



**VNiVERSiDAD  
D SALAMANCA**

**UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA**

ESCUELA DE DOCTORADO

**Programa de Doctorado**

**Estudios Ingleses Avanzados: Lenguas Culturas en Contacto**

TESIS DOCTORAL

**COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE:  
CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND  
WORKPLACE ADAPTABILITY IN CHINA THROUGH THE  
PERSPECTIVE OF ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL  
GLOBALIZATION**

XIAOYAN CHEN

2024





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XIAOYAN CHEN- 2024

Tesis que presenta Xiaoyan Chen para optar al Grado de Doctor y que autoriza para su defensa el director de la misma:

Jorge Diego Sánchez



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## Abstract

This PhD delves into the nuanced realms of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability within an English-speaking setting. It meticulously explores the definitions and ramifications of these concepts, exploring the intricate dynamics shaped by economic and educational globalization on the utilization and evolution of the English language.

This thesis takes a holistic approach, investigating cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability within a cross-cultural framework that revolves around English language and the benefits and obstacles associated to cross-cultural communication. It adds the philosophical trends of Qui and Dao to regard Chinese cultural specificities.

Rigorous data collection and analysis techniques have been used to evaluate the profound impact of economic globalization on English language usage, alongside an examination of how educational globalization influences English language proficiency in China. These revelations offer invaluable insights into the intricate relationship between English language proficiency and workplace adaptability in cross-cultural environments.

The research introduces methods for assessing cross-cultural competence and language proficiency specifically in university students. It intricately explores the interconnection between cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability. This doctoral thesis significantly augments the existing body of knowledge on cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability in contemporary China, illuminating the multifaceted dimensions of cross-cultural competence, workplace adaptability, and English language proficiency. Its discerning findings provide insights for individuals navigating cross-cultural environments, underscoring the imperative of research in this continually evolving field.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural competence, workplace adaptability, English language proficiency, economic and educational globalization.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to:

My beloved husband, Changjiang, who has been my unwavering source of support, providing me with encouragement, undivided attention, and boundless patience as I strive to accomplish both my professional and personal goals. His love has been a constant and reassuring presence, offering me strength during the challenging phases of this exploration.

To my dearest son, Zixun, you are my primary source of inspiration, infusing me with strength throughout every step of this research process. Your love and encouragement act as a powerful motivator, propelling me to persevere and forge ahead, even in the face of challenges. Your insightful questions and perspectives have consistently guided me toward deeper understandings of the research questions I have been exploring.

Both Changjiang and Zixun have played integral roles in the success of my research, and I am immensely grateful for the abundance of love, unwavering support, and inspiration they have generously shared with me.

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My first visit to Salamanca University in 2018 was a transformative experience. The captivating history and rich heritage of the institution left an indelible mark on me. As I walked through the hallowed halls of the Facultad de Filología, the ancient stone wall adorned with carved names struck me deeply. Those names represented individuals who had earned their doctorates from Salamanca University—a symbol of academic accomplishments and dedication. Inspired by this sight, I silently vowed to study diligently with the hope of one day having my name engraved on that very wall.

My journey at Salamanca University has been filled with growth and invaluable experiences over the years. I am profoundly grateful to my esteemed doctoral supervisor, Professor Jorge Diego Sánchez, for his unwavering support, guidance, and mentorship. His vast knowledge, rigorous approach to academia, and passion for teaching have been truly inspiring. Professor Diego Sánchez invaluable feedback and encouragement during the development of my research design have been pivotal in shaping the direction of my study. He has not only been a mentor in academic pursuits but also a role model for living a meaningful life.

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I would also like to thank the university where I am employed. Professor Liu Ying, the esteemed university president, graciously allocated me significant time during my doctoral studies, enabling me to successfully complete my final thesis in Spain.

Words cannot adequately express the depth of my gratitude to all those mentioned above, as well as countless others who have supported me along this journey. Their contributions and presence in my life have made a profound impact, and I will carry their guidance and support with me as I strive to leave my mark in academia.

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## List of Terms

The compilation of this list is deemed necessary to provide a clear conceptual foundation for the ensuing doctoral research. Adding the researcher's unique perspective to these terms is crucial, as it introduces nuanced interpretations and insights, contributing to the enrichment of the existing academic lexicon. These additions serve to augment the breadth and depth of language within the academic discourse, offering a more personalized and comprehensive understanding of the key concepts. Reading this list before embarking on the PhD journey is essential as it establishes a common understanding, serves as a theoretical roadmap, and facilitates a more meaningful engagement with the subsequent research.

**Adaptive Skills:** Skills required during transitions, such as career decision-making, self-exploration, understanding the professional environment, and seeking solutions from others.

**Boundary-Free Tendencies:** A willingness to transcend traditional boundaries in work and career-related activities.

**Career Adaptability:** The ability of individuals to plan, regulate abilities, and adapt to changing career plans and job responsibilities, especially in the face of unexpected events. It involves a psycho-social capacity to self-direct, manage, develop adaptive strategies, and achieve adaptive goals.

**Career Adaptabilities Scale-International Form (2012):** A scale developed by Savickas and his team to measure career adaptability on an international level.

**Career Learning:** The process of acquiring knowledge and skills relevant to one's career.

**Career Psychological Resources:** Psychological assets that contribute to an individual's ability to navigate and succeed in their career.

**Communicative Competence:** The effectiveness and appropriateness of communicative behavior.

**Comprehensive Model of Stress Adaptation Dynamic Growth Cross-cultural Adaptation:** A model explaining the process of cross-cultural adaptation, involving a shift in an individual's identity from a rigid identity defined by a single culture to an increasingly cross-cultural identity.

**Construct Validity:** The degree to which a scale measures the theoretical construct or concept it is intended to measure. It involves assessing whether the scale aligns with the theoretical framework.

**Content Validity:** The extent to which a scale or test measures the intended content domain. It involves assessing whether the items in a scale adequately represent the construct being measured.

**Correlation Analysis:** A statistical method used to evaluate the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. It helps in understanding the degree of association between variables.

**Criterion Validity:** The extent to which the results of a scale or test are consistent with other criteria (standards) believed to measure the same construct. It involves comparing results with other established measures.

**Cross-cultural Communication:** Communication between individuals from different cultures, involving the understanding and negotiation of cultural differences.

**Cross-cultural Competence:** The ability and skills required for effective communication, business negotiation, and management across different cultures.



**Cultural Adaptation:** The process of adjusting to and functioning effectively in a new cultural environment.

**Cultural Dimension Theory:** A framework developed by Professor Hofstede, consisting of dimensions such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and long-term versus short-term orientation, used to analyze cultural differences.

**Cultural Relativism:** Respecting and understanding different customs and habits in cross-cultural contexts.

**Dao and Qi:** Terms from Chinese traditional philosophy used by Gao Yihong to propose a theory of cross-cultural competence with Chinese characteristics. Dao represents internal aspects, while Qi represents external aspects.

**Descriptive Statistics:** Statistical methods used to summarize and describe the main features of a dataset. It helps in presenting and organizing data in a meaningful way.

**Economic Globalization:** The interconnectedness and interdependence of economies on a global scale, leading to increased economic exchanges and interactions.

**Educational Globalization:** The global integration of educational systems, including the exchange of knowledge, learning methods, and academic resources.

**Emotional Regulation Ability:** The capacity to manage and control emotions effectively in various situations.

**Factor Analysis:** A statistical method used to analyze the underlying structure (factors) of a set of variables. It helps in determining the relationships between observed variables and uncovering patterns in data.

**In-depth Interviews:** Qualitative research method involving detailed, open-ended interviews with participants. It provides deeper insights into individuals' experiences and perspectives.

**Cross-cultural Management:** The ability to lead and navigate situations involving individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds effectively.

**Cross-cultural Adjustment Scale (IAS):** A scale used to measure individuals' adaptability in cross-cultural environments, including their understanding, adaptation, and coping abilities towards cultural differences.

