivity, respect, relational, investment, and appropriateness. Although the model has not been developed into measurement tools, it has
implications for how we measure intercultural communicative competence—that is, do we take a
top down or bottom up approach in developing our variables for measure. Their assessment
seems to contrast the ideas of Ruben, who believed that observation of participants was better
than having participants self-report.

competence within intercultural contexts by suggesting a broad model of intercultural
competence that is broken down into three levels of analysis: the individual system, the episodic
system, and the relational system. According to Wiseman (2002), Spitzberg’s (1988) notion of
intercultural communication competence—behaviors that are seen as effective and appropriate—
has been embraced by a growing number of communication scholars.

The individual system consists of individual characteristics that may facilitate interaction
in a social setting. For each level of analysis Spitzberg lists several different propositions. For
example, in the individual system he proposes that “as communicator motivation increases,
communicative competence increases” (Spitzberg, 1994, p. 350). The episodic system consists of
features that a certain actor may have that may facilitate how competent they are perceived by
the coactor in a specific interaction episode. Under episodic system Spitzberg lists several
propositions. For example, “as actor’s communicative status increases, coactor’s impression of
actor’s competence increases” or “as actor’s motivation, knowledge, and skills increase,
coactor’s impression of actor’s competence increases” (p. 354). Finally, the relational system
contains components that may facilitate competence across the entire life of the relationship
rather than just in specific instances or episodes. Spitzberg (1994; 2009) lists propositions for the
relational system, for example: “As mutual attraction increases, relational competence increases,”
and “As relational network integration increases, relational competence increases” (p. 357-358).
Furthermore, the model illustrates the process of dyadic interaction as a function of three components: their motivation to communicate, the knowledge of communicating in that context, and the skills to implement their motivation and knowledge. Thus, interactants may be seen as incompetent because they lack motivation, knowledge, or skills, or because their partner has unrealistic expectations.

5. *Bennett’s (2004) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS).* “DMIS is a model of how the assumed underlying worldview moves from an ethnocentric to an more ethnorelative condition; thus, generating greater intercultural sensitivity and the potential for more intercultural competence” (Bennett, 2004, p. 11). More specifically, Bennett’s model moves through six stages from ethnocentric (experiencing one’s own culture as central to reality) to ethnorelative (one’s own belief as one among many). These stages include:

- Denial
- Defense
- Minimization (Ethnocentric stages)
- Acceptance
- Adaptation
- Integration (Ethnorelative stages).

**Ethnocentric stages.** *Denial* occurs when cultural differences are either not noticed or construed on broad terms such as “foreigner” or “immigrant.” Those who have a denial worldview tend to be either disinterested in cultural differences or act aggressively towards it or avoid it. *Defense* is the view of one’s culture as the only viable one. Those in the defense stage are more threatened by cultural differences (e.g. a feeling of being attacked). *Minimization* is the stage where you expect others to share your world views (e.g. universalism). Thus, minimization involves minimizing differences between dominant and non-dominant groups. At this stage, people cannot see the assumptions of their own culture clearly, and therefore, they cannot really appreciate other cultures. The ability to recognize your own culture is essential to move on to ethnorelative stages.
**Ethnorelative stages.** Acceptance is the acceptance of your own culture as one of many equally complex worldviews. Generally speaking, acceptance is “value relativity.” In sense, acceptance is the direct opposite of the ethnocentric stage of “defense.” Adaptation is generally the goal of intercultural training and is the ability to expand one’s world view to include constructs from other worldviews. In this stage, one is able to shift frames in reference to other cultures. The final stage is integration—the experience of “self” expands to move in and out of different cultural worldviews. Moving into the last stage does not mean you’re more interculturally competent; it means you’ve shifted your definition of your cultural identity. Thus, integration is not necessarily better in terms of intercultural competency; rather, it simply describes certain people (e.g. expats, global nomads).

Overall, ethnorelative people are “better at experiencing cultural differences than more ethnocentric people, and therefore, they are probably better at adapting to those differences in interaction” (Bennett, 2004, p. 9).

**2.5d ICC in CMC.** Although models and measurements of ICC are typically used for FTF intercultural training, there are instances of ICC being applied to CMC environments. These instances have been most typically in the area of linguistics and foreign language learning (Jin & Erben, 2007; Savignon & Roithmeier, 2004; O’Dowd, 2003). For example, Jin & Erben (2007) paired eight language learners of Chinese with eight Chinese native speakers in order to see how Instant Messaging (IM) impacts intercultural learning. Through the use of an ethnographic survey, intercultural sensitivity scale (Byram), follow-up interviews, the researcher’s journal reflections, and the participants’ IM conversation transcripts, Jin & Erben (2007) were able to assess the development of sensitivity to intercultural differences. They found that,
“Learners involved in IM-mediated intercultural learning became more sensitive to intercultural differences and undertook more critical thinking and self-reflection over the course of the project. Learners also expressed positive commentary about the use of IM in intercultural learning” (p. 304).

Thus, they found IM to be a viable tool in increasing intercultural sensitivity. O’Dowd (2003) uses Byram’s (1997) model to examine what characteristics of email exchanges can lead to intercultural learning. O’Dowd’s (2003) study involves a year-long email exchange between English learners of Spanish and Spanish learners of English. Topics for discussion were based off of Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural competence, which emphasizes that learners should develop a contextual understanding of behavior and understand the importance of cultural self-awareness and the inability to ignore one’s own culture. O’Dowd (2003) found that the elements of email messages enabled the students to develop successful relationships with their partners due to the ability to be sensitive towards their partner’s needs and communicative style, and capacity to produce engaging and in-depth correspondence.

However, O’Dowd (2003) cautions that putting students into networked intercultural environments will not necessarily lead to intercultural learning and a pedagogical plan is needed alongside the technology. This is also true of any FTF intercultural learning as well. Placing students in an environment with culturally different others, or simply being in another country will not necessarily lead to intercultural learning if no training takes place. In fact, uninformed/unguided situations such as these often lead to negative stereotyping behavior. Furthermore, the goal of the class and the student’s attitudes towards the use of technology needs to be taken into account of as well.
Others, like Savignon and Roithmeier (2004) examined the bulletin board exchanges of German students of English and American students of German. They identified communicative strategies used in CMC used to mitigate potential conflict and encourage participation. For example, the use of questions or comments at the end of a posting to soften a message, or the use of a subject heading to soften a message were used to compensate for nonverbal cues. According to Savignon and Roithmeier (2004), “Within specific reference to the development of sociocultural competence, CMC would seem to offer a relatively unexplored means of intercultural collaboration and understanding” (p. 285). However, the communicative competence of the participants in this study was relatively high. Therefore, the authors note that an examination of those with low communicative competence is needed before any assertions can be made.

2.5e Summary and implications of ICC. The models presented in this section were examined in regards to their influence on measures. Each provided frameworks for which to view ICC. First, Ruben offers a model that influences measures in terms of trying to link the gap between knowing and doing by focusing on behavior. Second, the European multi-dimensional model has developed into a model that focuses on the stages of competence rather than a static state; Similarly, Bennett’s DMIS model measure’s one’s experience as they move through various stages. (Models such as Taylor’s (1994) learning model for becoming interculturally competent take this idea of a development process of ICC one step further by focusing on the learning process through the use of the theory of transformative learning. Although learning is implied in the DMIS model and the European model, it does not explicitly focus on the learning process as Taylor’s model does. Thus, Taylor’s model steps us through how one might become interculturally competent rather than simply finding one’s state. Therefore, it is more useful as a
learning tool rather than pre/post measure of ICC). Arasaratnam and Doerfel’s culture-generic approach almost takes an opposite stance from Ruben’s model—that being, a bottom-up approach where we capture the participant experience based off of the participant’s perspective and not our own perspective. Finally, Spitzberg’s model provides a systems perspective that takes into account the individual, episodic, and relational systems; emphasizing that it is insufficient to obtain intercultural communication competence in one sub-system alone.

Although each model has its limitations (e.g. Linear stages of European and DMIS models; the pros and cons of participant experience vs. research observation of Ruben and Culture-Generic approaches; lack of environmental influence incorporated into Spitzberg’s model), taken together these models offer important implications for measurement:

1. We need to capture both actual behavior through observation and participant experience through self-report;

2. ICC is dynamic and we need to measure it as such.

Overall, the differences and similarities between these models highlighted the need for triangulation. Therefore, an ideal measure of ICC would incorporate multiple methods such as interview, survey, and observation. Support for incorporation of multiple methods can be found in Pruegger and Roger’s (1994) study on direct and indirect methods, which shows the importance of using both indirect and direct methods. They found that although there were no changes found in terms of cultural diversity and sensitivity when using the indirect tool Cross Cultural Sensitivity Scales (CCSS) after experimental treatment (e.g. groups participating in a cultural simulation game (Bafa Bafa) vs. a 90 minute lecture on cultural awareness that included a description of the Bafa Bafa experience and participant anecdotes), data gathered from personal
documents (e.g. ongoing notes regarding personal reactions they might have towards the study; three page reflection paper on the experience written two months after the experience) reveal effects of the experimental treatment. More specifically, quantitative data (e.g. paper and pencil survey) led to acceptance of the null hypothesis—no training effect; however, qualitative data revealed that there was an attitude change that resulted from the training. Therefore, inclusion of qualitative data resulted in avoidance of a type 2 error. Pruegger and Rogers (1994) conclude that, “By using both quantitative and qualitative measures, researchers can better explore the cognitive and affective results of cross-cultural training” (p. 385). Furthermore, the measure would take into account contextual influences and recognize ICC as a dynamic process.

Finally, studies (Jin & Erben, 2007; Savignon & Roithmeier, 2004; O’Dowd, 2003) have demonstrated that ICC can be applied in online environments as well as FTF; however, ICC as applied to CMC is generally looked at from the perspective of language learning or with a focus on communicative competence rather than ICC (Savignon & Roithmeier, 2004). ICC applied to this study takes a different perspective. This study uses ICC as an independent variable in order to see whether it can predict social cue communicative accommodative behavior and communication effectiveness.

2.6 Measurements of ICC

There are numerous measures/scales/indices available for intercultural competence (e.g. IDI; CCSS; IBAI). An extensive list of intercultural competence measures can be found in Humphrey’s (2007) report on the state of knowledge in intercultural communication competence written for National Center of Languages, Fantini and Tirmizi’s (2006) Project of the Federation of The Experiment in International Living (FEIL) whose purpose was exploration of construct
and tool development of ICC, and a report by Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe (2007). Although
the different measures are too numerous to list extensively here, the types of measures and
variables derived from those measures point to some important points mentioned earlier—the
existing models of intercultural competence are fragmented, lack coherence, and typically
consist of lists of skills, abilities, and attitudes that lack integration across lists (Spitzberg, 1994).

However, some consistencies can be found across these models and measures:

1. The popularity of using knowledge, attitude, and skills as variables to measure intercultural
competence (e.g. Language On-Line Portfolio Project (LOLIPOP); A Framework for
International/Intercultural Competencies);

2. The use of intercultural competence measures to assess the readiness of clients for
international assignments or intercultural training;

3. The emphasis on personal attributes/traits to gage/predict intercultural communication
competence (e.g. awareness, skills, knowledge, attitude, behavior).

Overall, there seems to be a lack of integration across models as many measurements
focus on the same or similar variables with different names and actually talk about the same or
similar issues without acknowledging one another. However, some important implications were
identified based on examination of the literature on ICC models. As a reminder, a review on
models found there are benefits in utilizing direct and indirect methods when measuring ICC and
pointed to the benefits of using models/measures that emphasize ICC as a process rather than a
static state. Intercultural Competence Assessment Project (INCA) provides a suite of tools that
uses blended approaches that combines questionnaires, scenarios, and role plays. These tools
were based off of the European Multi-dimensional research (Byram, Kuhlmann, Muller-Jacquier,
& Budin) and is available online at: http://www.incaproject.org/tools.htm. The INCA Project ran from 2001-2004 and was funded by the Commission of the European Communities under the Leonardo da Vinci II program. The aim of the project was “to develop a valid framework of intercultural competence and robust instruments for assessing intercultural competence to meet the needs of employers” (Prechtl & Lund, 2007, p. 467). Even though the project ended in 2004, the framework and assessment tools are continually tested, evaluated and refined. (An in-depth description of the models the INCA tools are based off of is provided in the models section). The INCA tests are seen as a “snap-shot in time” that may help with participants’ iterative intercultural competence development.

Therefore, the Intercultural Competence Assessment Project (INCA) will be adapted as a measure that combines both indirect and direct methods in order to best capture ICC and also provides an integration of various models within their model/measure (e.g. Ward, Bennett, Byram, ELP, Kuhlmann & Stahl). Furthermore, your actual behavior (rather than your internalized intentions) is what others use to determine your intercultural competence (Lustig & Koester, 1999). Therefore, INCA as applied to this study will primarily focus on the behavioral assessment rather than self-report. Details of this measure, as applied to this particular study are provided in the methods section.
2.7 Summary and Implications of Literature

Taken together, the literature presented in the background informs the importance of the choices made for this study. (See Table 3)

Table 3

Summary and Implications of Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Implications for Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Communication Effectiveness</td>
<td>Thai communicators tend to focus on social harmony while Americans emphasize clarity. (Knutson, et al., 2003; Knutson, 2004; Chaidaroon, 2003; Fisher, 2003; Sriussdaporn-Charoenngam &amp; Jablin, 1999; Dilbeck, et al., 2009).</td>
<td>Kim’s (1994) conversational constraints used to measure communication effectiveness because it can be applied to both Thai and American culture as it takes into consideration both components of social harmony stressed in Thai culture and clarity stressed in American culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Cues &amp; CMC</td>
<td>1. Social dynamic media perspective—users adapt textual affordances to meet their social cues needs taken (Walther, 1996; Rhoads, 2010; Fulk, Schmitz, and Steinfeld, 1990; Walther, Loh, Granka, 2005).</td>
<td>This study will examine actual intercultural interaction via Facebook, rather than survey-based cross-cultural comparisons, in order to analyze the influence of social cue behavior on communication effectiveness.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. There is a need to examine actual interaction in a more natural interactive setting.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>CAT (Gallois, Ogay, &amp; Giles, 2005) is both objective (predictive) and subjective (examines processes) and provides a way to examine the intergroup without neglecting the interpersonal characteristics of conversation, which offers a fruitful perspective of accommodation.</td>
<td>This study will use CAT as a framework from which to analyze conversational effectiveness from the perspective of accommodation.</td>
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A framework for which to examine Thai-American intercultural interaction through interpersonal posts on Facebook.

| Intercultural Communication Competence Models | Intercultural Communication Competence Models of ICC (Ruben, 1976; Byram, 1997; Risager, 2007; Kuhlmann & Stahl, 1998; Ward, 2001; Bennett, 2004; Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Spitzberg, 2009) point to a need for the need to capture both actual behavior through observation and participant experience through self-report. Furthermore, ICC is dynamic and we need to measure it as such. | This study focuses on intercultural interaction; therefore, ICC will focus on behavioral assessment of intercultural interaction. |

| Measuring Intercultural Communication Competence | Measurements of ICC, while numerous, have the following consistencies: 1. The popularity of using knowledge, attitude, and skills as variables to measure intercultural competence; 2. The use of intercultural competence measures to assess the readiness of clients for international assignments or intercultural training; 3. The emphasis on personal attributes/traits to gauge/predict intercultural communication competence (e.g. awareness, skills, knowledge, attitude, behavior). | This study will use the behavioral assessment portion of the INCA method as it is the only method that examines personal attributes/traits through assessment of actual behavior rather than self-report. |
2.8 Thesis Statement

In light of increased intercultural communication due to global use of ICTs, this study seeks to examine the factors—ICC; accommodative social cue behavior—that may influence/facilitate greater communication effectiveness within intercultural online interaction. Therefore, this study puts forth the following hypotheses:

H1: ICC of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of 1a) “ego’s understanding and clarity as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” and 1b) “ego’s ability to show face considerations as rated by ego’s intercultural partner.”

H2: ICC of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of the degree of accommodation towards one’s intercultural partner.

H3: Degree of social cue accommodation of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of 3a) “ego’s understanding and clarity as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” and 3b) “ego’s ability to show face considerations as rated by ego’s intercultural partner.”

H4: ICC of the American and Thai intercultural partners is a positive predictor of 1a) “ego’s understanding and clarity as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” and 1b) “ego’s ability to show face considerations as rated by ego’s intercultural partner” through degree of social cue accommodative behavior.

Please see the following conceptual model of hypotheses (Figure 1)
Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Hypotheses

Hypotheses:

- **H1 a, b+**: Ego’s Intercultural Communication Competence (U.S. vs. Thai)
- **H2+**: Ego’s Degree of Accommodation (U.S. vs. Thai)
- **H3 a, b+**: Communication Effectiveness (Understanding/Clarity & Face)
  - Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Intercultural Partner
  - Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Intercultural Partner
- **H4+**: Ego’s Intercultural Communication Competence (Overall)
Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors—ICC and accommodative social cue behavior—that may influence the communication effectiveness of intercultural online interaction. The model to be tested was described at the end of chapter two. The following describes the participants, procedures, and the measures used in this study.