**Cross-cultural Communicative Competence:** The ability to handle cultural differences in specific cross-cultural communication situations.

**Cross-cultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS):** A scale used to measure individuals' sensitivity and respect for cultural differences, as well as their cross-cultural communication skills.

**Internal Consistency Analysis:** Assessment of the consistency of responses within a set of items.

**Joint Construct Measures:** Measurement approaches where multiple variables are considered independently, without assuming a common latent variable.

**Multi-Dimensional Construct Structure:** Measurement approaches that consider a construct as having multiple dimensions, each contributing to the overall understanding of the construct.

**Observation Method:** A research technique involving the systematic observation and recording of behaviors and interactions. It is used in this study to observe workplace behaviors and interactions related to cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability.

**Occupational Resilience:** The state of readiness required to cope with predictable tasks in present or future job roles and to adapt to unpredictable changes in the job or work environment. It allows individuals to make changes to conform to new environments without much effort.

**Organizational Synergy:** A state of harmonious cooperation and interaction within an organization.

**Proactive Personality:** A personality trait characterized by taking initiative, being action-oriented, and anticipating future opportunities.

**Psycho-social Capacity:** Refers to the psychological and social abilities of an individual, such as self-direction, self-management, and the development of adaptive strategies.

**Qualitative Approach:** A research approach that focuses on understanding and interpreting the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

**Quantitative Research:** Research that involves the collection and analysis of numerical data, often using statistical techniques.

**Questionnaire Survey:** A research method involving the use of a structured set of questions to gather information from respondents. In this context, it is used to collect data on personal background, English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability.

**Regression Analysis:** A statistical technique used to investigate the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It helps in predicting the value of the dependent variable based on the values of independent variables.

**Reliability and Validity:** Measures of the accuracy and dependability of research instruments and findings.

**Stratified Sampling:** A sampling method where the population is divided into subgroups (strata) based on specific characteristics, and samples are then randomly selected from each subgroup. This method ensures a balanced representation of different characteristics within the sample.

**Theory of Marginal Intelligence for Cross-cultural Adaptation:** A theory explaining how individuals adapt to different cultures based on marginal intelligence.

**Uni-Dimensional Measures:** Measurement approaches that involve assessing a construct using a single dimension or scale.

**Vocational Competence Adaptation:** The ability to adapt competently to vocational tasks and challenges.

**Vocational Interpersonal Adaptation:** The ability to adapt interpersonally in vocational or work-related contexts.

**Vocational Psychological Adaptation:** The ability to adapt psychologically to vocational or work-related challenges.

**Workplace Adaptability:** An individual's ability to adjust and thrive in various work environments, involving flexibility, open-mindedness, and effective navigation of cultural differences.

**Workplace Adaptability Scale (WAS):** A scale used to assess an individual's adaptability in the workplace, consisting of multiple sub-dimensions such as adaptive thinking, adjustment ability, interpersonal relationships, and emotional coping.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**CAAS:** Career Adapt-Abilities Scale. It is a measurement tool designed to assess career adaptability based on four constructs: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence.

**CAE:** Certificate in Advanced English, an advanced level English proficiency exam within the Cambridge English Main Suite Exams.

**CPE:** Certificate of Proficiency in English, the highest-level English proficiency exam within the Cambridge English Main Suite Exams.

**CQS:** Cultural Intelligence Scale. It is a measurement tool designed to assess an individual's cultural intelligence.

**ELLS:** English Language Learners, individuals who are learning English as a second or foreign language.

**IBM:** International Business Machines Corporation, a multinational technology and consulting company.

**ICAPS:** cross-cultural Adaptation Potential Scale. It is a measurement tool related to cross-cultural competence.

**ICMS:** cross-cultural Communication Motivation Scale. It is another measurement tool related to motivation in cross-cultural communication.

**IELTS** (International English Language Testing System): A widely used test for assessing English language proficiency.

**MSE:** Cambridge English Main Suite Exams (MSE) refer to a series of English language proficiency exams provided by Cambridge Assessment English, part of the University of Cambridge. This exam series includes various assessments tailored to different proficiency levels, serving learners with diverse English language skills.

**PET:** Preliminary English Test, a Cambridge English qualification assessing English language proficiency.

**SPSS:** Stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, a software program used for statistical analysis and data management.

**TOEFL** (Test of English as a Foreign Language): A standardized test assessing English language proficiency.

**UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations aimed at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture.

**WAS:** Workplace Adaptability Scale, a scale used to assess workplace adaptability, consisting of multiple sub-dimensions.

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

In the current contemporary globalized landscape, the imperative nature of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability has become increasingly evident (Anand 12-16). These competences hold particular significance in nations undergoing rapid integration into the global economy and education systems, as is notably observed in the case of China (Gelfand 479). This thesis endeavors to scrutinize cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability within the contextual framework of China's economic and educational globalization.

The introductory section explores the repercussions of economic globalization on the Chinese work environment, encompassing various sectors such as manufacturing, services, technology, and other industries. As China progressively assimilates into the global economy, multinational corporations establish numerous branches and collaborative ventures within the nation. I understand global economy as an intricate network of interconnected economic activities that transcend national boundaries. It involves the seamless flow of goods, services, capital, and information across various sectors and industries, fostering international collaboration and interdependence.

In the case of China, the repercussions of economic globalization extend across diverse sectors such as manufacturing, services, technology, and others. As the nation progressively assimilates into the global economy, multinational corporations play a pivotal role by establishing numerous branches and collaborative ventures within the country. This integration not only transforms the economic landscape but also shapes the work environment across these sectors. The adaptation required in the workplace extends beyond economic aspects to encompass the cross-cultural dynamics influenced by globalization. Therefore, cross-cultural competence and adaptability become critical skills for individuals navigating this evolving professional landscape in China. This thesis seeks to delve into these

complexities, shedding light on the intricate relationship between economic globalization, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability in the context of China's evolving economic and educational scenario.

Consequently, there arises a heightened demand for employees possessing diverse cultural acumen to effectively communicate and collaborate, thereby presenting an array of challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, China's educational landscape has been significantly influenced by educational globalization, affording students and professionals enhanced access to educational resources and ideas from diverse international contexts such as the educational practices in Western countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. Consequently, the evolving Chinese workplace requires individuals equipped with cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability to thrive amid this dynamic environment.

This study investigates the significance of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability within the Chinese professional sphere while exploring the interrelationship between these two competences. Specifically, the following inquiries will be addressed:

- 1) How does cross-cultural competence impact workplace adaptability for employees within the Chinese work milieu?
- 2) What is the influence of economic and educational globalization on cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability?
- 3) In what ways do cultural disparities and challenges in the Chinese workplace shape cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability?

This thesis delves into the challenges and solutions inherent in cross-cultural communication within an English-speaking framework. Emphasizing the importance of adapting to the English language and excelling in a multicultural work milieu, this exploration aims to scrutinize the influence of English language proficiency on career



advancement. Strategies and recommendations will be proposed to augment the efficacy of cross-cultural communication.

The significance of possessing cross-cultural competence within an English-speaking context is underscored, offering practical guidance and strategies for learners and professionals to adeptly navigate cross-cultural communication challenges. The context to be explored is the dynamic landscape of multinational corporations in China, where employees encounter a multitude of cross-cultural challenges and opportunities. This study aims to address specific inquiries related to cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability in this context. It will explore how cross-cultural competence impacts the adaptability of employees in Chinese multinational corporations. Additionally, it investigates the effects of economic and educational globalization on these competences and examine how cultural disparities in the Chinese workplace contribute to challenges and shape cross-cultural competence and adaptability.

Furthermore, the significance of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability in both academic and practical realms is emphasized. Firstly, the findings contribute valuable insights to the Chinese workplace, offering businesses and organizations enhanced understanding on how to cultivate employees' cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability. Secondly, this exploration enriches the existing literature by advancing the comprehension of the interplay between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability, thereby establishing a theoretical foundation for the development and cultivation of indispensable workplace skills.

Nowadays, cross-cultural communication stands as a multifaceted process, demanding individuals to navigate cultural disparities, comprehend diverse perspectives, and effectively transmit messages across cultural boundaries (Ting-Toomey 211). The escalating globalization of economies and the movement of individuals across borders accentuate the imperative need for adept cross-cultural communication skills. Against this backdrop, my

proposal is to scrutinize the intricate relationship between cross-cultural competence, English language proficiency, and workplace adaptability among university students in the Chinese context. My study will encompass Chinese native students, international students studying in China, and overseas employees working in the country. Such a diverse participant pool allows for a comprehensive exploration of the development and impact of cross-cultural competence, English language proficiency, and workplace adaptability across different groups, contributing valuable insights within the unique cultural context of China.

The core objective of this thesis is to meticulously examine the influence of cross-cultural competence and English language proficiency on individuals' adaptability within multicultural workplace settings. By dissecting the interplay between these factors, this exploration seeks to show the challenges of cross-cultural communication and proffer effective strategies to surmount these obstacles. Additionally, I aspire to establish reliable methodologies for evaluating cross-cultural competence and language proficiency in university students in China and worldwide.

To underpin its assertions, the study incorporates a comprehensive literature review, delving into previous research on cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability. This review not only consolidates existing knowledge on these subjects but also identifies gaps that the current research aims to address. By synthesizing pertinent theories and studies, a robust theoretical framework for comprehending the intricate relationship between cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability is constructed. The outline of the present study is the following:

- Chapter 1 initiates with background information on the research topic, elucidates research objectives, underscores the study's significance in English Language Studies, and outlines research questions. It also expounds on the chosen methodology, discussing the approach for investigating the topic.

- Chapter 2 centers on an extensive review of pertinent literature in the field of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability within English language contexts. It explicates the definitions of these concepts and examines their pivotal role in the workplace. Additionally, the chapter delves into the repercussions of economic and educational globalization on English language use and proficiency, elucidating the theoretical framework for English Language Studies in cross-cultural contexts.

- Chapter 3 meticulously delineates the research methods and design, elucidating the rationale for selecting these specific methods to address the research questions. The section expounds on participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques, playing a pivotal role in ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings.

- Chapter 4 investigates specific facets of cross-cultural competence within English language contexts, exploring the influence of cultural dimensions on English language use and the role of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication. The chapter also scrutinizes challenges faced by English language learners in cross-cultural communication and proffers strategies for effective communication. Moreover, it accentuates the significance of cross-cultural competence and English language proficiency in multicultural workplaces, emphasizing their impact on career advancement. It inquires into the utilization of English as a lingua franca in global workplaces and the amalgamation of technology with English language communication. This section accentuates competences requisite for workplace adaptability in English language settings, including linguistic fluency, English language proficiency, and cultural sensitivity. It further discusses the significance of language schools, institutions, and corporate training programs in enhancing English language skills for workplace adaptation.

- Chapter 5 delves into research findings and analysis pertinent to English language proficiency and workplace adaptability. It scrutinizes data collection methods and data analysis techniques employed in English language research. The chapter explores the impact of economic globalization on English language use in the workplace, investigates the relationship between educational globalization and English language competence, and probes the implications of English language proficiency and workplace adaptability in cross-cultural contexts. It further examines the association between cross-cultural competence, English language proficiency, and workplace adaptability within the context of economic and educational globalization. It provides a literature review on the impact of globalization on the economy and education, discusses measurements of cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability, and analyzes the association and correlation between these factors. It offers valuable insights into the relationship between cross-cultural competence, English language proficiency, and workplace adaptability, underscoring the importance of these factors in a globalized world.
- Chapter 6 concludes the thesis, providing a summary of findings in English language studies and highlighting the researcher's contributions to the field. It furnishes practical recommendations for enhancing English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability.

Consequently, the thesis employs meticulous data collection and analysis techniques, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to amass data on cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability among university students. Surveys, interviews, and observations constitute the research design, providing a comprehensive understanding of the variables under scrutiny. The ensuing data will be subjected to thorough analysis using appropriate statistical techniques to unveil meaningful

insights and establish relationships between the variables. Accordingly, I now move to identify the former contexts of research on the topics.

### **1.1 Research Context**

The transformative impacts brought about by economic and educational globalization resonate in the daily lives of individuals. The increased flux of economic exchanges and the facile access to information have given rise to a convergence of diverse cultural influences, shaping a global milieu where cross-cultural competence stands as a pivotal asset. Defined by Deardorff (194), cross-cultural competence becomes the linchpin—a capacity encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for adept behavior in cross-cultural scenarios.

As elucidated by Barrett et al. (5-8), cross-cultural competence extends beyond mere proficiency, encapsulating attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills manifested through communicative behaviors. People with cross-cultural competence show a genuine ability to understand and appreciate various cultural backgrounds. Their skillful interactions are characterized by being fitting, impactful, and respectful, contributing to the development of positive and meaningful relationships. Furthermore, they gain profound insights into their own cultural identities through experiences of cultural divergence.

In the realm of Chinese foreign language education, Sun's (17) delineation of cross-cultural competence components underscores the significance of elements such as respect for cultural diversity, cross-cultural empathy, critical cultural awareness, and familiarity with the target language country's history and current situation. The ability to interpret and evaluate diverse cultural phenomena, engage in effective cross-cultural communication, and facilitate cross-cultural communication among linguistically and culturally diverse individuals solidifies the demonstration of cross-cultural communicative competence.

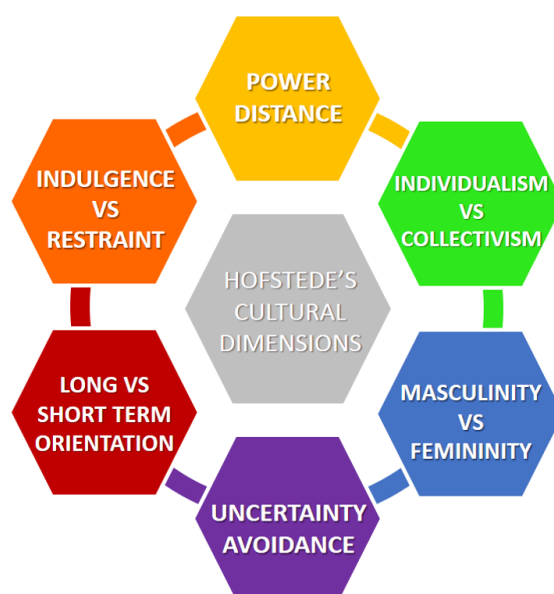
The relentless march of economic globalization has propelled an upsurge in practical human activities with heightened cross-cultural interactions. Scholars such as Luo (1-14), Björkdahl (200-209), and Carlgren (44-65) shed light on the ensuing disparities and conflicts between cultures. In response, theorists like Cross et al. (788) introduce the concept of cultural competence—a set of behaviors, attitudes, and strategies facilitating effective operation in cross-cultural contexts. Bennett's nuanced definition emphasizes the role of attitudes, practices, and policies in enabling individuals or organizations to collaboratively engage with diverse cultural backgrounds (243).

The academic landscape has progressively acknowledged the imperative of studying culture through the lens of sociological differences. The theoretical disciplines of cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural adaptation, and cross-cultural management have burgeoned as a result and scholars like González (105-124) have been instrumental in advancing these fields, contributing to the establishment of their theoretical foundations.

Furthermore, as economic globalization progresses, interactions between different cultures have become more frequent. Effective cross-cultural communication has become essential for the success of this economic development and, as a result, cross-cultural competence, and adaptability, which play a crucial role in achieving effective cross-cultural communication, have gained considerable attention from scholars.

Professor Hofstede is widely recognized as the theoretical founder and pioneer in the field of communication among diverse cultures. He conducted two studies with IBM employees, surveying 116,000 employees worldwide. IBM (International Business Machines Corporation) is a prominent US multinational technology and consulting company. It specializes in manufacturing and marketing computer hardware, middleware, software, and offers hosting and consulting services. These studies revealed that despite IBM's strong corporate culture, there were significant variations in cultural values among its employees (8).