3.1 Participants

Thirty-three students enrolled in a 300 level Intercultural Communication online class at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and 33 students (Banking and Finance Majors) enrolled in an English for Finance class at Phayao University in Thailand participated in a four week online exchange via Facebook. Altogether, 16.7% of the participants were male and 83.3% were female (both Thai and U.S.). The average age of participants was 21 ($SD=2.17$). Seven students were eliminated from the data analyzed from task two and 9 from task four because they either did not interact with their partner or did not fill out the survey, resulting in 26 students from UH Manoa and 26 students from Phayao University for task two ($n=58$), and 24 students from UH Manoa and 24 students from Phayao University for task four ($n=52$).

3.2 Procedure

Thai and U.S. participants were given randomly assigned cross-cultural partners. Participants were given simple tasks each week (e.g. introductions, word associations, comparative expressions, good-byes) and asked to interact with their partner via wall posts on a closed Facebook group page created specifically for the project. (See Table 4 for a week-by-week description of tasks). The tasks have been adapted from O’Dowd (2003), who used tasks such as word associations, and comparative expressions in a year-long email exchange between
English learners of Spanish and Spanish learners of English. The words used in the word associations and comparative expressions were changed to fit the cultural frames of Thai and American students in order to encourage discussion. For example, the word associations used words such as “green” and “yellow” because each have specific connotations for each culture (e.g. Green is the color of money in the U.S. and is often associated with greed. Yellow is the color of the King in Thailand and is worn on Mondays to pay respect to the King). After each exchange, participants were asked to fill out a survey on their intercultural exchange experience for that week. Screening questions ensured that participants actually interacted with their partner that week before taking the survey. The interaction was conducted in entirely in English. However, surveys and instructions were provided in Thai for Thai participants. Specific instructions provided to the students are found in Appendix D.

Table 4: Weekly Discussion Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Aim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intracultural Exchange</td>
<td>Students will describe American/Thai culture with an assigned intra-cultural partner</td>
<td>- Students get accustomed to using Facebook - cultural-self awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introductory Letter</td>
<td>Students introduce themselves and tell their partner what they suspect would be different or similar if they were to visit each other’s hometown</td>
<td>- Get to know their partners - Reflection on cultural differences and similarities</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Word Association</td>
<td>Students are presented a list of words, such as “good food” and “family” and “Religion” and are asked to write the associations they have for each word. They then compare these words with their partner.</td>
<td>Awareness of connection between culture and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comparative Expressions</td>
<td>Students are asked to complete a list of comparative phrases (e.g. As good as… As black as…). Students</td>
<td>Compare different connotations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
compare their phrases with their partners and explain possible origins and significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Good-byes</th>
<th>Students are asked to reflect on their experience and discuss what they learned from this experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning how to “wrap-up” - Encourage reflection on experience</td>
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</table>

### 3.3 Measures

**Screening questions.** In order to ensure that participants actually interacted with their partner each week, three screening questions were asked pertaining to their level of interaction for that week. For example, screening questions asked participants to answer true or false to the following statements: “I interacted with my partner this week,” “My partner “liked” my post, but did not comment,” and “I did not post anything this week.” Surveys indicating that they did not interact with their partner that week were eliminated.

**Participant information.** Participants were asked questions regarding biographical information and their intercultural experiences. To obtain biographical information, participants provided information regarding age, gender, major, and citizenship. To obtain intercultural experience information, participants provided information regarding experiences with other cultures. For example, questions such as, “How many friends do you have abroad?” and “How many different countries have you visited?” were asked.

**Communication Effectiveness.** Communication effectiveness was measured by examining the variables of “understanding and clarity” and “maintaining face and relationships” as they pertained to “my communication” and “my partner’s communication” for that week.

**Understanding and clarity.** After each weekly interaction, participants reflected on their
communication and their partner’s communication by rating eight items pertaining to understanding and clarity on a Likert scale from 1—strongly disagree to 5—strongly agree. These items were adapted from one of Kim’s perceived importance of conversation constraints (Clarity), and an added understanding constraint. For example, in regard to clarity, participants indicated how much the agreed with the following statement, “In our interaction, I made my point as clearly and directly as possible,” and in regard to understanding, “In our interaction, I was understood by my partner.” Understanding replaced Kim’s original constraint of “effectiveness” as it pertained specifically to compliance situations. Understanding and clarity was divided into “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding and Clarity,” (U.S. reliability, .89; Thai reliability, .71) and “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding and Clarity” (U.S. reliability, .78; Thai reliability, .71).

**Ability to show face considerations.** After each weekly interaction, participants reflected on their communication and their partner’s communication by rating 12 items pertaining face considerations on a Likert-scale from 1—strongly disagree to 5—strongly agree. These items were adapted from three of Kim’s perceived conversational constraints—feelings, avoidance imposition, and avoiding negative evaluation. For example, in regard to feelings, participants indicated how much they agreed with the following statement, “In our interaction, I avoided hurting my partner’s feelings,” and “In our interaction, my partner avoided hurting my feelings.” The measure was divided into “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations,” (U.S. reliability, .91; Thai reliability, .85), and “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations” (U.S. reliability, .79; Thai reliability, .80).

**Open-ended question.** At the end of the final week, participants reflected on the entire exchange through one open-ended question, which asked them to,
“Write a descriptive paragraph that evaluates your overall intercultural exchange experience over the past five weeks. Please provide specific examples from your exchange experience/interaction to help illustrate your point of view in your evaluation.”

This question was used to: 1. Aid in interpretation of quantitative results as participant’s own reflection on their experience might give clues and ground our speculation; 2. Be open to discovery, which allows us to find factors we had not anticipated when designing the questionnaire; 3. Give participants a voice, as participants should have a chance to express their experience.

**Intercultural communication competence (ICC).** The INCA method was adapted to code the Facebook exchanges between intercultural partners (Thai and U.S). Tasks two and four were coded for ICC, as task two captures early interactions and task four captures the interaction mid-project. Facebook exchanges of intercultural partners were coded along six variables: tolerance for ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, respect for otherness, empathy, communicative awareness, and knowledge discovery. Dialogues were coded dialogue-by-dialogue, pair-by-pair, and variable-by-variable. For example, pair one was coded for behavioral flexibility by examining the dialogue for instances of behavioral flexibility along three different levels: Basic, intermediate, or full. Each level contained characteristics for that particular variable.

For example, one particular characteristic of level “full” in the behavioral flexibility variable is “pays attention to the signals of others and modifies reactions accordingly.” This was further defined by the researcher (and coder) to mean that participants respond to what their partner says in a previous posting in a way that shows understanding and acknowledgement. For example, the following was rated as an instance of full behavioral flexibility:
Participant 12: “If you want detail about Thailand. I can help you.”

Participant 11: “Thank you. Yes, please! Is hiking popular? For recreation what do you do?”

Participant 12: “Yes. I like it, but I will go hiking rarely. You like it, right? For my recreation is the sea and the range, because it has good environment and clam. The sea in Thailand is so beautiful too. If you see it. You will like it. I sure.”

“I can called you “Poo”, right? Can you have your name Thai language? I can create to you.”

Participant 11: “Ohh I like to go hiking sometimes although I do not get around to it as much. What is the range? Is this a popular outdoor place? Can you send me pictures of Thailand please? Well “poo” is a part of my name it’s pronounced “poo nah” and spelt Puna =).”

Please note that within this example, there are other instances of other variables, such as knowledge discovery, empathy, and communicative awareness. Lower behavioral flexibility was given to participants who post without acknowledgement of their partner’s post. Usually, these came in the form of introductory narratives, in which participants introduced themselves, but did not acknowledge anything their partner said in their introduction. Based on this coding, for each ICC dimension (six dimensions total) each participant was given a grade of basic (1), basic-intermediate (2), intermediate (3), intermediate-full (4), or full (5) for each variable.

The INCA method was chosen because it provided a tool for the measurement of actual behavior. Behavior (rather than internalized intentions) is used by others to determine interlocutors’ intercultural competence (Lustig & Koester, 1999). In addition, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicates that the proposed measurement model fit the six dimensions of ICC used within this study. (See Table 5 below).
### Table 5

CFA of ICC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Index</th>
<th>Task Two</th>
<th>Task Four</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>3.28, $p = .66$</td>
<td>2.71, $p = .24$</td>
<td>Small $\chi^2$; large insignificant $p$ value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>&gt;.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>&gt;.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMR</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>&lt;.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>&lt;.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CFI = comparative fit index; NFI = normed fit index; GFI = goodness of fit index; RMR = root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

To achieve inter-coder reliability ten randomly selected dialogues (out of 30) were coded by another coder. In order to prevent cultural bias as much as possible, a coder from Thailand was selected. The purpose of the coding was to establish consistency of judgment across categories. After coding separately, the coder participated in a dialogue with the principal coder to explain their choices in coding. Any discrepancies between the principal and the coder were discussed until a resolution was agreed upon. The coding was then revised to reflect any changes agreed upon by the coders. For each dimension of ICC, inter-coder reliability ($K$ Alpha) was achieved for both U.S. and Thai participants and ranged from .70 to .97. As a result of the coding process, certain behaviors were added to particular variables. For example, within the variable ambiguity tolerance, one indication of “full” competency is “expressing satisfaction working with partner.” Originally, the coding guidelines included behavior in which participants outright expressed satisfaction working with their partner in statements such as, “I looking forward to your response!” or “I enjoy working with you.” However, after dialogue with the coder,
behaviors which express satisfaction through other means were added, such as telling one’s partner “that’s interesting,” or “wow.” Please see part II of Appendix A for coding scheme.

**Accommodation.** Accommodation occurs when someone alters their behavior in order to increase understanding/clarity, establish rapport, save/give face, or maintain/develop a relationship with their exchange partner. Instances of accommodation/non-accommodation were coded and the type of accommodation indicated. For example, copying your partner’s way of expressing themselves was found as a form of accommodation. For example, the U.S. partner wrote, “Hi Jane Doe, or shall I say Aloha,” which was followed by their Thai partner’s response of “Hi John Smith, or shall I say Sawatdee.” Another wrote, “Hi!!!!! Jane Doe 😊😊😊😊,” and their partner responded with “Hi!!!!!!!!! John Smith 😊😊😊😊.” Other examples of accommodation include but are not limited to: explaining special terms to increase the understanding of a non-local (e.g. “I like to eat Poke, which is raw fish”), and complimenting or expressing satisfaction (e.g. telling your partner how interesting you thought their post was).

Instances of accommodation were coded and the type of accommodation indicated. In addition, participant’s interactions were rated on a five point Likert scale from 1—Strongly Disagree to 5—Strongly Agree on the following questions adapted from Cappella (2005) and Bernieri, Reznick, and Rosenthal (1988):

1. Partner A accommodates for B’s behavior (1 to 5):
2. Partner B accommodates for A’s behavior (1 to 5):

**Primarily:** (circle one of the following)

a. “A primarily accommodated for B,”
b. “B primarily accommodated for A,”
c. “A and B accommodated for each other,”
d. “Neither A or B accommodated for each other”
In order to establish inter-coder reliability, eight randomly selected dialogues were coded by two other coders in addition to the principal coder. After coding separately, each coder participated in a dialogue with the principal coder to explain their choices in coding. Any discrepancies between the principal and the coder were discussed until a resolution was agreed upon. The coding was then revised to reflect any changes agreed upon by the coders. Coding was used to help coders make an informed and consistent decision on how to rate each participant at the end of the interaction. An intra-class correlation coefficient (single measures) was calculated at .861 to establish inter-rater reliability for the final rating of the interaction. Information pertaining to the types of accommodation, which emerged from the coding process, was used to aid in interpretation of quantitative results. Please see Appendix B for coding sheet.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected for this study includes both interval data (Communication Effectiveness, Accommodation, ICC “grade.”), and categorical data (coded ICC, coded type of accommodation, open-ended questions). The interval data was used to examine the proposed conceptual model, which predicted that ICC (IV) predicts communication effectiveness (DV) through social cue accommodation (mediator). As a reminder, ICC is one’s ability to develop a particular awareness of one’s own and the other’s culture in order to adapt appropriately to culturally different contexts. Therefore, the prediction was made that the higher your ICC, the more likely you will adapt through accommodation to your partner, and the higher your partner will rate the communication effectiveness of the exchange. The categorical data was used to aid in the interpretation of the quantitative results. (However, future studies will analyze these results further). Data was taken from the Facebook exchanges of tasks two and four, which capture two different types of exchanges (e.g. introductions vs. in the midst of the exchange).
Analysis of data according to predicted hypotheses. This study hypothesized that ICC would positively predict the communication effectiveness rating of one’s intercultural partner. H1 predicts that ICC of the American partner positively predicts how their Thai partner rates their American partner in terms of communication effectiveness and vice-versa. In order to examine this particular relationship, an essential violation of independence occurred. However, the same measurements were not used more than once.

Communication effectiveness was measured in two ways—understanding (H1a) and face (H1b). Understanding was examined from the perspective of ego’s rating of ego’s understanding and clarity and ego’s rating of ego’s partner’s clarity and understanding. Face was examined from the perspective of ego’s rating of ego’s own ability to show consideration towards my partner’s feelings and not impose on my partner, and ego’s rating of ego’s partner’s ability to show consideration towards my feelings and not impose upon me.

In order test the proposed hypotheses, a multiple regression was used to examine the dimensions of the American partner’s ICC (ambiguity tolerance, behavioral flexibility, respect for otherness, empathy, knowledge discovery, and communicative awareness), and degree of accommodation as predictors of their intercultural Thai partner’s rating of their American partner’s communication effectiveness in terms of understanding (H2a) (clarity and understanding of my intercultural partner’s messages) and face (H2b) (my intercultural partner’s ability to show consideration towards me), and vice-versa.

In addition, a multiple regression examined the dimensions of the American partner’s ICC and degree of accommodation as predictors of the American partner’s rating of their Thai partner’s communication effectiveness in terms of understanding and face, and as predictors of
the American partner’s rating of their own communication effectiveness—ability to be clear and be understood (H3a) and ability to show consideration towards their partner (H3b), and vice-versa.

Finally, H4 predicted that ICC could positively predict communication effectiveness (e.g. understanding and face) through accommodation. Accommodation was examined as a mediator of ICC and communication effectiveness using Structural Equation Modeling with maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS 22.0. This analysis first followed the Baron and Kenny (1986) “causal steps approach,” in which a direct relationship is looked for between ICC and communication effectiveness (total effect) and a mediation model that consists of a small non-significant link between ICC and communication effectiveness (direct effect). In addition, a significant relationship is looked for between accommodation and ICC and accommodation and communication effectiveness (indirect effect). However, because this approach lacks quantification of the indirect effect, it has been criticized for having low power in detecting intervening variable effects (Schmidt, Mueller, & Roder, 2011). Therefore, the significance of the indirect effect itself is also tested using bootstrapping with 2000 iterations yielded (Preacher & Hayes, 2011). In addition, model fit is assessed using chi-square test, comparative fit index (CFI), and the root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA) in order to examine whether the structural equation model fits the sample data.

**Evaluation of assumptions.** In order to evaluate assumptions, an analysis was performed using SPSS Regression to screen through residuals.

**Task two.** For Task two, standard residuals were calculated to determine outliers greater than 3 and less than -3 standardized residual values. An evaluation of Mahalanobis distance
(Max=13.2) indicates outliers do not exceed the critical value for two independent variables (13.82). Furthermore, Cook’s distance was calculated (Max=.226) to examine whether outliers have an influence on the results of our model as a whole. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), cases with a value larger than one are problematic; therefore, outliers did not have an influence on the results of our model as a whole. Linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity were also examined. Results of the evaluation indicate that residuals are normally and independently distributed. Furthermore, analysis conducted using SPSS Frequencies indicate that skewness and kurtosis levels are within normal acceptable range (between -1.0 and +1.0). Thus, normal distribution can be assumed.

In order to establish non-multi-collinearity tolerance, VIF, and correlation between the two independent variables were examined. Tolerance for ICC and Accommodation were found at .75, VIF was found at 1.33 for both variables, and correlation was found at $r = .50$. Therefore, tolerance (> .10), VIF (<10), and correlation (<.70) were found within an acceptable range and non-multi-collinearity was established.