Based on this extensive survey data, Professor Hofstede developed the Cultural Dimension Theory (Minkov 3-14), which consists of five dimensions (See Fig. 1 below). These dimensions are individualism and collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, quantity and quality of life (depending on a binary conceptualization of gender in multinationals), and long-term versus short-term orientation. This framework has been used to analyze cultural differences within different corporate cultures and groups within the same organization:



**Figure 1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (in Minkov 3)**

According to Professor Hofstede, cultural relativism is a fundamental concept in cross-cultural management research (15-41). Effective cooperation and coordination can only be achieved when people from diverse cultural backgrounds respect each other's customs and habits. This body of research is highly relevant to the current PhD study because it provides a theoretical foundation for understanding and exploring the various dimensions and stages of cross-cultural competence. By integrating these models, the study gains a comprehensive perspective on the multifaceted nature of cross-cultural competence and its implications for successful cross-cultural interactions.

Spitzberg (456) provides a macro perspective on communicative competence and cross-cultural communicative competence. He defines communicative competence as the appropriateness and effectiveness of communicative behavior, while cross-cultural communicative competence is reflected in specific cross-cultural communication situations. The definition of cross-cultural communicative competence should focus more on the ability to handle cultural differences, rather than the process and outcomes of communication.

Gao (39-53) draws on the concepts of Dao and Qi from Chinese traditional philosophy to propose the theory of Dao and Qi of cross-cultural competence with Chinese characteristics. Dao represents the internal level of cross-cultural competence, including internal personality and productive communication orientation. Qi, on the other hand, refers to cultural knowledge, communication skills, and efficacy, representing the external level of cross-cultural competence.

Sun (17) defines the connotation of cross-cultural competence within the context of language education in China. According to Sun, this competence includes:

- 1- Respect for the diversity of world cultures and the enactment of cross-cultural empathy and critical cultural awareness.
- 2- Mastery of basic theoretical knowledge and analytical methods of cross-cultural research.
- 3- Acknowledgment of the history and current situation of the target country of the language and understanding the basic characteristics and similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures.
- 4- Ability to interpret and evaluate different cultural phenomena, texts, and products.
- 5- Effective communication across cultures.
- 6- Ability to facilitate effective cross-cultural communication for individuals with different language and cultural backgrounds.



Gao (45) and Sun (17) use traditional Chinese language to explain the principles of cultivating cross-cultural competence. They argue that Dao represents the inherent attributes of cross-cultural competence and moral integrity, which takes precedence over Qi's cross-cultural skills. However, with good cross-cultural skills, one can also cultivate moral integrity and reach the level of Dao. While Professor Hofstede provided a possible framework for cross-cultural studies by identifying these five value dimensions, he did not offer a clear explanation as to why he chose them (8).

In conjunction with Professor Hofstede's seminal contributions, additional scholars have significantly enriched the comprehension of cross-cultural competence. Bennett (43), for instance, proffered a model of cross-cultural sensitivity, positing a developmental trajectory encompassing six stages: denial, resistance, contempt, acceptance, adaptation, and integration.

Imahori et al. (195-210) crafted a model for cross-cultural communicative competence that delves into factors at three distinct levels—competence, goal, and experience—while also considering interaction outcomes. Chen and Starosta (433), in their contribution, introduced a comprehensive cross-cultural competence model featuring four integral levels: personal characteristics, communication skills, psychological adjustment, and cultural awareness. Furthermore, Byram (5-13) underscored the pivotal role of language competence in the realm of cross-cultural communication. He articulated cross-cultural competence as the ability to seamlessly bridge linguistic and cultural disparities, facilitating effective interactions and assuming the role of a proficient cultural mediator. Byram's model encompasses language proficiency, sociolinguistic adeptness, discourse competence, and cross-cultural insight. These models and frameworks contribute to our understanding of cross-cultural competence and provide valuable perspectives for individuals and organizations engaged in cross-cultural communication.

The globalization of the economy has led to the emergence of cross-cultural working environments, which has made cross-cultural competence a professional competency that many business organizations and associations are paying attention to (Gopalkrishna 121). Recognizing the necessity and importance of cross-cultural communication skills, several well-known multinational companies such as Coca-Cola, Citibank, Business Alliance Insurance Company, IBM, Nestlé, Gulf Oil Company, and Scandinavian Airlines established cross-cultural communication training institutions in the 1980s to improve the skills of their employees in this area (Mackenzie et al. 10-18).

In 2000, the European Commission introduced a lifelong learning strategy for its member states, recommending eight core competences that all citizens should possess. Cross-cultural competence was highlighted as one of these "new basic competences," along with proficiency in foreign languages. UNESCO's publication "Investing in Cultural Diversity and cross-cultural Dialogue" in 2009 emphasized the significance of understanding different cultures as a new form of cultural literacy, equivalent in importance to traditional literacy in words and numbers. In 2013, they published the document "cross-cultural Competence: Basic Concepts and Practical Frameworks," which emphasized the importance of cross-cultural competence as a concept in cross-cultural communication research and as a topic of scholarly discussion. Therefore, Ranidiah (77) argues that in the context of globalization, cross-cultural competence is a skill that every citizen of the world should master.

In recent years, the profound impact of economic and educational globalization on organizational operations and individual career trajectories has been widely acknowledged in scholarly literature (Brown 11-25, Gunz 1613-1620, Shaturaev 51-58, Gopalkrishnan 28-41). The confluence of advanced technology and heightened international travel has ushered in an era where businesses operate within a global marketplace, emphasizing the paramount

importance of cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and adaptability in the contemporary workplace.

Cross-cultural competence has been defined as an individual's capacity to comprehend and navigate diverse cultural norms, values, and behaviors (Johnson et al. 525-543). It encompasses the development of an awareness and appreciation for various perspectives while adeptly adjusting one's behavior to align with different cultural contexts (Earley 343). In the context of an economically globalized workplace, cross-cultural competence emerges as a critical skill for establishing robust relationships with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders from varied backgrounds.

English language proficiency stands out as another pivotal factor in achieving workplace success. Moreover, it facilitates effective cross-cultural communication, recognizing the close linkage between language and cultural nuances and understanding (DeCapua 76). Effective communication among companies, colleagues and individuals can be upgraded through the reinforcement of cross-cultural abilities and workplace adaptability.

Workplace adaptability is characterized by an individual's ability to flexibly adjust and thrive in rapidly changing work contexts (Pulakos 612). In the contemporary globalized economy, workplaces undergo continuous evolution driven by technological advancements, shifting market dynamics and cultural transformations (Cascio 349-375). Individuals who can swiftly adapt to new situations, embrace change, and acquire new skills gain a competitive edge in this dynamic landscape.

Globalization has fundamentally restructured the global economy, converting traditional economic systems into intricate networks (Dicken 143). This transformation is marked by heightened international trade, increased foreign direct investment, and the ascendancy of multinational corporations. Consequently, states have encountered a spectrum of opportunities and challenges. On one hand, globalization has facilitated entry into new markets, elevated productivity through knowledge exchange, and stimulated economic

expansion (Lastres 172-187). Conversely, it has also given rise to job displacement, income inequality, and the diminution of local industries (Alderson 1244-1299).

The impact of globalization on education has triggered substantial changes in worldwide systems (Bottery 95-113). The global dissemination of information and ideas has prompted educational reforms to align with the imperatives of a globalized milieu (Knight 786). This includes the infusion of technology into classrooms, the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, an emphasis on fostering global citizenship and the mobility of students around places (Davis 133, Joseph 22-34).