**Task four.** In task four, an analysis conducted using SPSS Frequencies shows negative kurtosis for the variables ICC (-1.67), and Accommodation (-1.43), which were slightly outside of the acceptable -1 to +1 range. Attempts to normalize these variables did not resolve the issue. ICC scores were bimodal. This is because for task four, U.S. participants ($M=12.5, SD=3.56$) tended to score higher than Thai participants ($M=10, SD=3.3$); therefore, the data is bimodal—peaked in two different areas (low and high). Negative skewness was also found for communication effectiveness ratings (-1.14), which is slightly outside of the acceptable -1 to +1 range. This data was normalized using the” reflect and square root” function in SPSS. Although normalization brought skewness into a normal range, it did not improve the overall analysis.
because all other variables in the distribution were skewed to about the same slight-moderate extent; thus, transformation did not result in improvements to the analysis. Therefore, the data was not transformed and limitations acknowledged.

**Categorical data analysis.** The detailed description of the coding process for ICC along with a basic description of the coding process used in accommodation can be found in the methods section under the sub-heading “measures.” The coding process resulted in both interval data used to conduct quantitative tests of the hypotheses and categorical data for which to aid in the interpretation of the quantitative results. Two main types of categorical data used to interpret results within this study are types of accommodative social cue behavior, and open-ended responses from the final communication effectiveness survey.

For accommodation, participant exchanges were open-coded line-by-line using NVIVO. Units coded ranged from single words, sentences, to paragraphs that contained one particular instance of accommodation for one idea or topic. For example, “Hello Tiff,” may have been coded as one instance of accommodation for name preferences (e.g. Using partner’s preferred nickname, Tiff). Additionally, an entire paragraph describing one’s hometown, in which the participant provided information that may have helped his/her partner understand their hometown better, may have been coded as one instance of accommodation. (e.g. Hawaii is made up of eight islands and I live on the island of Oahu, which is located to the west of the eight island chain). As explained in the previous methods section, inter-coder reliability was established through the use of two other coders. The instances of accommodation were then grouped into categories of types of accommodation and non-accommodation. In general, the accommodative categories were representative of a particular non-physical cue (e.g. psychological/social dynamic). In order to examine the influence of physical and non-physical
social cues, each category of accommodation was examined for the types of physical cues utilized within that category. Please see table 10; 14 (Appendix E).

Participant responses from the open-ended question were open-coded using NVIVO. The unit of analysis was “idea units” in which instances that contained one particular idea was coded. Instances ranged from short sentences to paragraphs that contained one central idea. Conceptually similar terms were then grouped into categories. The results of the aforementioned data can be found below in the results chapter.
4.1 Intercultural Experience

For the Thai students, 81.8% reported that they had never traveled abroad before, while 9.1% have rarely traveled abroad (only 1 to 3 times), 6.1% sometimes travel abroad (once every few years), and 3% travel abroad often (once a year). Out of those who have traveled abroad, 83.3% reported traveling for vacation related reasons, while 16.7% traveled for school, volunteer, or work related reasons. 81.8% reported having no friends from abroad, 15.2% reported having one or two friends from abroad, and 3% reported having several (five to ten). In terms of interacting with people from other countries in their school or professional lives, 15.2% said that they never do, 21.2% rarely do (once or twice before), 27.3% sometimes do (once a month or less), and 36.4% often do (at least once a week). (However, those who reported interacting with people from other countries mentioned their English teacher as their prime form of contact with people from other countries). Finally, 87.9% reported having never worked in a group with people from various cultures, while 12.1% have worked in a group with people from various cultures.

For the American students, 27.3% have never traveled abroad before, 36.4% rarely travel abroad (1 to 3 times before), 12.1% sometimes travel abroad (every few years), 12.1% travel abroad often (once a year) and 12.1% travel abroad very often (more than once a year). Out of those who have traveled abroad, 60.9% traveled for vacation related reasons, 13% traveled to visit family, and 18.2% traveled for school, volunteer, or work related reasons. In terms of friends from abroad, 30.3% reported having no friends from abroad, 12.1% reported having one of two, 9.1% reported having a few (three to five), 12.1% reported having several (five to ten), and 36.4% reported having many (over ten). In terms of interacting with people from other
countries in their school or professional lives, only 3% said they never interact with people from other countries in their school or professional lives, 9.1% rarely do (once or twice before), 9.1% sometimes do (once a month or less), 30.3% often do (at least once a week), 48.5% do so very often (everyday). Finally, 21.2% reported having never worked in a group with people from various cultures before, and 78.8% have worked in a group with people from various cultures before. Not surprisingly, given the population of Hawaii, the American students (UH Manoa students) have significantly more experience both traveling abroad and interacting with people from other countries and cultures in their everyday lives.

Table 6
Intercultural Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intercultural Experience</th>
<th>Thai</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel Abroad:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely (1 to 3 times before)</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes (once every few years)</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often (Once a year)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often (More than once a year)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for Traveling Abroad:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Volunteer/Work</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends from Abroad:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple (1 or 2)</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few (3 to 5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several (5 to 10)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many (over 10)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interact with people from other Countries in school/professional life:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely (once or twice before)</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes (once a month/less)</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Often (at least once a week) 36.4% 30.3%
Very Often (everyday) 0 48.5%

Worked in a group with people
From various cultures:
Yes 12.1% 78.8%
No 87.9% 21.2%

4.2 Hypotheses One, Two, Three, and Four

In order to examine the proposed hypotheses, standard multiple regressions were conducted for H1, H2, and H3. For H4, accommodation was examined as a mediator of ICC and communication effectiveness using Structural Equation Modeling. The details of each hypothesis are revisited below before the presentation of the results.

H1. Overall, H1 predicted that in an intercultural exchange, ICC would positively predict the communication effectiveness rating of one’s intercultural partner. In other words, your partner’s ICC influences how you view their communication effectiveness in an intercultural exchange.

Table 7 (below) details the descriptive statistics of each variable examined in the study divided by task and nationality.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICC</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Thai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task Two</td>
<td>Task Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>4.6 (.68)</td>
<td>3.5 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>4.4 (.91)</td>
<td>3.0 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>4.7 (.77)</td>
<td>3.5 (.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>3.6 (.86)</td>
<td>2.3 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>3.8 (.98)</td>
<td>2.3 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate Awareness</td>
<td>3.1 (1.5)</td>
<td>2.5 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>3.9 (.87)</td>
<td>2.8 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 8**

Correlation Among Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AT</th>
<th>BF</th>
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<th>E</th>
<th>KD</th>
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<td><strong>Task 2</strong></td>
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Note: Standard Deviations in parenthesis next to the Mean
### EFFECTIVE COMPUTER-MEDIATED INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

#### Task 4

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<td>-.18</td>
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<td>-.26*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


In task two, collinearity statistics were within normal range of Tolerance (.68 to .92) and VIF (1.08 to 1.5), and correlation between variables (<.70). In task four, accommodation was deleted due to a multicollinear relationship—highly correlated with other variables (> .70), and in the upper ranges of VIF (7.0) and lower ranges of Tolerance (.13). For certain models, ICC
dimensions with similar negative standardized betas were combined and those with similar positive standardized betas were combined. These combined variables also contained conceptual similarity in regard to how they were measured within that particular task (e.g. surface vs. in-depth dimension). These combined variables are explained further in chapter five. These variables (task four) were within acceptable ranges of Tolerance (.21 to .70) and VIF (1.4 to 4.7).

Two separate regressions were conducted—one for understanding and one for face—for each task (task two and task four). Table 8 shows the results of the multiple regression for H1a—“Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” Table 9 shows the results of the multiple regression for H1b—“Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” Tables 10 through 13 display the results for H1 additional findings.

Table 9

Multiple Regression: “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner” (H1a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ F(8, 49) = .503, p = .848, \text{adj. } R^2 = .075 \]

Task 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 4</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
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<td>.71</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner” (H1a). The results of table one indicate that the multiple regression model was not significant for task two in terms of “ego’s understanding as rated by ego’s partner,” adjusted $R^2 = -.075$, $F(8, 49) = 0.503$, $p = .848$, nor was it significant for task four, adjusted $R^2 = -.034$, $F(4, 47) = 0.570$, $p = .680$. In an intercultural computer-mediated environment, ego’s ICC does not predict ego’s partner’s rating of ego’s understanding. H1a was not supported for both task two and four. In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as the reference for both task two ($t = 0.99, p = .32$) and task four ($t = 1.5, p = .13$). For both task two and four, nationality does not positively predict “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” Please see Table 10 below for the results of H1b.

Table 10
Multiple Regression: “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner” (H1b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Task 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F(8, 49) = .50, p = .85, adj. $R^2 = -.07$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Task 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Task 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance,</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility,</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F(4, 47) = 1.12, p = .36, adj. $R^2 = .008$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner” (H1b). The results of Table 9 indicate that the multiple regression model was not significant for task two in terms of “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner,” *adjusted $R^2 = -.07, F(8, 49) = .50, p = .85*, nor was it significant for task four, *adjusted $R^2 = .008, F(4, 47) = 1.12, p = .36*. In an intercultural computer-mediated environment, my ICC does not predict ego’s partner’s rating of ego’s ability to show face considerations. Therefore, H1b was not supported for both task two and four. In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as the reference for both task two (t = .99, p = .79) and task four (t = .60, p = .55). For both task two and four, nationality does not positively predict “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”
Overall, H1 was not supported. The multiple regression models were not significant in examining the relationship between U.S. ICC and their Thai partner’s rating of their U.S. partner’s communication effectiveness and vise-versa. Attempts to amend the models did not result in significant differences.

**Additional findings related to H1.** Additional findings (found below) examined the relationship between U.S. ICC and U.S. rating of their Thai partner’s and U.S. rating of themselves and vise-versa. These results were found to be significant and are found in Tables 11, 12, 13, and 14.

Table 11

Multiple Regression: “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding and Clarity”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>-1.51</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>-.62</td>
<td>-4.3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F (8, 49) = 2.83, p < .05, adj. R² = .205

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 4</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>-0.89</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>3.08**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery, Ambiguity</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.68</td>
<td>-2.98**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tolerance, Communicative Awareness

Respect for Otherness, Empathy

F (4, 47) = 3.65, p < .05, adj. $R^2 = .172$

**$p < .01$; *$p < .05$

“Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding and Clarity” (H1 additional findings). The results of Table 11 indicate that the multiple regression model was significant for task two in terms of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding and Clarity,” adjusted $R^2 = .205$, $F$ (8, 49) = 2.83, $p < .05$. More specifically, in task two, the ICC dimension of “ambiguity tolerance” negatively predicted Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding, ($\beta = -.62$, $t = -4.3$, $p < .05$). In task four, the multiple regression model was significant in terms of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding,” adjusted $R^2 = .172$, $F$ (4, 47) = 3.65, $p < .05$. More specifically, the ICC dimension of “behavioral flexibility” positively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding and Clarity,” ($\beta = .65$, $t = 3.08$, $p < .01$). In addition, the ICC dimensions of knowledge discovery, ambiguity tolerance, and communicative awareness together negatively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding,” ($\beta = -.68$, $t = -2.98$, $p < .01$). However, respect for otherness and empathy were not predictors of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding.” In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as the reference for both task two ($t = .25, p = .80$) and task four ($t = -1.37, p = .18$). For both task two and four, nationality did not positively predict “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding.” Overall, in the intercultural computer-mediated environment, ego’s ICC predicts how ego rates their partner’s understanding. (Table 12 below presents the results of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Consideration.”)
Table 12
Multiple Regression: “Ego’s rating of ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ICC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>-1.99</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>-4.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-2.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F (8, 49) = 3.66, p = .002, adj. R^2 = .272

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 4</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**ICC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F (7,44 ) = .71, p = .66, adj. R^2 = -.04

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05
“Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations” (H1 additional findings). The results of Table 11 indicate that the multiple regression model was significant for task two in terms of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations” adjusted \( R^2 = .272, F(8, 49) = 3.66, p < .01 \); however, it was not significant for task four, adjusted \( R^2 = .04, F(7, 44) = .71, p = .66 \). In an intercultural computer-mediated social environment of task two, ego’s ICC predicts how ego rates their partner’s ability to demonstrate face considerations; however, not within the structured-work-focused environment of task four. More specifically, in task two, the ICC dimensions of “ambiguity tolerance” \((\beta = -.59, t = -4.22, p < .001)\), and “knowledge discovery” \((\beta = -.29, t = -2.07, p < .05)\) negatively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as the reference for both task two \((t = .63, p = .53)\) and task four \((t = -1.2, p = .23)\). For both task two and four, nationality did not positively predict “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” (Table 13 below presents the results of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding”).

Table 13

Multiple Regression: “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding and Clarity”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>0.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICC</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>-2.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding” (H1 additional findings). The results of Table 12 indicate that the multiple regression model was significant for task four in terms of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding,” adjusted $R^2 = .133$, $F (4, 47) = 2.95, p < .05$; however, it was not significant for task two, adjusted $R^2 = .02$, $F (8, 49) = 1.15, p = .35$. Although the multiple regression model in task two was not significant, the ICC dimension of “ambiguity tolerance” ($\beta = -.43$, $t = -2.6, p < .05$) was found to be a significant negative predictor of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding.” In task four, the ICC dimensions of “communicative awareness,” ($\beta = -.65$, $t = -2.79, p < .01$) negatively predicted “ego’s rating of ego’s own understanding.” The ICC dimensions of “behavioral flexibility,” “empathy,” and “respect for otherness,” ($\beta = .66$, $t = 2.81, p < .01$) together positively predicted “ego’s rating of ego’s own understanding.” In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as the reference for both task two ($t = .12, p = .91$) and task four ($t = -1.11, p = .27$). For both task two and four, nationality did not positively predict “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding.” (Table 14 below presents the results of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations”).

Table 14
Multiple Regression: “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
![Image of the document content](image-url)

**EFFECTIVE COMPUTER-MEDIATED INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION 103**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>0.11</th>
<th>.41</th>
<th>.04</th>
<th>0.27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ICC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambiguity Tolerance, Knowledge Discovery</th>
<th>-1.08</th>
<th>.30</th>
<th>-.53</th>
<th>-3.6**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility, Communicative Awareness</td>
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<td>.25</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Task 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>-2.2</th>
<th>.97</th>
<th>-.32</th>
<th>-2.24*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ICC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambiguity Tolerance</th>
<th>1.3</th>
<th>.58</th>
<th>.56</th>
<th>2.3*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>-.46</td>
<td>-2.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>-0.74</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F (6, 51) = 3.32, p <.01, adj. R^2 = .19

F (7, 44) = 3.22, p <.01, adj. R^2 = .233

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

“Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations” (H1 additional findings). The results of Table 14 indicate that the multiple regression model was significant for task two in terms of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations,” adjusted R^2 = .19, F (6, 51) = 3.23, p <.01, and task four, adjusted R^2 = .233, F (7, 44) = 3.22, p < .01. In an intercultural computer-mediated environment, ego’s ICC predicts how ego rates their own ability
to show face considerations for both the social environment of task two and the structured-work-focused environment of task four. More specifically, in task two, the ICC dimensions of “ambiguity tolerance” and “knowledge discovery” ($\beta = -.53$, $t = -3.6$, $p < .01$) together negatively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” In task four, “ambiguity tolerance” ($\beta = .56$, $t = 2.3$, $p < .05$) was a positive predictor, and “empathy” ($\beta = -.46$, $t = -2.15$, $p < .05$) was a negative predictor of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as the reference for both task two ($t = 0.29$, $p = .84$) and task four ($t = -2.29$, $p < .05$). In task four, nationality is a negative predictor, such that U.S. participants significantly rated their own abilities to show face considerations as lower than Thai participants, ($t = -2.24$, $p < .05$).

Overall, the models in H1 are not significant predictors of the relationship between your ICC and your intercultural partner’s rating of your communication effectiveness. However, the additional models indicate that your ICC is a significant predictor of how you rate your intercultural partner’s communication effectiveness and how you rate your own communication effectiveness. Although H1a and b were not supported, additional models related to H1a and b were found to be significant.

H2. H2 predicted that ICC positively predicts your degree of accommodation towards your intercultural partner. For example, H2 positively predicts the American partner’s degree of accommodation toward their intercultural Thai partner and vice versa. In order to examine H2, a multiple regression was used to examine the dimensions of one’s ICC (ambiguity tolerance, behavioral flexibility, respect for otherness, empathy, knowledge discovery, and communicative awareness) as predictors of one’s degree of accommodation towards their intercultural partner. (Table 14 below shows the results of ICC as a predictor of accommodation.)
Table 15
Multiple Regression: Accommodation (H2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ICC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>2.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>2.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>2.06*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ F(7, 50) = 3.44, p < .01, \text{ adj. } R^2 = .23 \]

**Task 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ICC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity Tolerance</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Flexibility</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Otherness</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Discovery</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Awareness</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>4.1***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ F(7, 44) = 41.5, p < .001, \text{ adj. } R^2 = .848 \]

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05.
**Accommodation (H2).** The results of Table 15 indicate that the multiple regression model was significant for both task two, \(\text{adjusted } R^2 = .23, F(7, 50) = 3.44, p < .01\), and task four, \(\text{adjusted } R^2 = .848, F(7, 44) = 41.5, p < .001\). In both the social environment of task two and the structured-work-focused environment of task four, ego’s ICC influences their degree of accommodation towards their intercultural partner. More specifically, within task two, the ICC dimensions of “behavioral flexibility,” (\(\beta = .29, t = 2.12, p < .05\)) “respect for otherness,” (\(\beta = .33, t = 2.57, p < .05\)) and “knowledge discovery,” (\(\beta = .28, t = 2.06, p < .05\)) positively predict one’s degree of accommodation. Within task four, “communicative awareness” (\(\beta = .41, t = 4.1, p < .001\)) positively predicted one’s degree of accommodation. In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as a reference for both task two (\(t = -.36, p = .72\)) and task four (\(t = 1.6, p = .12\)). Nationality did not predict one’s degree of accommodation within task two or task four. Overall, H2 was supported.

**H3.** H3 predicted that the degree of accommodation toward your intercultural partner would positively predict your intercultural partner’s rating of your communication effectiveness. In other words, your partner’s degree of accommodation influences how you view their communication effectiveness in an intercultural exchange. For example, H3 predicts that the degree of accommodation of the American partner positively predicts how their Thai partner rates their American partner in terms of communication effectiveness and vise-versa. Based on the results as reported in Tables 2 through 7, in task two, accommodation did not significantly predict communication effectiveness in terms of understanding (\(\beta = -.05, t = -.27, p = .79\)) or face considerations (\(\beta = -.14, t = -.89, p = .38\)), nor did it significantly predict understanding (\(\beta = .38, t = .94, p = .35\)) or face considerations (\(\beta = .18, t = .46, p = .65\)) in task four. H3 was not supported.
**H4.** H4 predicted that ICC could positively predict communication effectiveness (e.g. understanding and face) through accommodation. Accommodation was examined as a mediator of ICC and communication effectiveness using Structural Equation Modeling with maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS 22.0. Baron and Kenny’s (1986) causal steps approach is also conducted along with bootstrapping for confidence intervals and an examination of model fit.

The following Figure 2, shows the results of this examination of H4a—“Ego’s Understanding as Rated by Ego’s Partner” as the dependent variable for task two (basic model) followed by the mediation model in Figure 3.

Figure 2
Task Two: Basic Model for “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”

![Diagram showing relationships between AT, BF_KD, RO, Emp, CA, and Ego’s ICC, with arrows indicating the direction of influence.]

Note: 1. AT = Ambiguity Tolerance, 2. BF = Behavioral Flexibility, 3. RO = Respect for Otherness, 4. Emp = Empathy, 5. KD = Knowledge Discovery, 6. CA = Communicative Awareness 7. ICC = Intercultural Communication Competence
The basic model (Figure 2 above) illustrates the direct relationship between “my ICC” and “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” The path was not statistically significant, (standardized coefficient $\beta = -0.06, p = 0.67$). The basic model attained good fit for the observed data in terms of chi-square, $\chi^2 = 6.3$, $df = 9$, $p = 0.71$, RMSEA of less than $0.08$ (RMSEA $= 0.00$), and a CFI score met of greater than $0.93$ (CFI $= 1.0$). Although the model achieved good fit, the results do not satisfy Baron and Kenny’s first step in testing mediation (significant relationship between the IV and the DV). Nonetheless, a mediation model was tested to examine the strength of the indirect relationship (“Ego’s ICC” $\rightarrow$ “Ego’s Accommodation”) while controlling for the direct effect of “ego’s ICC” to “Ego’s Understanding as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” (See Figure 3 below).

Figure 3

Task Two: Mediation Model for “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”
The direct path from “Ego’s ICC” to “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner” remained non-significant, standardized coefficient $\beta = -.01$, $p = .97$. In addition, the indirect effect from “Ego’s Accommodation” to “Ego’s Understanding as Rated by Ego’s Partner” was not significant, $\beta = -.12$, $p = .46$. However, the indirect effect of “my ICC” was significantly associated with “ego’s accommodation,” standardized coefficient $\beta = .52$, $p < .01$. Bootstrapping for indirect effects for 95% C.I. indicates that zero lies in-between the lower (-.26) and upper level (.43); therefore, the indirect effect is not significant. In addition, the mediated model achieved good fit in terms of chi-square, $\chi^2 = 14.3$, $df = 13$, $p = .35$, and CFI met the benchmark of >.93 (CFI = .97) and met the RMSEA benchmark of <.08 (RMSEA = .04). Although the model met good fit benchmarks, the effects of mediation were not significant. The below Figure 4 illustrates the basic model for the portion of communication effectiveness—”Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”
The basic model illustrated in Figure 4 above shows the direct relationship between “my ICC” and “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” The path was not statistically significant, standardized coefficient $\beta = -.15$, $p = .31$. The basic model attained good fit for the observed data in terms of chi-square, $\chi^2 = 10.5$, $df = 9$, $p = .31$, the CFI score, which met the benchmark of $>.93$ (CFI = .95), and the RMSEA score, which met the benchmark of $<.08$ (RMSEA = .05). Even so, the results do not satisfy Baron and Kenny’s first step in testing mediation. Nonetheless, a mediation model was tested to examine the strength of the indirect relationship (“Ego’s ICC” $\rightarrow$ “Ego’s Accommodation”) while controlling for the direct effect of “my ICC” to “my ability to show face considerations as rate by my partner.” (See Figure 5 below).
The direct path from “Ego’s ICC” to “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner” remained insignificant, standardized coefficient $\beta = -.11, p = .54$. In addition, the indirect effect from “ego’s accommodation” to “ego’s understanding as rated by ego’s partner” was not significant, $\beta = -.08, p = .61$. However, the indirect effect of “my ICC” was significantly associated with “my accommodation,” standardized coefficient $\beta = .52, p < .01$. Bootstrapping for indirect effects for 95% C.I. indicates that zero lies in-between the lower (-.40) and upper level (.16); therefore, the indirect effect is not significant. The mediated model did however achieve good fit in terms of chi-square, $\chi^2 = 19.4, df = 13, p = .11$. However, the CFI score did not meet the benchmark of >.93 (CFI = .87), the RMSEA score did not meet the
benchmark of <.08 (RMSEA = .09). The model did not meet the standards for mediation. Figure 6 below illustrates the basic model “my understanding as rated by my partner” for task four.

Figure 6
Task Four: Basic Model for “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner”

The basic model illustrated in Figure 6 above shows the direct relationship between “my ICC” and “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” The path was not statistically significant, standardized coefficient $\beta = .05, p = .72$. The basic model attained good fit for the observed data in terms of chi-square, $\chi^2 = 7.4, df= 9, p = .60$, and the CFI score, which met the benchmark of >.93 (CFI = 1.0), and the RMSEA score, which met the benchmark of < .08 (RMSEA = .00). Even so, the results do not satisfy Baron and Kenny’s first step in testing mediation. Nonetheless, a mediation model was tested to examine the strength of the indirect relationship (“Ego’s ICC” $\rightarrow$ ”Ego’s Accommodation”) while controlling for the direct effect of
“my ICC” to “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” The Figure 7 below illustrates the mediation model for task four.

Figure 7
Task Four: Mediation Model for “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05. Note: 1. AT = Ambiguity Tolerance, 2. BF = Behavioral Flexibility, 3. RO = Respect for Otherness, 4. Emp = Empathy, 5. KD = Knowledge Discovery, 6. CA = Communicative Awareness

The direct path from “Ego’s ICC” to “Ego’s Understanding and Clarity as Rated by Ego’s Partner” remained non-significant, standardized coefficient $\beta = .62, p = .32$. In addition, the indirect effect from “Ego’s Accommodation” to “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner” was not significant, $\beta = .71, p = .24$. However, the indirect effect of “Ego’s ICC” was significantly associated with “Ego’s Accommodation,” standardized coefficient $\beta = .95, p < .001$. Bootstrapping for indirect effects for 95% C.I. indicates that zero lies in-between the lower (-.99) and upper level (3.6); therefore, the indirect effect is not significant. The model, however, achieved good fit in terms of Chi-Square, $\chi^2 = 11.6, df = 13, p$
= .56, CFI, which met the benchmark of >.93 (CFI = 1.0), and RMSEA, which met the benchmark of <.08 (RMSEA = .00). Nonetheless, “Ego’s Accommodation” does not meet the criteria of a mediator between “Ego’s ICC” and “Ego’s Understanding as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” The Figure 8 below illustrates the basic model for “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”

Figure 8

Task Four: Basic Model for “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”

Note: 1. AT = Ambiguity Tolerance, 2. BF = Behavioral Flexibility, 3. RO = Respect for Otherness, 4. Emp = Empathy, 5. KD = Knowledge Discovery, 6. CA = Communicative Awareness

The basic model illustrated in Figure 8 above shows the direct relationship between “Ego’s ICC” and “Ego’s Understanding as Rated by Ego’s partner.” The path was not statistically significant, standardized coefficient $\beta = .02, p = .87$. The basic model attained good fit in terms of chi-square, $\chi^2 = 10.97, df= 9, p = .28$, CFI score, which met the benchmark of >.93 (CFI = .99), and RMSEA, which met the benchmark of <.08 (RMSEA = .065). However, the
results do not satisfy Baron and Kenny’s first step in testing mediation. Nonetheless, a mediation model was tested to examine the strength of the indirect relationship (“Ego’s ICC” → “Ego’s Accommodation”) while controlling for the direct effect of “Ego’s ICC” to “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Consideration as Rated by Ego’s Partner.” The Figure 9 below illustrates the mediation model for task four.

Figure 9
Task Four: Mediation Model for “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”

Note: 1. AT= Ambiguity Tolerance, 2. BF = Behavioral Flexibility, 3. RO = Respect for Otherness, 4. Emp = Empathy, 5. KD = Knowledge Discovery, 6. CA = Communicative Awareness

The direct path from “Ego’s ICC” to “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner” remained non-significant, standardized coefficient $\beta = -.37, p = .55$. In addition, the indirect effect from “Ego’s Accommodation” to “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner” was not significant, $\beta = .41, p = .49$. However, the
indirect effect of “Ego’s ICC” was significantly associated with “Ego’s Accommodation,” standardized coefficient $\beta = .96$, $p < .001$. Bootstrapping for indirect effects for 95% C.I. indicates that zero lies in-between the lower (-1.95) and upper level (2.7); therefore, the indirect effect is not significant. In addition, the mediated model achieved good fit in terms of Chi-square, $\chi^2 = 14.8$, $df = 13$, $p = .32$, CFI score, which met the benchmark of >.93 (CFI = .99), and RMSEA score, which met the bench mark of <.08 (RMSEA = .05). Nonetheless, “Ego’s Accommodation” does not meet the criteria of a mediator between “Ego’s ICC” and “Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations as Rated by Ego’s Partner.”

Additional findings. In order to determine whether ICC scores were significantly different depending on task, task was dummy-coded with task two as a reference. The results indicate that participants had significantly higher scores in task two than in task four ($t = 6.34$, $p < .001$). In addition, nationality was dummy-coded with U.S. as a reference. Within task four, U.S. participants had significantly higher ICC scores than Thai participants ($t = 2.6$, $p < .05$). However, ICC scores were not significantly different depending on nationality in task two ($t = 1.7$, $p = .096$). In addition, scores were dummy-coded for task with task two as the reference and accommodation as the dependent variable. Accommodation scores were significantly higher in task two than in task four ($t = 4.48$, $p < .001$). Finally, task was dummy-coded with task two as a reference and communication effectiveness as the dependent variable. There was not a significant difference in communication effectiveness scores of face ($t = -.75$, $p = .46$) or understanding ($t = -1.6$, $p = .12$) depending on task.
4.3 Summary of Hypothesis One, Two, and Three Results

Overall, the results indicate that ICC is a significant predictor of how you rate your intercultural partner and self-communication effectiveness, but not a significant predictor of how your intercultural partner rates your communication effectiveness. In other words, the proposal put forth in H1, which predicted that a) The U.S. partner’s ICC would positively predict their Thai partner’s rating of the U.S. partner’s understanding (“my understanding as rated by my partner”) and vise-versa, and b) The U.S. partner’s ICC would positively predict their Thai partner’s rating of their U.S. partner’s ability to show face considerations (“my ability to show face considerations as rated by my partner”) and vise-versa was not significant. However, additional findings related to H1 reveal that ICC is a significant predictor of how you rate your partner’s face and understanding and how you rate your own face and understanding. In addition, H2, which predicted that ICC would be a positive predictor of one’s degree of accommodation toward their intercultural partner, was supported. Finally, H4, which predicted that ICC would positively predict your intercultural partner’s rating of your communication effectiveness through accommodation, was not supported. The findings also reveal a significant difference between tasks in terms of ICC scores, with participants scoring significantly higher in task two than in task four, and a significant difference in terms of nationality, with U.S. participants scoring higher in ICC in task four than their Thai counterparts. Details of these findings and their implications are provided in chapter five—discussion.

4.4 Additional Findings

The following are additional findings derived from categorical data—types of accommodation, social cues in accommodation, and open-ended questions. They are presented
here as findings that may help with interpretation of the proposed hypotheses, and inform future studies in this area.

**Types of accommodation.** Participant exchanges were open-coded line-by-line using NVIVO. Units coded ranged from single words, sentences, to paragraphs that contained one particular instance of accommodation for one idea or topic. For example, “Hello Tiff,” may have been coded as one instance of accommodation for name preferences (e.g. Using partner’s preferred nickname, Tiff). Additionally, an entire paragraph describing one’s hometown, in which the participant provided information that may have helped his/her partner understand their hometown better, may have been coded as one instance of accommodation. (e.g. Hawaii is made up of eight islands and I live on the island of Oahu, which is located to the west of the eight island chain).

**Task two.** For task two, the following categories of accommodation emerged from open coding: Accommodates towards partner’s interests, explains special terms to increase the understanding of a non-local, accommodates towards partner’s name preferences, copies/imitates partner’s way of speaking/expressing themselves, accommodation toward partner’s feelings, accommodation through complimenting or expressing satisfaction, and language accommodation.

Conversely, the following categories of non-accommodation emerged: Does not explain special terms, uses expressions, idioms, or sarcasm that is not understood by partner, and does not acknowledge partner’s post or interests.

**Task four.** For task four, the following categories of accommodation emerged: Explains special terms to increase the understanding of a non-local, accommodation towards partner’s interests, accommodation towards partner’s feelings, and accommodation through
complimenting/expressing satisfaction. Conversely, the following category of non-accommodation emerged, does not acknowledge partner’s post or interests. The following Table 16 provides information as to the main categories, examples of instances coded at that category, and the number of instances for each category.