This process has boosted new skills and competences because individuals now require not only technical proficiency but also a capacity for cross-cultural communication, adaptability, and critical thinking. As industries progressively embrace economic globalization and its extensive needs (interconnection among places or development of foreign language training, for instance) the demand for people equipped with these skills continues to escalate. Educational institutions are pivotal in this process, assuming the crucial role of imparting competences and underscoring the significance of a comprehensive education that melds academic knowledge with practical skills (Li 846).

The impact of globalization has faced challenges regarding income inequality, cultural assimilation, and the digital divide which have emerged, demanding attention and strategic interventions (Dewan 298-337, Bertucci 17). To address these challenges effectively, policymakers are expected to propose, as Resta proclaims, inclusive and equitable economic policies which advocate for cultural diversity, preserve local knowledge, and close the digital gap through the promotion of accessible technology and internet connectivity (743-746).

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

In recent years, scholars have recognized the significance of cross-cultural competence in the context of international business. For organizations to thrive in today's globalized working environment, it is essential for employees to possess the ability to adapt to complex cultures (Matveev 11). Furthermore, effective and clear cross-cultural communication is crucial for success in this globalized setting organizations as well as business associations (Bennett 239-250). Examples of such business associations include multinational corporations, where employees from diverse cultural backgrounds collaborate to achieve common goals. International trade organizations and joint ventures involving companies from different countries also highlight the necessity for cross-cultural competence in navigating complex global business landscapes. As globalization continues to shape the business world, fostering cross-cultural competence becomes not just a desirable skill but a fundamental aspect of thriving in the interconnected and diverse international business environment.

Within the realm of multinational corporations, the acknowledgment of the imperative nature and significance of cross-cultural adaptation is widespread. Scholars have diligently examined this phenomenon for nearly a century, with noteworthy contributions emerging from diverse disciplines, including Anthropology. This rich tapestry of academic inquiry underscores the interdisciplinary nature of the field, drawing on insights from Anthropology and related disciplines to comprehensively explore the complexities inherent in adapting to diverse cultural contexts, as pointed out by Borsa (423), Anderson (293) and Cuesta-Vargas (7). Psychologists have also contributed significantly, leading to a thriving research field with a well-established theoretical framework and a continuously advancing research process (Sun 69-88).

Anthropology directed its focus towards research on cross-cultural adaptation, primarily investigating the transformations in cultural practices, values, and various facets of

indigenous tribes after their encounters with European colonies. The surge in international migration has spurred sociologists to delve into the gradual assimilation processes experienced by immigrants upon interacting with the host country's populace. Psychologists have expanded their research to individuals, exploring the cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants, foreign students, and travelers. This has led to the development of various theories, such as the classic theory of cross-cultural adaptation strategies (Walker 95), the ABC Model of Cross-cultural Adaptation (Zhou et al. 63-75.), the Comprehensive Model of Stress Adaptation Dynamic Growth Cross-cultural Adaptation (Kim 99-112), and the Theory of Marginal Intelligence for Cross-cultural Adaptation (Chen 353-383).

The ABC Model of Cross-cultural Adaptation is a model that aids in understanding the process of adapting to a different culture. In this model, A represents affect, B represents behavior, and C represents cognition. According to this model, when individuals enter a new cultural environment, they adapt through changes in their feelings, actions, and thoughts. The “Model of Stress Adaptation Dynamic Growth Cross-cultural Adaptation” explains the process of cross-cultural adaptation. This process also involves a shift in the individual's identity, transitioning from a rigid identity primarily defined by a single culture to an increasingly cross-cultural identity.

Bennett (179) and Chen & Starosta (118) have early on recognized the importance of cross-cultural competence and have developed mature systems and research methods. Cross-cultural communication ability research, as an integral part of cross-cultural communication research, has relatively advanced structural models and scales (Byram 1997). Most scholars have focused their research on the cross-cultural competence and adaptability of expatriates and travelers (He 67-92). Gao (169-172) developed a cross-cultural competency indicator system for Chinese expatriates by drawing on Andrea Graf's (667) research and using statistical analysis methods to identify three dimensions of this ability based on the experiences of Chinese expatriates (Haier Group U.S. Division). However, there

is a lack of empirical research data and reference value for Chinese college students and Chinese enterprises, which is what this PhD study aims to account for.

In terms of cross-cultural communication research in China, there has been a relatively late start and an imperfect theoretical system. More exploration is needed to select cases for theoretical analysis, and there is a lack of quantitative research, which weakens the persuasiveness of the findings.

To bolster the persuasiveness of cross-cultural communication research in China, it becomes imperative for scholars to cultivate a robust theoretical framework and engage in empirical studies employing rigorous analytical methods. Through these attempts, researchers can articulate compelling arguments and furnish substantive evidence to underpin their viewpoints or claims. Such a meticulous approach holds the potential to significantly contribute to the broader progression of the field, elevating the overall persuasiveness of the research findings. Furthermore, it is important to note that the majority of research models in China have focused on foreign-funded enterprises such as Volkswagen from Germany, Coca-Cola from the United States, or Carrefour Supermarkets from France, while there has been relatively limited research on domestic enterprises.

In the realm of cross-cultural communication research in China, there exists a discernible need for an increased focus on studies scrutinizing the communication practices and challenges encountered by national enterprises. Despite the valuable insights garnered from research on multinational corporations, an equally vital aspect is the exploration of distinctive communication dynamics within the Chinese context, specifically about domestic enterprises.

To increase the understanding of cross-cultural communication in national companies, future research should aim to investigate the communication patterns, challenges and strategies of well-known Chinese companies such as Alibaba, Tencent or Huawei. Exploration would illuminate the specific cultural issues, negotiation styles, and

decision-making processes that arise in domestic settings, thus contributing to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of cross-cultural communication dynamics in China.

There is still much scope for research, as most studies on measuring cross-cultural communication skills mainly involve teachers and students, with limited research on the needs of other industries and companies. In addition, some studies only conduct theoretical analysis from the perspectives of Linguistics and Sociology, neglecting the aspect of economic globalization.

Consequently, this study focuses on Chinese university students and overseas workers coming to China as participants, with the main interviewees being the directors of companies in China. Most Chinese college students participating in this study have learned at least one non-native language and possess certain cultural knowledge related to it. The respondents who come to China are predominantly senior executives or university lecturers with a strong educational background.

The objectives of this study are to examine the participants' English proficiency and subsequently to explore the relationship between cross-cultural competence and workplace adjustment in a specific setting within China. To address the heterogeneity of data, this study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods, to empirically investigate the cross-cultural competence of Chinese college students and its influencing factors from the perspective of globalization studies. This exploration explores effective strategies for enhancing the cross-cultural communication abilities of Chinese college students, promoting the integration, adaptation, and coexistence of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. By elucidating the relationship between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability, this study offers a better understanding of the requisite competences in the so-called era of globalization, thereby providing crucial guidance for educational institutions, employers, and individuals in fostering the development of cross-cultural



competence. This not only enhances students' employability but also cultivates talent with a global perspective and proficiency in cross-cultural communication, making positive contributions to societal and economic advancement.

### **1.3 The Significance of exploration in English Studies**

This study aims to explore the relationship between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability in China. With the increasing globalization of the economy and education, it is essential for individuals to possess cross-cultural competence to effectively navigate the complexities of a diverse workforce (Johnson et al. 525-543). Drawing parallels from the field of English Studies, one can observe the significance of cross-cultural competence through the collaborative involvement of international scholars and students in research projects or English courses. In research endeavors, their cooperation necessitates teamwork, effective communication, and an appreciation of diverse viewpoints and methodologies stemming from various cultural backgrounds, thereby advancing the progression of projects. Similarly, in English courses, the commonplace intercultural exchange between students and teachers underscores the need for individuals to comprehend and adapt to distinct cultural perspectives, facilitating successful academic collaboration and communication.

This recurring phenomenon is evident in English Studies, notably within international collaborative projects, academic conferences, and the realm of English language education. Scholars and students operating in these environments must skillfully navigate thoughts and academic approaches originating from diverse cultural contexts, underscoring the pivotal role of cross-cultural competence in achieving fruitful collaboration and communication. Moreover, in the professional sphere, individuals with robust English proficiency may gain a

competitive advantage, given English's status as a universal working language in the international workplace.