Table 16
Accommodation Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation through:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explains special terms</td>
<td>Task 2</td>
<td>“I like นั้นพริกอ้วน that called ’nam phrik aawng’, ingredient is pork and tomato.”</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“…We also have this dish called lau lau pronounced lah oh lah oh. It’s tea leaves that have been steamed around pig meat…Same with the raw fish it is called poh keh that is also very delicious prepared with sea weed Hawaiian salt, and anything else you would like, people use kukui nut, and sesame oil. That usually makes it very good.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task 4</td>
<td>“So I guess a few of the sayings I should explain are 3, 6, and 10. I could not think of any sayings I’ve heard from conversation in regards to “as happy as a...” besides one of my favorite songs- Happy as the Sun by Tyrone Wells. (Here’s a link if you’re curious about what kind of music I listen to 😊 <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUeHkmC-DxY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUeHkmC-DxY</a> )”</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner’s feelings</td>
<td>Task 2</td>
<td>“I hope you will understand me to talk with you again, because I’m not well 119english language. ^^”</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“And no it’s not a problem at all your English is pretty good, I was able to understand it. It must be hard translating to English for us, and I give you credit and say thank you. Because otherwise it would be very hard to communicate haha.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Task | Complimenting/expressing satisfaction | “Hi! Sorry to get back to you so late. I am doing okay, I have a huge cold 😔 so have been feeling really under the weather. How are you doing?”
“you should Health care.” |
| Task | “It’s nice to read about Thailand from someone who actually lives there instead of just learning about it on the web.”
“WOW!!! Welcome to Thailand and nice to meet you … I find you are a charming lady very😊).” |
| Task | “Clever as a cat! I really like that 😊” |
| Task | “See you later, Tiff. (MA-TA AI-MA-SHO)” |
| Task | “Hi… or I shall say SA-WAT-DEE-KA from Thailand” (Partner previously said, “Hi…. or shall I say Aloha from Hawaii.”) |
| Partner’s Interests | “I’m not sure how the tourist industry of Thailand and Hawaii compares, but I’m sure there’s plenty of tourism there as well. I looked up some things on Thailand on the Internet and found that a past time and competitive sport is kite flying? That’s really neat!”
“I’m very interested “Hawaiian luau food” of you suggested. It looks very yummy. I would like to try it. Thank very for suggested.” |
<p>| Task | “How come you put smart as David Beckham? Is he considered smart in Thailand? Or smart 😊” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Accommodation through:</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-explanation of special terms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I will introduction northern Thai foods for you, Nam Prik Ong, Sai Aua, Kaeng Hung Le, Northern Thai food very delicious.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Surfing, seafood, tourism and the “hang-loose” culture are definitely big in my hometown just like Hawaii.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not acknowledging partner’s post or interests</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Hawaii is most definitely a place everyone should visit at least once. We have some great hikes that take you to beautiful views of the island. On the North Shore side of the island we have the best shaved ice places, which is one thing Hawaii is known for. I hope one day you do get to visit Hawaii.” (Only talks about themselves; does not exhibit interest in partner).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                              |      | “1. As good as it gets  
2. As black as coal  
3. As happy as a smile  
4. As clever as a fox  
5. As cold as ice  
6. As smart as a whip  
7. As white as a ghost  
8. As smooth as a baby's bottom  
9. As quiet as a mouse  
10. As big as the moon” |
|                                              |      | (Note: Only does the comparative expressions task and does not interact with their partner in any way). |
| Using sarcasm, expressions, or idioms (non-literal meanings) that are not explained and not understood by partner. | 2    | “I may be stating the obvious but I just wanted to share that I have gotten questions such as: “Do you guys live in grass huts and climb coconut trees?” from people who are not at all familiar with Hawaii. I wonder if there is a similar situation with where you’re from too?” |
|                                              |      | (NOTE: This example was taken literally by the Thai partner, who assumed the American partner was literally asking “Do you guys live in grass huts…?” and responded by saying, “We do not live in grass huts, and we train monkeys to pick coconuts for us.”)
For task two, accommodating for partner’s interests (e.g. trying to find something in common with partner) emerged as the most prominent category (54 instances). This was followed by explaining special terms (32 instances), accommodating for partner’s feelings (30 instances), and expressing satisfaction/complimenting partner (30 instances). For task four, the non-accommodative behavior of not acknowledging partner’s post or interests was found to be the most prominent category (33 instances). This was followed by accommodating through expressing satisfaction/complimenting partner (23 instances).

4.5 Use of Social Cues in Accommodation

This study examined accommodation in terms of social cue behavior. Social cues are verbal or non-verbal clues that guide social interactions. Within CMC, these social cue categories can be grouped as physical and non-physical social cues. Physical cues consist of nonverbal communication (kinesics, paralanguage, proxemics), and non-physical cues consist of psychological cues (feelings, empathy, humor), and social dynamics (praise, cooperation) as well as language. However, these two categories are not mutually exclusive. Nonverbal cues such as laughter can indicate the psychological cue of humor. Thus, social cues cannot be examined separately (as physical and non-physical), but must be examined in terms of how one influences the other.

In order to examine the influence of physical and non-physical social cues, each category of accommodation was examined for the types of physical cues utilized within that category.
Each type of physical cue (e.g. nonverbal) aids in achieving the goal of the particular non-physical (e.g. psychological/social dynamic) category in which it is found.

For example, within the task two accommodation category of “explaining special terms,” non-verbal cues are used mainly as paralanguage that helps in clarifying the message (e.g. “it is pronounced “SH...BLEE”), display excitement (e.g. “their food is incredible!”), quotations for sarcasm (e.g. “downtown”), and three dots to display tentativeness (“i don’t know price of elephant ride ☹...sorry.”). In addition, kinesics—emoticons are used to soften messages (see previous example). Task four displays the same type of non-verbal social cues with the addition of picture links used to illustrate something that is difficult to describe in words. Overall, the nonverbal social cues displayed within the accommodation category of “explaining special terms” are used to help clarify or increase understanding of particular messages and soften or add excitement to messages.

Within the accommodation category of “partner’s feelings,” non-verbal social cues, such as paralanguage are used to reassure a partner. For example, emoticons are used to apologize over language abilities or to reassure a partner that everything is fine (e.g. “I’m so sorry if you don’t understand me because my English language not very well. ^_^”), laughter is used to highlight that they are joking/understanding (e.g. “It must be hard translating to English for us, and I give you credit and say thank you. Because otherwise it would be very hard to communicate haha.”), and exclamation marks are used to reassure a partner (e.g. “Your English is great girl!”). Overall, social cues were used to accommodate for their partner’s feelings. The same types of social cues were used within this category between task two and task four.
The social cues used within the accommodation of category of “complimenting/displaying satisfaction” included mainly the use of paralanguage and kinesics. For example, within task two, exclamation marks were used to emphasize satisfaction (e.g. “Thanks for teaching me about Thailand!”), all caps were used to indicate excitement (e.g. WOW!!!), and emoticons were used to emphasize the feelings of the message (e.g. “It’s amazing how well you can understand and write English 😊”). The same types of social cues were used within task four with the addition of laughter to indicate the joking nature of the message (e.g. “oh lol, that is black.”). Overall, the social cues used within the accommodation category of “complimenting/displaying satisfaction” worked to show one’s partner how happy or satisfied they were with the interaction.

The “special language” accommodation category included social cues that are not normally used by the other culture, but were picked up and used in order to develop a greater rapport with their partner. Paralanguage and kinesics were the main types of social cues used. For example, laughter normally expressed using “haha” by the U.S. students was used by a Thai student (e.g. “But with the Sea same Hawaii haha~”), instead of “555” –the usual form of online laughter. (The word for “5” in Thai is pronounced “ha.”) Exclamation marks were also used to accompany messages written in Thai by U.S. students in order to emphasize the message (e.g. อะไรคือความคิดของคุณคืออะไร? (In English)? Looking forward to your response!). All caps were used when speaking a language other than Thai or English for clarity’s sake (e.g. “MA-TA AI-MA-SHO”). Finally, smiley faces were used to provide messages with a warm feeling (e.g. “I am using translator so it may come out different. 😊.” Overall, since the types of accommodation that appeared within this category were used to specifically increase rapport with one’s partner, the social cues that accompanied these messages were used to help increase the good feeling or these
particular messages or increase the understanding of these messages. This category only appeared within task two.

The accommodation category of “copying/imitating partner” includes messages in which partners directly copy their partner’s way of expressing themselves, or very specifically provide the same type of information that bears an uncanny resemblance to their partner’s message. The types of non-verbal social cues used within this category mainly fall under paralanguage and kinesics. For example, all caps are used to indicate another language (e.g. “Hi or I shall say SA-WAT-DEE-KA from Thailand”), and exclamation marks are used to emphasize excitement (e.g. “Now!! , I live in Phayao about 3 years”). Furthermore, smiley faces/eyes are used to indicate feeling of warmth/happiness (e.g. “Hi!! 😊) I am very pleased to have you as a partner.”). Overall, the non-verbal social cues used within this category are directly copied from one’s partner. Therefore, they are used to deepen rapport with one’s partner. This category only appeared within task two.

The category of accommodating for “partner’s interests” mainly used non-verbal social cues such as paralanguage, kinesics, and external visualizations. Within task two, for example, exclamation marks were used to indicate excitement in learning about a partner (e.g. “I would love to visit Thailand to see the historic sites and try to delicious food! I hear there are many elephants too!) All caps were used to accentuate the feeling of a word or message (e.g. “I LOVE Thai food!”). Smiley faces were used to indicate a happy/warm feeling of the message (e.g. “I believe Hawaii food delicious same Thai food too. ^_^”). In addition, pictures of places to visit in Thailand, such as the floating market, were posted to help increase understanding. Non-verbal social cues were used similarly in task four. Overall, since accommodation within this category is used to find common ground with a partner or express interest in a partner’s culture in order to
increase rapport, non-verbal social cues were used to further this goal by increasing the feeling of excitement or interest one had in their partner’s culture.

Finally, there was very limited use of non-verbal social cues within non-accommodative behavior. Although some non-verbal social cues of paralanguage were used within the “non-explanation of special terms” category, these were mainly things like use of all caps or quotation marks to indicate a new term (e.g. “I live in northern, that called “LANNA””). However, these new terms are not followed up by any explanation as to what they are. Furthermore, exclamation marks are used to accent/emphasize a message (e.g. “Sai Aua, Kaeng Hung Le...Northern Thai food very delicious I confirm !!”). In addition, quotation marks are used to indicate a question with implied meaning that is taken quite literally by Thai participants (e.g. “I have gotten questions such as: “Do you guys live in grass huts and climb coconut trees?” from people who are not at all familiar with Hawaii.”). However, overall, very few social cues are used within non-accommodative behavior. Please see APPENDIX E for the social cues in accommodation table.

4.6 Open-Ended Question

U.S. Participants. One open-ended question was provided on the final survey (task 5 survey), which asked participants to do the following:

“Write a descriptive paragraph that evaluates your overall intercultural exchange experience over the past five weeks. Please provide specific examples from your exchange experience/interaction to help illustrate your point of view in your evaluation.”

Participant responses were open-coded using NVIVO. From 200 instances (instances range from short sentences to paragraphs that contain one central theme, topic, or idea), 52 codes emerged. Conceptually similar terms were further grouped into six emerging categories: I learned, quality
of communication, the experience, the project, my partner, and the medium. The categories are listed below in order of largest category to smallest category.

1. The first category, “I learned,” are words that describe things learned during the interaction, such as, “recognized similarities and differences between cultures,” “specific examples of Thai culture,” and “learned about own culture.” Twenty-one instances were coded for this category. Recognizing similarities and differences about culture was the most frequently mentioned theme in this category (12 instances). For example, participants wrote:

   “We did have similarities that made me realize that even though things are completely different between my partner and I, we did have some similarities.”

   “Although our cultures are so different from each other, at the same time, they are quite similar, which is what this study really allowed me to see.”

   “It is very interesting to see the different perspectives and the similarities that cultures have.”

2. The second category, “quality of communication,” refers to words that specifically related to descriptions of the communication, such as, smooth, in depth, forced, and superficial. Seventeen references were coded for the category “quality of communication.” Language barrier was the most frequently mentioned theme in this category (six instances). For example, one participant wrote,

   “I did feel however, that there was a bit of miscommunication because of the language barrier. Sometimes this made our communication a little difficult, but I still felt that I was able to understand the overall concepts of what she was telling me.”
A lack of depth was another frequently mentioned theme in this category (four instances). For example, one participant wrote,

“…I don’t think the conversations were “deep” enough for me to really understand my partner and my partner’s culture. Sure, I found out she is friendly and sweet, and a little about what is important to her, but that’s about it.”

3. The third category, “the experience,” refers to words that describe the overall experience, such as, good experience, good opportunity, and beneficial. Seventeen instances were coded for the category “the experience.” Good experience was the most frequently mentioned theme in this category (12 instances). For example, participants wrote:

“I really enjoyed interacting with her and I think this experience would benefit a lot of people. Thanks for making it possible!”

“I enjoyed being able to talk to a person in a different country! It was a cool experience!”

“Overall this experience was awesome and fun and a great learning experience.”

“I think that this was a good experience overall and I’m glad I participated in it.”

4. The fourth category, “the project,” refers to descriptions of the components of the project itself, such as, “wish study could be longer,” “wished surveys allowed for more explanation,” and “activities helped learn about culture.” Fourteen references were coded for this category. Activities helping participants learn about culture was the most frequently mentioned theme in this category (13 instances). For example, participants wrote:

“Participating in the activities each week helped me learn more about my partner and could compare our different cultural practices. An example of great interaction between...”
my partner and I, which was the introductions. We both had something we had in common, it was food. It doesn’t matter where you come from food is an international language, every culture has its own way of preparing each item, but they all come up with something.”

“I really liked when we did the word association exercise because it allowed us to see what is most important to them and what the first thing that comes to their mind is. It was nice to compare and contrast our views with theirs.”

“For the first task, it was interesting to be paired with someone in class to share opinions on the American culture. After reading everyone’s it seemed to be along the same lines: fast-paced, technology run, freedom, etc. When I got paired with Woramet, it was refreshing to get a taste of a different culture such as kite flying as a sport. As the weeks went by, I feel that the conversations became more comfortable. In Task 3 and 4, it was intriguing to see the differences in word association and comparative expressions. Most of the comparative expressions where phrases that I’ve already heard before with words that were already matched with the adjective. For example, As cold as ice or as smart as a fox. On the other hand, Woramet had phrases like “As black as a Verge pot,” “As happy as won the lottery,” and “As smart as David Beckham.” I was confused at first, but after conversing, I gained understanding of what a verge pot is and why he would consider David Beckham smart.”

5. The fifth category, “my partner,” are words that describe the behavior/interaction of their partner, such as, personal, new friend, and lack of response. Ten references were coded for the category “my partner.” Lack of response was the most frequently mentioned theme in this category (six instances). For example, participants wrote:

“I was curious to see what the time difference was? Because at times, I felt I would not hear form my partner.”

“My partner’s limited ability to express her thoughts and feelings in English may be the reason why we did not attempt to continue our responses with one another.”
“Our interaction wasn’t to interactive. Every week I would do the task but most of the time I would just get one response. Most times I would respond to my partner’s post but after that she did not respond.”

6. Finally, the sixth category, “the medium,” are words that describe the technology or the medium, such as, “thanks technology,” “suggest using Skype or chat,” and “would like face-to-face interaction.” Only three instances were coded for this category. Of these instances, participants suggested using other mediums, such as Skype or chat in order to have more of a face-to-face feel of interacting with their partners. For example, one participant wrote:

“If I had the opportunity, I would definitely want to interact with my partner not only through Facebook, but through other types of social media to get more face to face communication and interaction; I think it’ll be a much more effective experience, but it was overall different and fun!”

Thai participants. Participant responses were translated from Thai to English by native Thai speakers, and Americans with high proficiency in Thai. All translations were verified by native Thai speakers. Responses were open-coded using NVIVO. Six major categories emerged:

Learning about culture, the experience, new friend, quality of communication, and opportunity to practice English. Examples of each category are described below from largest to smallest category:

1. The first category, “learning about culture,” is the largest category. It refers to instances that specifically talked about things they learned from the project. This category was broken into three subcategories: “learned about my partner’s culture,” (Eight instances) “taught my partner about my own culture,” (Two instances) and “learned about cultural differences” (Nine instances). For example, “learned about my partner’s culture” consisted of the following types of statements:
“I learned about how my friends live in their lives. They tend to be happy on an island surrounded by the ocean and do water sports. When the waves are good, they play water sports. They like the ocean and would love to visit the Thai ocean once.”

“I learned the thoughts and ideas of my partner who live in a different country. Viewpoints, culture, livelihood”

The sub-category, “taught my partner about my own culture,” consisted of the following statements:

“Our friendliness let my buddy know important Thai culture, like food, “Wai” (greeting), “don’ts”. I hope that foreign friends learned about Thai traditions that will eventually lead them to experience Thai culture first hand.”

“…at the same time also exchanged about Thai culture with my friend. I hope that knowing about Thai culture will cause them to want to come visit/tour Thailand more.”

The sub-category, “learned about cultural differences,” consisted of the following types of statements:

“The cultural exchange allowed me to know that Thai culture and Hawaiian culture are different. For example, food, child-rearing, living spaces, customs, culture.”

“I can understand differences amongst Thai and American culture. For example, Americans love freedom. They do as they please. However, Thai people have to cling to tradition.”

2. The second category, “the experience,” refers to words or social cues (e.g. smiley faces) that were used to describe the overall experience, such as, “good experience,” “good opportunity” or
“I gained…from this project.” Eleven instances were coded for this category. Instances in this category frequently talked about the opportunity to gain new knowledge. For example,

“This project gave me the opportunity to exchange culture with my friend. And I can give/tell about my culture to my friend who can understand. I got a friend who is a foreigner. Speaking together cheerfully. And we understand each other nicely.”

“This experience (exchanging culture for five weeks) has allowed me to know that local places in each country have cultures that are different. For example, eating, dressing, behavior, and desires differ depending on each country.”

“I feel good, proud, and glad about this experience.”

In addition, some participants simply used smiley faces to express their experience (three instances).

3. The third category, “new friend,” refers to instances that specifically talked about gaining a new friend from the project. Five instances were coded in this category. For example,

“I got to know the culture of my friend and the opinions of one another. Even though we have never met, we can still be friends and work together successfully.”

“I got a friend who is a foreigner. We can speak together cheerfully.”

“I gained new knowledge like foreign culture, food, beliefs, and new foreign friends who I wouldn’t have known if this program didn’t exist.”

4. The fourth category, “quality of communication,” refers to words that specifically related to descriptions of the communication, such as, “superficial” or “deep.” Only two instances were
coded for the category “quality of communication.” Both instances discussed the exchange as lacking depth/being superficial. The first instance attributed the lack of depth to the set-up of the project, for example:

“The knowledge is not deep/profound because there are not many questions (in the activities) and we didn’t have many chances to talk. We knew each other superficially.”

The second instance attributed the lack of depth to a language barrier:

“The exchange was at a good level. But having a choice of language could help with understanding in terms of whether we are incorrect or are unable to explain in order to exchange fully. For example, culture must be explained with detail, ultimately our language skills gave only just enough understanding, and didn’t delve into deeper real culture.”

5. The fifth category, “opportunity to practice English,” refers specifically to instances that discussed the exchange as an opportunity to learn English. Only one instance was coded for this category:

“I will have good chance to practice speaking English.”

Overall, the U.S. participants were mostly concerned with what they learned from the experience, such as cultural differences, quality of the communication, in which language was often cited as the reason for a lack of depth in the communication, and the overall experience, which was mostly described as a fun learning experience. Similarly, Thai participants mostly commented on what they learned from the experience, in which learning about cultural differences was the most frequently referenced, and the overall experience, in which the
opportunity to talk with a foreign friend and learn new things about culture was most frequently mentioned. In contrast, although Thai participants echoed similar feelings about the depth of communication, this was mentioned much more frequently by American participants than Thai participants (only two instances). In addition, Thai participants were more likely to talk about gaining a new “foreign” friend; whereas, American participants seemed to feel like the exchange was perhaps not deep enough to warrant the term “friend.” (e.g. “…I don’t think the conversations were “deep” enough for me to really understand my partner and my partner’s culture. Sure, I found out she is friendly and sweet, and a little about what is important to her, but that’s about it”). The implications of these open-ended responses are further discussed Chapter five.
Chapter Five: Discussion

This study examined the factors (ICC and accommodation of social cues) that may influence perceived communication effectiveness (understanding & clarity; face & maintaining relationships) in intercultural online exchange. ICC influencing communication effectiveness through accommodation of social cue behavior was the main conceptual model examined. The following discussion brings together the results from ICC, accommodation, social cues, and communication effectiveness and provides implications for their role in intercultural online interaction.

5.1 ICC and Communication Effectiveness

Overall, the results indicate that ICC is a significant predictor of how you rate your intercultural partner and self-communication effectiveness, but not a significant predictor of how your intercultural partner rates your communication effectiveness. Within a FTF intercultural environment, it is your actual behavior (rather than your internalized intentions) that others use to determine your intercultural competence (Lustig & Koester, 1999). However, based on the findings of this study, your intercultural competence does not predict how your intercultural partner rates your communication effectiveness, but rather, predicts how you rate your partner’s communication effectiveness and self-communication effectiveness. For example, a U.S. participant’s high ICC does not predict their Thai partner’s rating of how effectively their U.S. partner communicates. However, a U.S. participant’s high ICC does predict how they rate their Thai partner’s communication effectiveness and self-communication effectiveness. In sum, ICC does not predict how you see me, but predicts how I see you and how I see myself. The specifics of these findings are detailed below.
**Task two.** In task two, the ICC dimension of ambiguity tolerance negatively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding,” “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations,” “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding,” and “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” Within task two, ambiguity tolerance involved staying positive about learning in ambiguous situations. It involved paying attention to differences in the exchange and participating positively despite those differences. For example, ambiguity tolerance includes expressing satisfaction in working with your partner, maintaining a positive attitude, and pointing out differences and reacting to these differences positively. More effort does not necessarily equal clearer communication and better understanding. In fact, the more one participated, the more opportunities they had to assess their partner’s level of understanding and the more opportunities their partner had to demonstrate their level of clarity. In an intercultural online setting, the more tolerance for ambiguity, the more opportunities U.S. participants had to realize that their partner did not understand them, they did not understand their partner, and vise-versa.

In addition, both ambiguity tolerance and knowledge discovery were significant negative predictors of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations,” and “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” Face considerations involves not inconveniencing and not intruding upon your partner. In Thai, this concept is known as “Kreng Jai” and is a major component of the Thai value system (Pfahl et al, 2007). The ICC dimension of knowledge discovery logically follows ambiguity tolerance—one participates positively in an ambiguous situation (unfamiliar intercultural territory), pays attention to differences and then tries to discover more about their partner by asking them questions in order to make the situation less “ambiguous.” However, the more questions you ask, the more you may feel like the time
required to discover more is an inconvenience on you, especially, if your efforts do not result in
greater understanding (as indicated in the previous paragraph). Consequently, higher levels of
participation and discovery can incur feelings of intruding on your partner and your partner
intruding upon you, especially if the end result is not rewarding (e.g. greater understanding). In
sum, greater effort to positively participate and higher levels of discovery about your
intercultural partner’s culture, does not account for greater communication effectiveness in terms
of understanding and clarity and face considerations, but rather, leads to less perceived
understanding, clarity, and face considerations.

**Task four.** In task four, the ICC dimension of behavioral flexibility was a significant
positive predictor of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding.” It is important to
remember that task four was characterized by its structured-work-focused environment.
Therefore, participants had a tendency to just do the assignment with little socialization. Thus,
participants scored low in behavioral flexibility if they did nothing more than post the
assignment with little socialization or interaction with their partner. In light of this, behavioral
flexibility, within task four, essentially measured whether or not you actually interacted with
your partner. In other words, did you pay attention to your partner and modify your reactions
accordingly. Therefore, within task four, the more social you are within a structured-work-
focused environment, the greater you perceive your partner’s ability to understand and be clear.

In addition, ambiguity tolerance, knowledge discovery, and communicative awareness
negatively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Partner’s Understanding,” and “Ego’s Rating of
Ego’s Partner’s Ability to Show Face Considerations” within task four. As stated previously,
ambiguity tolerance involves staying positive about learning in ambiguous (unfamiliar
intercultural territory) situations. Knowledge discovery measures how much you ask about the
other’s culture and explain your own culture. Communicative awareness measures if you are able to adapt your communication to the situation, such as trying to explain misunderstood concepts in a different way or posing questions to resolve misunderstandings. However, engaging in all three of these dimensions can actually lead to greater misunderstanding and face threatening behavior. For example, the following exchange (Figure 10) is one example from task four in which engaging in more ambiguity tolerance, knowledge discovery, and communicative awareness can actually lead to greater misunderstanding and possible embarrassment. As seen in the example, the more the U.S. participant tried to delve deeper into discussion about the posts, the more frustrated they became about not understanding their Thai partner, and the more frustrated the Thai partner became about being able to fully respond or understand their U.S. partner. In addition, the Thai participant may have felt like her partner was “making her look bad” by continuing to ask questions that she could not fully understand or answer. Conversely, the U.S. participant may have felt inconvenienced that she exerted so much effort into the exchange and did not get a satisfactory result.

This example also shows that this particular pair relied heavily on text to communicate with each other. However, greater understanding may have been achieved through the posting of pictures to illustrate, for example, what a pestle and mortar is. Participants did not utilize all the affordances available to them in an online intercultural environment. Further suggestions for how to encourage greater learning in intercultural online environments through the utilization of online affordances, such as posting pictures, are provided below in section 5.3 under “adapting textual affordances.”
In addition, according to the results, behavioral flexibility, empathy, and respect for otherness positively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding” and communicative awareness negatively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Understanding.” Thus, the more I pay attention to my partner and modify my reactions accordingly (behavioral flexibility), the more I respect the values and norms of my partner’s culture (respect for otherness), and the more I ask about the other’s feelings and try to take their perspective (empathy), the greater I rate my own ability to understand my intercultural partner. These three dimensions are similar in that they
involve being respectful of the other’s feelings and culture. Therefore, the more I engage in this type of behavior, the more I feel I can understand my partner. In essence, in a structured-work-focused online intercultural environment, positive participation, respect and empathy can lead to a feeling of greater understanding of your intercultural partner. However, trying to explain things in different ways, defining terms, posing questions, and trying to resolve misunderstandings (communicative awareness) can lead to a feeling of misunderstanding.

Finally, in task four, ambiguity tolerance positively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations” and empathy negatively predicted “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” In other words, the more positive you are about working with someone different from yourself, the higher you rate your ability to show face considerations towards your partner. The major difference between ambiguity tolerance and empathy, as measured within task four, is that ambiguity tolerance does not require you to ask anything of your partner. It only requires that you participate positively by, for example, expressing satisfaction in working with your partner. In fact, you may feel that because you are participating so positively and expressing satisfaction in working with your partner that they may view you in a better light. Thus, ambiguity tolerance can be a positive predictor of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Consideration” towards my partner. Conversely, empathy was measured mainly as trying to identify with your partner. The findings points to empathy as a negative predictor of “Ego’s Rating of Ego’s Ability to Show Face Considerations.” In other words, the more you try to identify with your partner, the lower you rate your ability to show face considerations. At first this may seem counterintuitive; however, “ego’s ability to show face consideration” was examined by one’s ability to not intrude or inconvenience one’s partner and to not cause one’s partner to dislike him or her. Therefore, asking about your partner’s feelings
and trying to identify with them in some way may actually feel like intruding or inconveniencing your partner. Moreover, American participants tended to rate themselves higher than Thai participants in terms of “ability to show face consideration” towards my intercultural partner. This is indicative of Thai culture, in which Thai participants may not want to portray themselves poorly especially when it comes to ability to show face considerations. Thai culture places great importance on “Kreng Jai,” which is extreme consideration towards the feelings of others (Komin, 1990, Pfhal, 2007). With such importance placed on this ideal, it is not surprising that Thai participants tended to rate themselves higher in this category, as rating themselves low in this category would reflect quite poorly on them from a cultural standpoint.

5.2 Social Environment vs. Structured-Work-Focused Environment

According to the results, task two was significantly different from task four in terms of scores in ICC and accommodation, where participants scored significantly higher in the more social environment of task two than the more structured environment of task four, which resulted in mainly “work” talk and little socialization. This finding suggests that the type of environment in a computer-mediated setting matters when measuring ICC and accommodation. First, an environment that is less-structured (e.g. asking participants to introduce themselves and their cultures) tends to result in more socialization and an environment that is more structured (e.g. asking participants to compare specific word associations or expressions) tends to result in more “work specific” talk and less socialization. This is significant when measuring ICC and accommodation in computer-mediated settings because both measures depend on socialization outside of the prescribed task. For example, ICC as measured in this study examines actual behavior in terms of factors such as communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, and empathy. However, these types of behaviors are difficult to detect when participants do little
outside of posting the prescribed task (e.g. “Here are my comparative expressions… “As black as night, as white as snow, etc…”). Therefore, tasks that encourage more socialization will tend to result in higher scores in ICC and accommodation (which also depends on socialization outside of the prescribed task).

Furthermore, when participants are silent in a computer-mediated setting, it is interpreted as absence, which results in a lower score and a partner who feels that their partner is unresponsive or does not care. However, this behavior is often due to language comprehension in which a Thai participant may not respond because they do not understand and do not want to threaten their own face (e.g. do not want to look unintelligent) or their partner’s face (e.g. do not want to inconvenience my partner) by asking for clarification. On a related note, although there was not a significant difference between scores in terms of nationality in task two, task four found significant differences in ICC and accommodation scores between nationalities. This finding further supports the difference between task two and task four in that while nationality (or language) was not a factor in task two (the more social environment) it was a significant factor in terms of one’s rating of ICC and accommodation where U.S. students scored significantly higher in a more structured work-focused environment. This difference in scores is likely a result of language skills due to the more nuanced language skills required in task four (e.g. explaining your comparative expressions) than in task two (e.g. introducing yourself and your culture). According to Warren (2014), intercultural communication problems are often attributed to “a mismatch in cultural values when, in fact, the causes lie elsewhere” (p.482). Warren (2014) points to actual language use as something that has lacked attention in such influential works in the field of intercultural communication as Hall and Hofstede, who
emphasize shared values and social norms. The findings of this study indicate that language may have played a role in intercultural behavioral assessment of participants.

**Social context.** Taken together, these differences based on type of task environment and nationality tell us that not only can the type of environment (social vs. structured-work-focused) influence the intercultural competency rating, accommodation rating, and participant rating of a partner’s communication effectiveness, it can also influence these factors in terms of nationality, such that those from Thailand will tend to score lower than their U.S. counterparts in more work structured environments due to second language skills. Therefore, measures, such as ICC should take this into account when being adapted for computer-mediated environments.

This finding further emphasizes the importance of considering the context (e.g. social vs. structured-work-focused environment) when it comes to measuring ICC, accommodation, and communication effectiveness within online environments. According to Derks, et al. (2007), participants use more emoticons in socio-emotional contexts than in structured-work-focused contexts; therefore, social context (e.g. structured-work-focused environment) can influence the use of social cues in CMC environments. This corroborates with the findings within this study in which very limited amount of social cues were used within the more structured-work-focused task four. Comparatively, participants utilized more social cues within task two. According to the literature, social cues are essential in helping us establish common ground (Verhulsdonck, 2007), which is the knowledge that participants are aware they have in common (Clark & Brennan, 1991). Since establishing common ground is essential in the formation of “social capital” (Resnick, 2002), which can lead to successful future interactions, it is not surprising that a relationship between ICC and your partner’s self-rating of communication effectiveness was found within task two, but not within task four. In other words, social cues, which are more
likely to be used in social rather than structured-work-focused environments, are important for encouraging positive face, which can lead to common ground, and successful future interactions in online environments.

**Measuring ICC in CMC.** As stated previously, the main difference between task two and task four was sociability, where task two was focused on socializing and task four more structured and work focused. Thus, the higher scores within task two may indicate that ICC translated for computer-mediated environments is more concerned with sociability than accomplishing specific work objectives. Furthermore, the higher use of social cues within task two than in task four highlights the importance of the environment when measuring ICC because a more social environment can encourage more use of social cues which can lead to higher ICC scores. Thus, it is important that we consider the context in which ICC is being measured, especially in CMC environments where we are limited to “posts,” for example, to determine someone’s behavior. Therefore, within CMC environments and with current ICC measures, being more social leads to a tendency to be more interculturally competent. So, within online environments, where silence is translated as absence, the question of, “does more social really equal more interculturally competent?” must be asked.

Furthermore, according to Watson, Gallois, Hewett, and Jones (2014), a consideration of the interactants’ motivations is what the ICC approach is missing. Watson et al. (2014) posit that “the ICC approach does not address the ways in which speakers’ goals in an interaction influence their approach to the interaction” (p.512). In other words, we cannot assume that interactants desire to engage in effective communication or are motivated by the same goals. Based off of the open-ended responses, it seems that Thai participants were more motivated by making foreign friends and practicing English than their U.S. counterparts, who desired to have an in-depth
cultural exchange. This is not surprising since the demographic data collected in this study indicates that the Thai participants had much less contact with people from other cultures than their U.S. counterparts.

Overall, when it comes to measuring ICC in CMC environments, we should reconceptualize the way we measure ICC as something influenced by the environment, mediums used to communicate, speaking partner, motivation, and task being performed rather than just skills, knowledge, and behavior as it has typically been measured.

5.3 Accommodation

Communication Accommodation Theory proposes that accommodative behavior results in positive interactions/future interactions and non-accommodative behavior results in negative interactions/future interactions (Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005). This study hypothesized that ICC would influence accommodative behavior and in turn perceived effectiveness of the exchange. In terms of accommodation, H2a and b were supported within task two—participant’s ICC positively predicted their accommodative behavior. In addition, H2 was supported within task four—participant’s ICC positively predicted their accommodative behavior even within a structured-work-focused environment. However, H3, which predicted that one’s degree of accommodation would influence their intercultural partner’s rating of their communication effectiveness, was not supported. Thus, the Communication Accommodation Theory was not supported within this study—accommodative behavior did not result in a higher rating of communication effectiveness as perceived by one’s intercultural partner. The degree of accommodation was influenced by the type of social cue accommodative behavior as coders arrived at the degree of accommodation based on an assessment of the types of accommodative
social cue behavior present. Future studies should examine what types of accommodative social
cue behavior may influence communication effectiveness. Furthermore, perhaps accommodation
does not influence communication effectiveness in the way predicted. While social harmony and
understanding are important factors for both cultures in FTF environments, the findings of the
open-ended questions indicate other more important factors, such as depth and openness.

For example one U.S. participant wrote,

“…I don’t think the conversations were “deep” enough for me to really understand my
partner and my partner’s culture. Sure I found out she is friendly and sweet, and a little
about what is important to her, but that’s about it.”

This sentiment was further emphasized by Thai participants (although to a lesser degree than
U.S. participants), as one Thai participant wrote,

“The knowledge is not deep/profound because there are not many questions (in the
activities) and we didn’t have many chances to talk. We knew each other superficially.”

However, Thai participants seemed to be more concerned with the opportunity to interact with
“foreigners” than their American counterparts.

“This project gave me the opportunity to exchange culture with my friend. And I can
give/tell about my culture to my friend who can understand. I got a friend who is a
foreigner. Speaking together cheerfully, we understand each other nicely.”