The concept of cross-cultural competence is framed as an individual's adeptness in effectively interacting and communicating with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Johnson et al. 542). In the contemporary globalized landscape, where businesses and organizations transcend borders, possessing cross-cultural competence emerges as an indispensable skill for professionals like international business negotiators, diplomatic envoys, and global marketing strategists. In international business negotiations, professionals need to navigate cultural nuances, customs, and communication styles to establish fruitful partnerships and agreements. Diplomatic envoys, representing their countries in foreign lands, rely heavily on cross-cultural competence to build positive relationships and foster diplomatic ties. Global marketing strategists, tasked with promoting products or services worldwide, must understand the cultural preferences and sensitivities of diverse consumer bases for effective marketing campaigns. This underscores the broader applicability of cross-cultural competence across various professional domains, emphasizing its role not only in interpersonal communication but also in facilitating successful collaborations and transactions in a globalized professional landscape.

In contrast, workplace adaptability is characterized by an individual's capacity to adjust and thrive across various work environments (Hartmann, et al. 913-959). This includes but is not limited to corporate offices, manufacturing plants, research institutions, creative studios, educational institutions, and even virtual or remote work setups. This workplace adaptability trait encompasses qualities such as flexibility, open-mindedness, and the ability to navigate cultural differences effectively. As economic and educational globalization expand in the business terrain in China, comprehending the influence of these factors on workplace adaptability assumes growing significance. One example of this is evident in the case of multinational corporations establishing branches in China. Professionals working in these

organizations need to navigate the diverse cultural, operational, and managerial aspects, showcasing high levels of workplace adaptability. For instance, a global tech company like Apple, opening a branch in China, requires employees who can seamlessly adapt to both the corporate culture of the parent company and the unique dynamics of the Chinese business environment. This adaptability is crucial for successful integration and collaboration, emphasizing the practical application of the workplace adaptability trait in real-world scenarios.

The study holds substantial implications for English Language Studies as it contributes to the comprehension of cross-cultural communication in the workplace using English language. By pinpointing the pivotal factors contributing to successful cross-cultural interactions and workplace adaptability, exploration promises valuable insights for language educators, business professionals, and policymakers, advancing their understanding of cross-cultural communication dynamics in the workplace and offering practical implications for professionals operating in diverse environments. It is important to know the particularities of motivations of Chinese university students and international companies to assess the transnational and geopolitical implications of the use of English in contemporary China.

Recognizing cross-cultural competence as a dynamic skill necessitating ongoing development and enhancement (Dolan 443), I explore viable strategies and approaches for fostering competence within the Chinese context. By scrutinizing successful examples and best practices, language educators stand to gain valuable insights into the most effective pedagogical methods for imparting communication skills in cross-cultural contexts. In addition, the study has the potential to furnish employers with guidance in the recruitment and training of personnel equipped with the requisite cross-cultural competence to thrive in the contemporary global workplace.

Furthermore, adaptability is crucial in the workplace considering economic and educational globalization (Wang 13). The dynamic nature of the Chinese job market requires

individuals to be flexible and adaptable, hence the significance of this concept. In the context of China's dynamic job market, individuals often encounter shifts in industry demands, technological advancements, and evolving skill requirements. For instance, the rapid development of the technology sector may lead to increased demand for professionals skilled in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cybersecurity. Those who can adapt to these emerging trends and acquire the necessary skills are more likely to thrive in this dynamic job market.

Changes in government policies and economic priorities can also impact job requirements. For instance, a shift towards sustainable practices might create a demand for professionals with expertise in environmental conservation and renewable energy. Individuals who can quickly adapt their skills and knowledge to align with these changing priorities are better positioned for success.

Relating this to cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability, individuals in a dynamic job market shaped by economic and educational globalization must not only adapt to shifting industry demands but also cultivate the ability to collaborate with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds. Cross-cultural competence becomes integral when working in globalized teams, fostering effective communication and collaboration across borders. Moreover, workplace adaptability includes the capacity to adjust not only to changing job requirements but also to diverse cultural norms and expectations within a globalized work environment. Individuals who excel in both adaptability and cross-cultural competence are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the evolving professional landscape in the era of economic and educational globalization.

This study surveys distinct challenges and possibilities that arise in China. In the Chinese context, individuals must navigate a multifaceted professional landscape, addressing challenges such as cross-cultural communication barriers, rapid technological changes, and the need to balance traditional values with global trends. This necessitates a heightened

emphasis on cross-cultural competence, enabling effective collaboration in a culturally diverse workplace. Workplace adaptability, in this scenario, extends beyond industry demands to encompass the adept adjustment to diverse cultural norms, reinforcing the integral role of adaptability and cross-cultural competence in successfully maneuvering China's evolving job market shaped by economic and educational globalization.

As China undergoes rapid economic growth and transformation, changes in the labor market and educational system are occurring (Guthrie 133). The findings and insights generated by this study stand poised to provide language educators, employers, and policymakers with practical strategies for fostering cross-cultural competence and enhancing workplace adaptability within the evolving landscape of globalization in China.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter explores cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability, elucidating their definitions, historical context, and relevance in English language education. As globalization continues to reshape the interconnected world, the ability to navigate diverse cultural landscapes becomes increasingly vital. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of cross-cultural competence is deemed essential, serving as the foundation for effective communication and collaboration in various professional settings.

Section 2.1 initiates the exploration by elucidating the concept of cross-cultural competence. It begins by defining its components and tracing the historical evolution of cross-cultural competence research. Importantly, the investigation extends to its specific implications in English language contexts, laying the groundwork for subsequent discussions. Additionally, attention is given to the development of theoretical models tailored to English language education, focusing on their role in fostering cross-cultural competence.

Moreover, in Section 2.1.5, a critical examination is conducted into the measurement of cross-cultural competence, emphasizing the need for effective and appropriate assessment tools in cross-cultural communication. This analysis contributes to the establishment of a comprehensive framework for evaluating individuals' cross-cultural proficiency.

Transitioning to Section 2.2, the focus shifts towards workplace adaptability, recognizing its profound impact on individuals' professional trajectories. Definitions and classifications of workplace adaptability are delineated, drawing connections between workplace and career adaptability. Section 2.2 further explores the conceptual structure of career adaptability and the methodologies employed to measure workplace adaptability, shedding light on the crucial interplay between career competency and adaptability.

However, a nuanced examination reveals certain shortcomings in existing research, compelling a scrutiny of the limitations within the realms of cross-cultural competence

(Section 2.3.1) and workplace adaptability (Section 2.3.2). Identifying these gaps is imperative for advancing the current discourse and directing future research endeavors. By acknowledging and addressing these shortcomings, the chapter aims to contribute to the refinement and expansion of knowledge in these pivotal domains.

In essence, this chapter serves as a comprehensive introduction to the multifaceted landscape of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability. Through an intricate exploration of definitions, historical context, and measurement methodologies, the groundwork is laid for a nuanced understanding of these constructs, ultimately aiming to enhance their practical applications in professional and educational settings.

## **2.1 Definition and Components of Cross-Cultural Competence**

In 1959, E.T. Hall introduced the groundbreaking proposition that "culture is communication" to be credited as the pioneer to coin the term cross-cultural communication (119). When assessing cultural differences, it is important to regard skills which encompass linguistic proficiency, adaptive behavior, and cross-cultural communication abilities, making it applicable across diverse settings such as business, healthcare, and education.

Cross-cultural communication competence is a multifaceted system that comprises over twenty competence concepts sharing analogous connotations, a fact generally accepted among scholars and researchers in this field. According to Fantini (8-9), cross-cultural communicative competence is a widely used term in research and education concerning cross-cultural communication. This term comprehends cross-cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural adaptation, cross-cultural competence, global competitive intelligence, ethnic relativism, international competence, international communication, multiculturalism, and other related concepts. The initial factor deals with a set of personality traits that hold

particular significance in fostering cross-cultural competence. The second aspect pertains to the skills showcased in forming relationships, engaging in interpersonal interactions, mitigating misunderstandings of meaning, and working towards a common good. The third element comprehends four key areas, namely knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness, whereas the fourth element pertains to language proficiency. The final aspect involves the different stages of competence development, ranging from low to high (Fantini 8-9).

Byram defined cross-cultural citizenship as the ability to communicate effectively across cultures. He believed that individuals with strong cross-cultural communication skills can form connections between local situations and the global environment, comprehend the complexities of national identity, and show respect for diverse cultures (Byram 238-239). Deardorff argues that cross-cultural competence is synonymous with global competence, comprised of respect, active listening, adaptability, relationship-building, empathy, self-awareness, and cultural humility (Deardorff 2-9). Chen posits that global communication competence and cross-cultural communication competence are indistinguishable (Chen 3). Denson suggests that cross-cultural communication competence can currently supersede cross-cultural understanding (Denson 3). Ang introduced the concept of cultural intelligence, which involves the capability of individuals to operate effectively in diverse cultural settings, closely related to the idea of cross-cultural communication skills (Ang 335). Summarizing the common traits of the previous definitions, cross-cultural communication competence is a multifaceted system encompassing linguistic proficiency, adaptive behavior, and a range of skills such as cross-cultural sensitivity, adaptation, competence, and global awareness. Scholars emphasize the significance of personality traits, relationship-building skills, and a comprehensive understanding of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness, all contributing to effective communication across diverse cultural contexts.

Deardorff defines cross-cultural competence as the demonstration of appropriate cross-cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes in cross-cultural environments by individuals



(194). Barrett highlighted that cross-cultural competence encompasses attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills demonstrated through communicative behavior. This proficiency enables individuals to respect and comprehend people from different cultures (5). This further definition by Deardorff aligns with the previous conceptualizations as it underscores the importance of appropriate cross-cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes for effective communication in diverse environments. Barrett's emphasis on attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills contributing to respectful and comprehensive interaction mirrors the earlier discussions regarding the multifaceted nature of cross-cultural communication competence. Therefore, Deardorff's and Barrett's perspectives are in continuity with the previously outlined common traits, reinforcing the notion that cross-cultural communication competence requires a combination of linguistic proficiency, adaptive behavior, and a holistic set of skills and attitudes for successful communication across diverse cultural contexts.

Sun discusses the constituent elements of cross-cultural competence in foreign language education within China, including respect for global cultural diversity, possessing cross-cultural empathy and critical cultural awareness, as well as mastery of basic theoretical knowledge and analytical methods for cross-cultural research. It is important to be acquainted with the history and contemporary state of the country whose language you intend to learn, while comprehending the fundamental features, similarities, and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures. Here, being capable of scrutinizing and assessing diverse cultural phenomena, literary works, and commodities. It is also crucial to be skilled in appropriate and effectual cross-cultural communication and adept in aiding individuals from varying lingual and cultural backgrounds in achieving effective communication across cultures (Sun 17). This suggests that cross-cultural communicative competence reveals itself in the suitability and efficiency of cross-cultural communicative conduct.

Stadler's conceptualization of cross-cultural competence delineates four integral clusters, namely 'knowledge,' 'communication,' 'relationships,' and 'personal attributes.'

Within the knowledge cluster, proficiency is characterized by adeptness in 'information gathering,' the application of 'creative thinking,' a resolute 'goal orientation,' and the capacity for 'collaborative problem-solving.' The communication cluster underscores the importance of competences such as 'communication management,' the acquisition of language skills through 'language learning,' judicious 'language moderation,' attentive 'active listening,' adept 'mediation,' the facilitation of knowledge dissemination through 'sharing knowledge,' the cultivation of trust through 'building mutual trust,' and the cultivation of adaptability through 'stylistic flexibility' (1-8).

The relationship cluster encompasses interpersonal dynamics, emphasizing skills like 'welcoming strangers,' the art of 'building rapport,' sensitivity to diverse social and professional contexts encapsulated in 'being sensitive to social and professional contexts,' and the cultivation of 'interpersonal attractiveness.' (Stadler 6). Lastly, the personal attributes cluster comprehends qualities that contribute to an individual's efficacy in cross-cultural interactions, such as a proclivity for risk-taking, self-awareness, openness and receptivity, adaptability, a sense of inner purpose, and the possession of coping skills and resilience. Resilience here can be understood according to Jorge Diego Sánchez as a "transformative mode" that guarantees socio-politic change, challenging dominating structures through narratives that promote awareness-raising, resistance, and subversion against interlocking systems of patriarchal control based on class, race, gender, caste, or sexuality (109). Stadler's comprehensive framework thus underscores the multifaceted nature of cross-cultural competence, requiring a nuanced understanding and development of competences across these four interconnected clusters. Jorge Diego Sánchez further underscores the necessity for a profound comprehension and development of various competencies within these four interconnected clusters in cultivating cross-cultural competence (118).

The UNESCO has formulated a framework for cross-cultural competence which views this competence as comprising general and culture-specific knowledge, as well as the ability

to address issues and establish cross-cultural communication (Pais 1-16). Three fundamental dimensions make up cross-cultural competence in this UNESCO-designed taxonomy, namely *knowledge* (awareness), *emotions* (attitudes), and *behavior* (skills). It is widely acknowledged that cross-cultural competence involves individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds displaying sensitivity, flexibility, and adaptability in cross-cultural communication interactions, according to the demands of the communicative context. Such requirements may be categorized at the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral levels (Hendrarso 1). For university students, the development of cross-cultural competence is crucial in achieving a comprehensive international outlook, active involvement in global affairs, and effective leadership skills.

### 2.1.1 History of Cross-cultural Competence Research

Initial research on cross-cultural competence focused on the definition of predictor variables of competence. Lustig summarized four different approaches to the study of cross-cultural competence: the trait approach which accounts "personality traits and attributes of individuals" (153), the perception approach valuing "attitudes and motivations" (157), the behavioral approach which assesses "behavior and performance in specific communicative situations" (158) and the culture-specific approach which pinpoints "behavior and perceptions arising in a specific culture" (165). In addition, research on cross-cultural competence often revolves around a series of definitions, components, and models.

Chen & Starosta (22) considered cross-cultural competence as the ability to successfully (there is a missing verb here) cross-cultural identities of both communicators in different cultural situations to perform communicative acts effectively and appropriately. They listed three important components of cross-cultural competence (see Figure 2): cross-cultural sensitivity (emotion), cross-cultural meaning (cognition) and cross-cultural skills (behavior).



**Figure 2. Triadic Theory of Cross-cultural Competence (Chen & Starosta 22)**

Cross-cultural sensitivity competence refers to motivation and attitudes to understand or accept cultural differences. Cross-cultural awareness includes understanding relevant cultural knowledge and cultural awareness, etc. Cross-cultural skills concern the ability to complete communicative tasks and achieve communicative goals in a multicultural context. The former triadic model theory shown in Figure 3 is based on psychological theory to explore what constitutes cross-cultural competence.

Byram's model of cross-cultural communicative competence (hence ICC) is the most authoritative in the field of foreign language education (Deardorff 247). The model divides cross-cultural communicative competence into linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and cross-cultural competence, as shown in Figure 3 (Byram 73).