Overall, based on the open-ended questions, participants found the depth and openness of the
exchange the development of friendship to be more important components than the factors used
to measure communication effectiveness within this study (understanding; clarity, maintaining
face and relationships). This finding is of interest because developing friendship and depth of communication are the opposite of what Facebook was designed for—maintaining existing relationships initially formed offline rather than creating new relationships online (Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfeld, 2008). Furthermore, there is a difference in effective communication in CMC compared to FTF. According to Tidwell and Walther (2002), mediated participants who asked more questions were perceived to be more effective than those in FTF situations who asked more questions. Therefore, there are certain characteristics of an interaction that is perceived as more effective in online environments than in FTF environments, such as inquisitiveness. Thus, it is possible that in addition to social harmony and understanding, which are both important factors in Thai and U.S. communication effectiveness FTF situations, there are other more important factors in online environments. Furthermore, according to the social dynamic media perspective, users adapt textual affordances to meet their social cues needs (Walther, 1996; Rhoads, 2010; Fulk, Schmitz, and Steinfeld, 1990; Walther, Loh, Granka, 2005). While users were able to adapt textual affordances to achieve communication effectiveness as measured within this study—clarity, understanding, and maintenance of face and relationships—users were unable to adapt textual affordances enough to achieve the depth of communication that they desired to achieve with their partners.

**Adapting textual affordances.** As discussed previously in the results, for task two, accommodating for partner’s interests (e.g. trying to find something in common with partner) emerged as the most prominent category (54 instances). This was followed by explaining special terms (32 instances), accommodating for partner’s feelings (30 instances), and expressing satisfaction/complimenting partner (30 instances). For task four, the non-accommodative behavior of not acknowledging partner’s post or interests was found to be the most prominent
category (33 instances). This was followed by accommodating through expressing satisfaction/complimenting partner (23 instances). This limited or non-use of social cues in non-accommodative behavior compared to its frequent use within accommodative behavior indicates that using social cues is an essential part of accommodation in intercultural online exchange.

Overall, the main types of non-verbal social cue behaviors used were paralanguage (e.g. laughter, accentuation, etc.), and kinesics (e.g. emoticons), which were used to accentuate messages, soften or create a warm feeling of a message, or express some sort of satisfaction. The non-verbal social cues within each accommodation category worked to achieve the goals of that particular category. For example, all caps were used within the accommodation category of “explain special terms” in order to increase clarity of one’s message. From this perspective, users were indeed able to adapt textual affordances to meet their social cues needs to increase clarity, understanding, and maintain face and relationships (Walther, 1996; Rhoads, 2010; Fulk, Schmitz, and Steinfeld, 1990; Walther, Loh, Granka, 2005). Overall, the combination of non-verbal and non-physical social cues are used to increase clarity and understanding, increase rapport with one’s partner, and ultimately aid in the successful reception of one’s accommodative message.

However, adapting textual affordances to meet the needs of depth and openness were more difficult to achieve via Facebook. Some participants attributed this lack of depth to pitfalls of the medium and suggested utilizing tools like Skype to remedy the problem. This finding suggests that a lack of presence may be the reason participants felt a lack of depth and openness that is often more present in FTF situations. However, Hollan and Stornetta (1992) suggest looking at distinctive characteristics of the ICT rather than trying to imitate FTF interactions. Similarly, Licoppe and Smoreda (2004) state that ICTs are not a substitute for FTF interaction,
but rather, a new resource for connected presence. Furthermore, Olson and Olson (2000) suggest that replicating FTF in online environments is not always achievable. Therefore, it is important to remember that CMCs like Facebook have their own unique characteristics. For example, asynchronous interaction allows for Thai participants, who are functioning in a second language, to review and revise their message before sending it, which takes away the FTF pressure of using a second language “on the fly.” In addition, Facebook attempts to extend or add onto already existing relationships rather than imitate FTF interactions. According to Lampe, et al. (2008) people use Facebook to maintain existing relationships that were initially formed offline rather than creating new relationships online. Therefore, while clarity, understanding, and maintaining face and relationships is possible in this environment, achieving more “depth” in the relationships and conversations may be more difficult to achieve.

With this in mind, suggestions can be made for how to improve intercultural online exchange beyond the variables of clarity, understanding, and maintenance of face and relationships. First, lack of depth can be attributed to a lack of “presence.” Something as simple as activities that allow interactants to express themselves in a greater variety of ways, such as activities involving posting pictures/videos, which can overcome the boundaries of language, may help to increase the feeling of openness and depth. Participants also commented that some of the activities were too basic and did not encourage interaction beyond simple comparisons. Thorne (2010) talks about “intercultural communication in the wild” in which learning may be, “…situated in arenas of social activity that are less controllable than classroom or organized online intercultural exchanges might be, but which present interesting, and perhaps even compelling opportunities for intercultural exchange, agentive action and meaning making” (Thorne, 2010, p. 144).
Therefore, when it comes to learning in intercultural online environments, perhaps less structured/open-ended activities may provide participants with more opportunities to connect with their partner in a way that is constructed through the interaction rather than prescribed by the teacher or researcher. According to Hewling (2006), online class participants can generate a “third” culture. Perhaps if participants are allowed more freedom in their interactions to generate their own meaning, they will have more opportunity to move beyond bi-polar cultural distinctions and generate a “third” culture.

This type of “meaning-making” can be viewed as “intersubjective meaning-making,” which is “how people in groups make sense of situations and each other” (Suthers, 2006, p.7). This occurs when meaning is jointly created through the interaction. According to Suthers (2006), technology used to aid Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) should be designed to encourage intersubjective meaning making rather than trying to imitate FTF learning situations. Suthers (2006) proposes specific lines of investigation in order to examine unique opportunities for intersubjective meaning making in technology. These lines of investigation are beneficial to organize a discussion on adapting affordances of Facebook to encourage learning through online intercultural interaction.

First, using Facebook for learning through intercultural interaction can be examined by asking “what constructive actions does the medium enable?” (p.13). Facebook is a social medium by nature; therefore, it should be used for inherently social activities rather than forcing participants to engage in “work” activities. Therefore, learning activities should be loosely designed so that participants are not confined to the task at hand and are encouraged to go beyond the prescribed assignment.
Second, the affordances of a medium influence how valuable it is as a *referential resource*; therefore, we must consider how to encourage users to focus on specific information or ideas. For intercultural learning activities on Facebook, this means remembering that Facebook is at its core social; therefore, specific information or ideas desired by the instructor or coordinator should incorporate activities that encourages participants to learn through socialization. This may include activities that encourage participants to post pictures, videos, or links that may help encourage specific information to be learned in a more social way.

Third, the advantage of using CMC in learning activities is that it keeps a record of activity that can be reviewed at a later time. This record can be used as a resource for intersubjective meaning-making by allowing participants to reflect on prior activity. Posting on Facebook allows for this type of reflection. Therefore, activities should be structured so that participants build off of the activity from prior weeks. The set-up of activities for this study consisted of weekly activities that did not encourage this type of build-up. Thus, even though participants started to establish a rapport with their partner during introductions, the flow of the interaction was cut-off by the next week’s task, which did not build off of this established rapport. Future use of Facebook as an intercultural learning tool should utilize the advantage that posts have for reflection and encourage students to build-off of their previous weeks’ interactions.

Finally, technology can be used as a *reflector of subjectivity*. In other words, it can be used to enhance meaning-making through mutual awareness of one another. Facebook allows us to keep tabs on our friends activities (whether we want to or not). Although posting mundane daily activities may be a nuisance for some, this function of Facebook could actually be utilized to encourage learning about cultures in online intercultural settings. This would be similar to
“flat Stacy or flat Steve” activities in which grade school students send a paper doll to another city, state, or country and the recipients take pictures of their daily activities and send a diary back in order to learn more about their culture. Through tagging their partner, participants on Facebook would let their partners know of their activities throughout the day—where and what they are eating, etc. so that participants are allowed to gain a better understanding of their partner’s culture and life. This would increase mutual awareness of each other and encourage a feeling of “connectedness.” Future studies should delve further into these ideas of intercultural online learning and “intersubjective meaning-making.”

5.4 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model of ICC positively predicting communication effectiveness through accommodative social cue behavior was not supported, and accommodation was not found as a mediator of ICC to communication effectiveness. It is possible that other factors besides ICC and accommodation may account for more of the variance in communication effectiveness. For example, as stated previously, while social harmony and understanding are significant indicators of communication effectiveness in FTF of their respective cultures, the open-ended question indicated that participants valued other factors of communication effectiveness, such as depth, openness, and friendship. Future studies should examine these as factors of communication effectiveness.
Chapter Six: Conclusions & Implications

As a whole, this study has important implications for the measurement of ICC, accommodation, and communication effectiveness, and the use of social cues in intercultural CMC environments.

First, in a social online intercultural environment, greater effort to participate and discover more about your intercultural partner can actually lead to less perceived communication effectiveness (understanding, clarity, face considerations). Greater effort does not necessarily mean greater communication effectiveness. However, in a structured-work-focused online intercultural environment, positive participation, respect and empathy can lead to a feeling of greater understanding of your intercultural partner; while trying to explain things in different ways, defining terms, posing questions, and trying to resolve misunderstandings (communicative awareness) can lead to a feeling of misunderstanding.

Second, the findings of this study indicate that new measures should be developed that capture how ICC in CMC environments is influenced by the environment, communication medium, partner characteristics, participant motivations, language, and type of task performed rather than focusing on skills, knowledge, and behavior as it has popularly been measured in the past. There is a distinct difference in the scoring of ICC and accommodation depending on the type of task being performed. Furthermore, language matters as tasks become more difficult and less social. These factors must be taken into account when adapting measures of ICC, accommodation, and communication effectiveness for intercultural CMC environments.

Third, although previous research on intercultural social cue behavior in CMC has tended to focus on differences rather than interaction (Kayan, Fussel, & Setlock, 2006, Choi, Lee, Kim,
& Jeon, 2005, Nardi, Whattaker, & Bradner, 2000, Massey, Montoya-Weiss, Hung, and Ramesh, 2001), through the examination of actual interaction, this study was able to find that non-verbal social cues are used in combination with non-physical social cues in intercultural CMC environments to increase clarity and understanding, and increase rapport with one’s partner. Future studies should examine what types of accommodative social cue behavior may lead to greater communication effectiveness.

Fourth, while social harmony is important factor for effectiveness within Thai FTF environment, and understanding is an important factor within American FTF environments (Knutson, et al., 2003; Knutson, 2004; Chaidaroon, 2003; Fisher, 2003; Sriussdaporn-Charoenngam & Jablin, 1999; Dilbeck, et al., 2009), the results indicate that other factors, such as depth, openness, and friendship may be more important communication effectiveness factors for intercultural online exchanges. However, these factors are influenced by motivational differences between cultural groups, as U.S. participants expected to engage in a “deeper” cultural exchange, while Thai participants wanted to gain new “foreign” friends (due to lack of contact with people from other cultures). Future studies should look further into the findings of the open-ended questions.

Fifth, textual affordances were adapted to meet social cue needs necessary for successful accommodation that helped to increase clarity, understanding, and maintain face and relationships. However, as mentioned above, participants did not achieve the “deeper” connection that they desired from the exchange. When it comes to learning in intercultural online environments, less structured/open-ended activities should be implemented to provide participants with more opportunities to connect with their partner in a less confined way. In this way, participants can construct the meaning of their interaction themselves rather than having it
imposed on them by the instructor or coordinator. These activities should take advantage of the unique affordances of Facebook (e.g. keeping a record of posts, tagging, ability to post various types of media, such as pictures, video and links) through learning activities that building off of previous posts, keep participants feeling connecting through tagging and posting about daily activities (rather than just the prescribed assignment), and encourage participants to socialize through posting of pictures, videos and links. In sum, activities designed for intercultural online learning should take advantage of Facebook’s unique affordances as a social medium, rather than trying to force activities that are not suited for this type of medium (e.g. very structured work-related activities).

6.1 Limitations and Future Studies

The strength of this study is that it examines actual intercultural interaction and uses a mixed analysis of actual behavior along-side self-report and open-reflection. Like most studies, it is not without its limitations. As mentioned previously, the data from task four did not meet the assumptions of “normally distributed data” and was not amenable to analysis. However, it was not without significance as the differences between task two and task four pointed to the influence of the task (social vs. structured-work-focused) on measurements of ICC, accommodation and communication effectiveness within intercultural computer-mediated environments. In addition, language likely played a role in the distribution of the data found in task four. Future studies should try to “even the playing field” by using U.S. students of Thai and Thai students of English in the exchange. In addition, activities should be revised to meet the suggestions provided in this paper to encourage more social interaction. Future studies should also examine what types of accommodative social cue behavior may lead to greater communication effectiveness and examine factors such as depth, openness, and friendship as
other possible factors of intercultural CMC communication effectiveness. Finally, future studies should further explore the results of the open-ended questions as they relate to communication effectiveness in intercultural online environments.

However, in spite of potential limitations of this study, the findings are still noteworthy. First, Intercultural Communication Competence predicts how you rate your partner’s communication effectiveness and self-communication effectiveness. Second, non-verbal social cues are used in combination with non-physical social cues in intercultural CMC environments to increase clarity and understanding, and increase rapport with one’s partner. Third, less structured/open-ended activities should be utilized in online intercultural learning environments to provide participants more opportunities to connect with their partner in more agentic ways. Finally, measuring ICC and accommodation in online environments is influenced by the environment, communication medium, partner characteristics, participant motivations, language, and type of task performed.
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APPENDIX A (PART I)

Intercultural Communication Competence (Adapted from INCA, 2004)

I. Biographical Information and Intercultural Experience

Instructions: Please fill out the following form as clearly and accurately as possible.

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Major:

University:

Citizenship:
Intercultural Experience

1. How many friends from abroad do you have?

2. How many languages do you speak well?

3. Where and how did you learn these languages?

4. How often have you dealt with people from other countries in your professional/school life?

5. Have you ever worked in a work group with members from various cultures?

6. How often do you read books that are written in foreign languages?

7. How often have you been abroad? (If your answer is 0, please skip down to “Additional intercultural experiences”).

8. Which countries have you been to?
9. How often have you been abroad for school or work related reasons? Please explain.

10. How long did your longest stay abroad last?

11. How many different countries have you visited already?

Additional intercultural experiences:
## II. ICC Behavioral Assessment (Adopted from INCA, 2004)

Please rate each participant according to their ability in the following categories:

Participant #_____
Assessor #_____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Ambiguity Tolerance</th>
<th>Behavioral Flexibility</th>
<th>Respect of Others</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Knowledge Discovery</th>
<th>Communicative awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>____ Mostly reacts in a calm manner, but displays discomfort, restlessness or anger. ____ expresses dissatisfaction with working together ____ does not openly address their partner</td>
<td>____ Frequently ignores reactions from the other culture. ____ refuses to deviate from the assigned task. ____ insists on sticking with one approach to communicating. ____ is not alert to the signal from others.</td>
<td>____ displays prejudices ____ tends to criticize the other’s culture ____ criticizes the other’s values</td>
<td>____ Shows that he does not recognize other’s feelings. ____ Does not identify with others ____ tendency to identify only how own feelings</td>
<td>____ hardly recognizes any rules/norms ____ does not recognize the reasons for the other’s actions ____ Does not ask for the reasons for the other person’s behavior ____ Does not ask for background information about the other culture</td>
<td>____ continually ignores misunderstandings ____ does not recognize communication problems as being cultural, but personal ____ does not adapt communication patterns to the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermedia</td>
<td>____ reacts in a calm and collected manner ____ pays some attention to differences</td>
<td>____ sometimes pays attention to signals of others ____ pays attention to reactions of other culture, but not consistently</td>
<td>____ values and respects the values and norms of the other culture in most cases ____ has a neutral approach towards other</td>
<td>____ Partly identifies with others ____ recognizes the feelings of others ____ asks about the other’s ____ recognizes some cultural rules/norms ____ Poses some questions ____ starts to explain the rules/norms</td>
<td>____ recognizes some misunderstandings as being cultural ____ is able to address some misunderstandings ____ starts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>AT: 1 2 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>BF: 1 2 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>RO: 1 2 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>E: 1 2 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>KD: 1 2 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>CA: 1 2 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Predominant Level</strong></td>
<td>Basic:</td>
<td>Intermediate:</td>
<td>Full:</td>
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APPENDIX B

Accommodation

Directions:

Accommodation occurs when someone alters their behavior in order to increase understanding/clarity, establish rapport, save/give face, or maintain/develop a relationship with their exchange partner. For each dialogue:

1. Using the comment function, mark instances in which accommodation/non-accommodation occurs. (An example of this has been provided for you on the first coding sheet).

2. Note how the accommodation is occurring (e.g. accommodates towards partner’s feelings).

The following are categories in which accommodation may occur (although they are not limited to these categories):

- Accommodates towards partner’s name preferences (e.g. calls partner by requested nickname)
- Copies partner’s way of speaking or expressing themselves (e.g. phrases things in exactly the same way as their partner)
- Explains special terms to increase understanding of a “non-local.”
- Accommodates towards partner’s interests (e.g. tries to find something in common with their partner; commons on aspects of their previous post, etc…)
- Accommodates towards partner’s feelings (e.g. assures partner that their English is fine; shows concern for their partner’s feelings/well-being)
- Accommodates through complimenting or expressing satisfaction (e.g. tells partner that their post was “interesting,” etc…)

Non-Accommodation can also occur:

- Does not explain special terms (e.g. My favorite foods are poke and lau lau, with no explanation of what these are).
- Uses sarcasm/non-literal meanings that are not understood by their partner
- Does not recognize mistakes and fix as demonstrated by their partner.
- Does not acknowledge partner’s post/interests

3. After each interaction, indicate how much you disagree/agree with the following statements—1 strongly disagree to 5—strongly agree. Then indicate which partner primarily accommodated for whom.

Partner A accommodates for B’s behavior (1 to 5):
Partner B accommodates for A’s behavior (1 to 5):

**Primarily:** (circle one of the following)
a. “A primarily accommodated for B,”
b. “B primarily accommodated for A,”
c. “A and B accommodated for each other,”
d. “Neither accommodated for the other”
Appendix C

Communication Effectiveness

Please circle True or False

1. I interacted with my partner this week. T/F
2. My partner “liked” my post, but did not comment. T/F
3. I did not post anything this week. T/F

Part I

Please reflect on the exchange you had with your partner this week. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale of:

1—Strongly Disagree, 2—Disagree, 3—Neither, 4—Agree, 5—Strongly Agree.

Myself:

___1. In our interaction, I avoided hurting my partner’s feelings.
___2. In our interaction, I was considerate toward my partner’s feelings.
___3. In our interaction, I did not intrude on my partner.
___4. In our interaction, I avoided inconveniencing my partner.
___5. In our interaction, my message did not cause my partner to dislike me.
___6. In our interaction, I did not see my partner in a negative light.
___7. In our interaction, I made my points as clearly and directly as possible.
___8. In our interaction, I directly came to the point while conveying my message.
___9. In our interaction, I understood my partner.
___10. In our interaction, I understood my partner’s communication.

My Partner:

___1. In our interaction, my partner avoided hurting my feelings.
___2. In our interaction, my partner was considerate of my feelings.
___3. In our interaction, my partner did not intrude on me.
___4. In our interaction, my partner avoided inconveniencing me.
___5. In our interaction, my partner did not see me in a negative light.
6. In our interaction, my partner’s message did not cause me to dislike him/her.

7. In our interaction, my partner made his/her points as clearly and directly as possible.

8. In our interaction, my partner came to the point while conveying his/her message.

9. In our interaction, my partner understood me.

10. In our interaction, my partner understood my communication.

**Part II**

*Please circle how you feel about the quality of the communication in the interaction overall this week.*

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Part III

Write a descriptive paragraph that evaluates your overall intercultural exchange experience over the past five weeks. Please provide specific examples from your exchange experience/interaction to help illustrate your point of view in your evaluation.

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Intercultural Exchange Project

General Project Instructions

For this project you will interact with Thai students at Phayao University in Thailand on Facebook. Thus, if you do not have a Facebook account already, you will need to sign up for an account for this assignment. (If you do not wish to have a Facebook account in the future, you can terminate your account at the completion of the assignment/exchange). Once you have a Facebook account, you will be invited to join a Facebook group. Your exchange will take place in this group and will only be visible to other group members.

You will be paired with Thai student for the exchange, and will be required to:

1. Have one discussion via wall posts once a week on the assigned task (tasks are listed below). Discussion posts posted to the group wall will be visible to other group participants and you are encouraged to join in on other pair discussions as well.

2. Reflect on the weekly exchanges using the provided survey. The survey will be provided on the Facebook group page.

Tasks: (NOTE: The first exchange will occur with an in-class intracultural partner. All other exchanges will be with your assigned Thai intercultural partner).

Intracultural Exchange

1. For this task, you will be assigned an in-class intracultural partner.

2. Please discuss your definition of “American Culture” with your intracultural partner.
Introductory Exchange Letter

Please include the following information in your letter:

1. Introductory Information: Name, Year, Major, University, Home town, etc.

2. Comparison of hometowns: Describe hometown and or Hawaii and discuss what you think might be different or similar about each other’s home town.

3. Motivation: Discuss what you hope to get out of this exchange/ your motivation for participating in this exchange (besides class requirements).

Please use this letter as a launching point for further “getting to know you” type of discussion. Thus, after posting this letter and reading your partner’s letter, please respond by asking questions based off of their letter.

Letter example:

Aloha,

My name is Mary Jones. I am a sophomore at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Honolulu, Hawaii majoring in business. Although I have been attending school here for the past two years, I am originally from Seattle, Washington.

My hometown is a city; however, it is surrounded by nature and is very concerned about the environment. From Seattle there is a beautiful view of the snow covered Mt. Rainier and the Puget Sound, which is the body of water that comes in from the Pacific Ocean. However, it rains a lot! It probably rains round nine months out of the year and sometimes that can be kind of depressing. Seattle is famous for Salmon and Coffee, as it is home to the very first Starbucks. Although I don’t know much about Thailand, I would suspect our home towns are very different. For example, families here tend to live in separate homes. What I mean is that my grandparents...
live in a separate home than my parents and my siblings. Although I don’t know much about Thailand, I would suspect that most families all live together in one house. Is that right?

Hawaii is very different from Seattle. The weather is mostly sunny and breezy year round and we have incredible mountains and beaches. The culture is also very different because there is a prevalence of various Asian cultures along with Pacific Islander cultures, such as: Native Hawaiians, Samoans, Micronesians, etc. This is reflected in the delicious food available here. Because of the major Asian influences, perhaps your hometown culture might be more similar to Hawaii than Seattle.

During this exchange I hope to be able to learn more about you and your culture and hope to come to a greater understanding of one another. I look forward to our exchange.

Mary Jones

Word Associations

Please write at least 3 associations you have for each word. For example, the word “green” might have associations such as: environment, clean, earth, healthy. With your partner, have a discussion on the similarities and differences that you see and what they might mean in terms of cultural differences/similarities. For example, you might notice a difference in word associations having to do with color. So, you might ask your partner if certain colors have a particular cultural significance.

1. Delicious
2. Family
3. School
4. Religion
5. Money
6. Pink
7. Yellow
8. Men
9. Women
10. Technology

**Comparative Expressions**

Complete the list of comparative expressions/phrases. Compare your phrases with your partner and discuss similarities and differences, and possible origins and significance.

1. As good as __________.
2. As black as __________.
3. As happy as a__________.
4. As clever as __________.
5. As cold as __________.
6. As smart as____________.
7. As white as ____________.
8. As smooth as ____________.
9. As quiet as ______________.
10. As big as______________.

**Wrap-up/Good-byes**

Discuss the following with your partner:

1. What did you learn about yourself and your culture from the experience?
2. What did you learn about your partner and their culture from the experience?
## Table 17

Social cues in accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Social Cues</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation through:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explains special terms</td>
<td>Task 2</td>
<td><strong>Paralanguage:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Use of all caps/dashes to clarify pronunciation&lt;br&gt;• Use of exclamation marks for accentuation&lt;br&gt;• Use of quotations for sarcasm.&lt;br&gt;• Use of …to display tentativeness</td>
<td>1. “Well that looks delish!”&lt;br&gt;2. “My name is Chablis. It is pronounced SHA..BLEE which the S is silent at the end.”&lt;br&gt;3. “It is located kind of behind Diamond Head mountain, you should google© very pretty.”&lt;br&gt;4. “My name is spelled J-o-c-e-l-y-n but it is pronounced like Jos-lin”&lt;br&gt;5. “The “downtown” of Oahu”&lt;br&gt;6. “But their food is incredible!”&lt;br&gt;7. “i don’t know price of elephant ride ©…sorry.”&lt;br&gt;8. “pronounced “poo nah.””&lt;br&gt;9. “Wow!”</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Kinesics:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Use of frowny/smile face to soften message</td>
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<td>Task 4</td>
<td><strong>Paralanguage:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Use of quotations to illustrate subjective meaning of word&lt;br&gt;• Use of exclamation marks to indicate excitement.</td>
<td>1. “super fluffy squishy looking (or ‘cute’ if you will) bird”&lt;br&gt;2. Picture link&lt;br&gt;3. “‘good as a fairy’ Fairy is kind.^<em>^”&lt;br&gt;4. Hey Eye !&lt;br&gt;5. “As smart as me. [ just kidding c(: ]”&lt;br&gt;6. Have a good week, Eye!!!:) 7. (Here’s a link if you’re curious about what kind of music I listen to 😊 <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUeHkmC-DxY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUeHkmC-DxY</a> )&lt;br&gt;8. ^</em>^</td>
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<td>Task 2</td>
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<td>• Use of laughter to highlight they are joking/understanding</td>
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<td>• Use of exclamation mark to reassure partner.</td>
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<td><strong>Kinesics:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use of smiley faces/eyes to apologize.</td>
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<td>• Use of smiley faces/eyes to reassure partner that everything is fine</td>
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|                       | 1. “Your English is fine! Don’t worry” |
|                       | 2. It’s alright if you used the wrong word…so keep up the good job 😊” |
|                       | 3. “I’m sorry if you don’t understand, because my English is not good. :D” |
|                       | 4. “…I’m not well English language. ^^” |
|                       | 5. “Your English is very good though! I hope our semester goes well!^^” |
|                       | 6. “Please don’t worry about your English, yours is much better than my Thai…because I don’t speak Thai. Hehe” |
|                       | 7. “And don’t worry about your English! It’s not my first language either, so I know how hard it is 😊 lol. Please tell me if you don’t understand what I say too!” |
|                       | 8. “I’m so sorry if you don’t understand me because my English language not very well. ^_^” |
|                       | 9. “It must be hard translating to English for us, and I give you credit and say thank you. Because otherwise it would be very hard to communicate haha.” |
|                       | 10. “and your English is great girl!” |
|                       | 11. “I’m so sorry if you don’t understand me because my 193english language not very well. ^^” |

|                       | Task 4 | Paralanguage: |
|                       |        | • Use of exclamation marks to indicate excitement/warmth |
|                       |        | • Use of laughter to |

<p>|                       | 1. “How are you doing? ^O^” |
|                       | 2. “Hope you’re doing great!” |
|                       | 3. “Hello! I hope you had a great week 😊” |
|                       | 4. “Sorry for the slow reply. 😊” |</p>
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<td>Use of all caps to indicate excitement.</td>
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<td>Use of smiley faces to emphasize feeling of message.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use of laughter to indicate joking nature of message.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Kinesics:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use of smiley/frowny emoticons to indicate feeling of message (Happy or sad).</td>
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</table>

| 5. | “Hi! Sorry to get back to you so late. I am doing okay, i have a huge cold 😊” |
| 6. | “It’s ok=:).” |
| 7. | “wow our answers are kinda different! I answered mine using popular sayings...like a lot of people here are familiar with the saying, “as good as it gets!” lol...interesting...:( hope you’re having a great week” |
| 8. | “I hope you’re having a great week too. ^_^” |
| 9. | “hope your weekend went well! Here is my task 4 to you!” |

| 1. | “I’d love to learn more about Thailand and would like to hear more about you!” |
| 2. | “Thanks for teaching me about Thailand!” |
| 3. | “Good to hear from you!” |
| 4. | “Thanks for all the cool info about Thailand! It’s really neat to see the language written out!! Although I can’t read it! It’s amazing how well you can understand and write English 😊” |
| 5. | “^_^” |
| 6. | “Well that looks delish!” |
| 7. | “Nice to meet you too. 😊” |
| 8. | “WOW!!! Welcome to Thailand and nice to meet you. I find you are a charming lady very😊)). My name’s...and my nickname’s Aew !!! ^_^.” |

| 1. | “wow these are different than mine!” |
| 2. | “Looking forward to hearing your answers!” |
| 3. | “it is interesting because I don’t drink coffee hehe, so i wouldn’t really know! 😊” |
### Kinesics:
- Use of smiley faces to emphasize feeling of the message.
- Use of smiley face alone to indicate satisfaction.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of exclamation mark following name to emphasize excitement in meeting partner.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use of laughter to indicate humor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use of exclamation marks to emphasize message.</td>
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<td>Use of laughter to indicate humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use of exclamation marks to emphasize message.</td>
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|        |        | “I hope you’re having a great week too. ^_^” |
|        |        | “wow our answers are kinda different! I answered mine using popular sayings...like a lot of people here are familiar with the saying, “as good as it gets!” lol...interesting...(: hope you’re having a great week” |
|        |        | “^_^” |
|        |        | “oh lol, that is black.” |
|        |        | “Good answers and very different indeed!” |
|        |        | “cant wait to hear your answers!” |
|        |        | “looking forward to hearing from you! ^^” |
|        |        | “Hmm, interesting. We have a few same answers!” |
|        |        | “I like your expressions! ☺” |
|        |        | “clever as a cat! I really like that z;0” |
|        |        | “its funny how we have similar thoughts yet are from such different cultural backgrounds!” |

|        |        | Exclamation marks following name (9 instances) |
|        |        | Smiley faces following name. (4 instances) |

<p>|        |        | “But without Sea same Hawaii haha~” |
|        |        | “OMG you have festivals that celebrate that a couple times a year ,It must be fun.^^” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Paralanguage:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of all caps to indicate another language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Use of all caps to emphasize excitement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Use of exclamation marks to emphasize excitement.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of smiley faces/eyes to indicate feeling of warmth/happiness.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinesics:</th>
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<td>• Use of smiley faces/eyes to indicate happy/warm feeling of the message.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Post of pictures to increase clarity.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Paralanguage:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of exclamation marks to indicate excitement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of multiple exclamation marks to emphasize level of curiosity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of all caps to emphasize/accentuate feeling of message/word.</td>
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EFFECTIVE COMPUTER-MEDIATED INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task 4</th>
<th>Paralanguage:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use of exclamation marks to put extra emphasis on message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use of repeated letters in a word to emphasize the strength of that word.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Kinesics:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use of smiley faces to indicate warm feeling of sentence or “wink” at a “joking” statement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|        | completely different! However, I have a lot of friends from Thailand. And my parents and I love Thai food! We eat Thai probably once or twice a month! We really want to visit Thailand in the near future. 😊 I am excited to learn more about the Thai culture! 😊” |
|        | 6. “I LOVE Thai food!” |
|        | 7. “I love to travel and Thailand is on my list too! I would love to go shopping, tour around, and eat the Thai food there. I love Thai curry and pad thai! 😊 I would love to hear more about how Thailand is and your life in Thailand. ^^^” |
|        | 8. Picture link |

<p>| Non-Accommodati | 1. “Sometimes it will be reallyyyyy sunny!” |
| Non-Accommodati | 2. “Hmm, interesting. We have a few same answers!” |
| Non-Accommodati | 3. “oh!! I put smart is “William Bradley Pitt” because i think it’s meant smart, perfect or good-looking.” |
| Non-Accommodati | 4. “In my opinion, He(Beckham) smart everything,especially while he wearing suit. ^.^” |
| Non-Accommodati | 5. “wow there’s a few differences we have here. =) interesting.” |
| Non-Accommodati | 6. “i think it’s interesting that you put “coffee” for as smooth as. It is interesting because I don’t drink coffee hehe, so i wouldn’t really know! 😊” |
| Non-Accommodati | 7. “wow these are different than mine!” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>on through:</th>
<th>Task 2</th>
<th>Paralanguage:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-explanation of special terms</td>
<td>Task 2</td>
<td><strong>Paralanguage:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of all caps to indicate a new term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of quotation marks to indicate a special term.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use of exclamation mark to emphasize/accents message.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1.</strong> I live in northern, that called “LANNA”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.</strong> “I love the Hawaiian culture and the fact that our islands are a cultural “melting pot”.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3.</strong> “Surfing, seafood, tourism and the “hang-loose” culture are definitely big in my hometown just like Hawaii.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4.</strong> “Sai Aua, Kaeng Hung Le...Northern Thai food very delicious I confirm!!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not acknowledging partner’s post or interests</td>
<td>Task 2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task 4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using sarcasm, expressions, or idioms (non-literal meanings) that are not explained and not understood by partner.</td>
<td>Task 2</td>
<td><strong>Paralanguage:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of quotation marks to indicate a sarcastic/non-literal question.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>“I may be stating the obvious but I just wanted to share that I have gotten questions such as: “Do you guys live in grass huts and climb coconut trees?” from people who are not at all familiar with Hawaii. I wonder if there is a similar situation with where you’re from too?”</strong></td>
</tr>
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