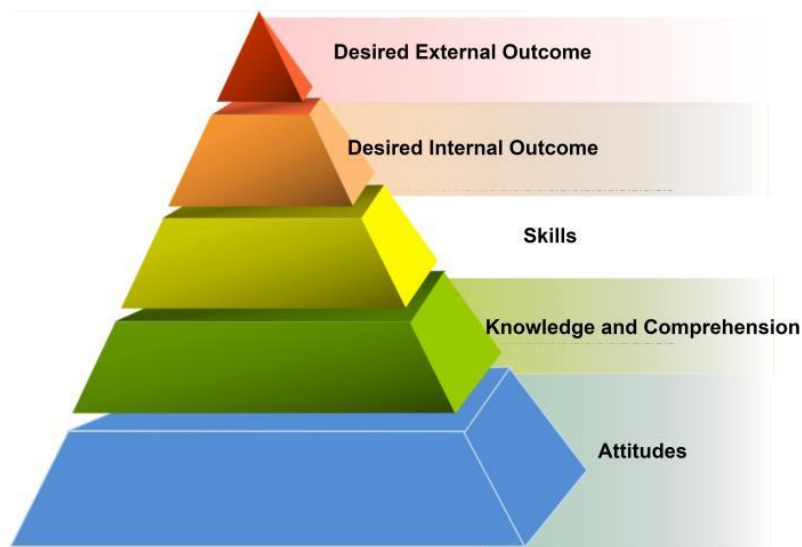


**Figure 3. Byram's Model of ICC (Byram 73)**

Byram's model of ICC, which refers to the field of foreign language education, has the greatest problem of creating a large overlap between the knowledge and skills dimensions of ICC and cross-cultural competence, since the classification of competences tends to cause conceptual confusion and is not conducive to the description of ICC.

Deardorff (21) argues that cross-cultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in culturally diverse situations based on one's cross-cultural knowledge, skills, awareness, and attitudes. At the same time, she points out that *effectiveness* and *appropriateness* are extremely important. She considers that *effectiveness* can be determined by the individual, whereas *appropriateness* can only be determined by the judgement of others and is directly related to their cultural sensitivity and cultural statuses. In *Assessing cross-cultural Competence in Study Abroad Students* (2006), Deardorff summarizes the core elements of cross-cultural competence through questionnaire results and develops

the pyramid model of cross-cultural competence accordingly. This pyramid model appears below in Figure 4 and shows, from the bottom to the top, attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, skills, desired internal outcome and desired external outcome.



**Figure 4. Deardorff's Model of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (Deardorff 232)**

Deardorff's Model of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity, depicted in Figure 4, is important and relevant for the study being conducted because it provides a framework to understand and measure individuals' ability to interact effectively across cultures. The model is significant in cross-cultural research and practice as it highlights the various stages of development in becoming culturally sensitive and competent.

In the graph, the pyramid symbolizes the five stages of cross-cultural sensitivity: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation. Each stage mirrors a distinct mindset and level of awareness towards cultural differences, indicating the degree of openness to engaging with diverse cultures. Within the context of the study and the employed questionnaires, this model proves instrumental in evaluating the participants' cross-cultural sensitivity and their progression through these developmental stages. By discerning individuals' positions on this continuum, valuable insights emerge regarding their attitudes,

behaviors, and perceptions towards cultural diversity. This information becomes pivotal for appraising the efficacy of interventions or training programs aimed at fortifying cross-cultural competence. The importance of Deardorff's Model in the teaching of English in the context of globalization lies in its ability to equip educators with a systematic approach to cultivate cross-cultural sensitivity among students. English, as a global language, is a tool for communication and understanding across diverse cultural contexts. By incorporating this model into English language teaching, educators can facilitate the development of not only linguistic proficiency but also the essential cross-cultural competencies needed for effective communication in a globalized world. This aligns with the evolving role of English language education, which extends beyond language acquisition to encompass intercultural communication skills essential for navigating the complexities of our interconnected and diverse global society.

Furthermore, the paradigm serves as a tool to pinpoint potential challenges or barriers that individuals might encounter in cross-cultural interactions. For instance, those in the denial or defense stages may exhibit signs of ethnocentrism or resistance towards cultural differences, posing potential obstacles to effective communication and collaboration. Recognizing these barriers lays the foundation for designing interventions geared towards fostering cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. Overall, Deardorff's Model of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity is important for this study as it provides a conceptual framework and measurement tool to assess individuals' cross-cultural sensitivity and guides interventions to enhance their cross-cultural competence.

Regarding a Chinese context, Gao (54) constructs a theoretical framework to assess the cross-cultural communicative competence of Chinese university students (the knowledge-doing model). She proposes that the cross-cultural communicative competence of university students consists of a cross-cultural communicative knowledge system and a behavioral system. This suggests that knowledge is not only a higher ideological field

suspended in conceptual form that arises and develops in action, but also an important prerequisite that guides the thought and determines action. Wu, Fu & Peng (12), considered the current situation of cross-cultural competence development of university students in the Chinese cultural context and constructed a theoretical model of cross-cultural foreign language teaching as shown in Figure 5.

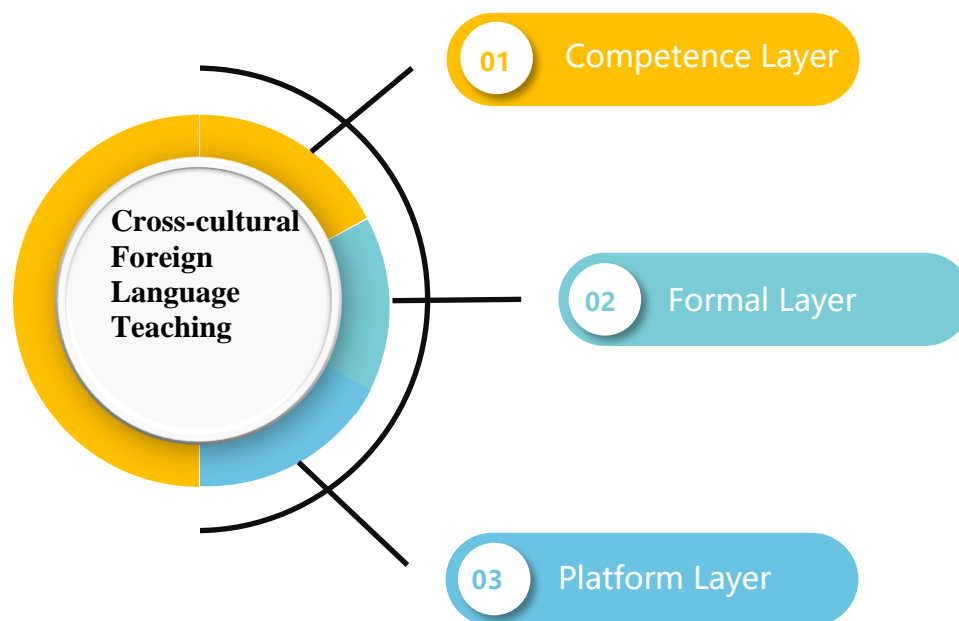


Figure 5. A Three-level Theoretical Model of Cross-cultural Foreign Language Teaching (Peng, Fu & Wu 12)

Empirical data have been obtained to verify and support the study of cross-cultural competence assessment and application of university students in five comprehensive universities across the country. The sample consisted of 447 second-year undergraduate students from various disciplines, including Computer Science, Control Engineering, Management, Materials Science, Law, and Electronic Information Engineering. The sample distribution reflected the proportion of disciplines, with humanities and social sciences accounting for 21%, engineering and technology occupying 69%, and other disciplines representing 10%. Figure 4 showed that the theoretical model of cross-cultural foreign language teaching consists of three levels: the platform level, the form level, and the competence level. The language course serves as the foundational platform for cultivating



cross-cultural competence, with experiential, critical, and interactive learning standing out as primary modalities for its development. The key dimensions integral to this competence include knowledge of the national culture, familiarity with the foreign culture, attitudes, cross-cultural cognitive skills, cross-cultural communication skills, and heightened awareness.

The primary objective of this model is to enhance language teaching strategies and facilitate the acquisition of effective cross-cultural communication skills. The inclusion of a diverse sample comprising second-year undergraduate students from various academic disciplines further enriched the study, enabling a comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural competence across distinct contexts, as previously shown in Figure 5.

The insights derived from this section illuminate both the strengths and areas requiring enhancement in the cross-cultural competence of university students. Through a meticulous examination of the data, the researchers discerned the factors shaping language learning within the Chinese cultural context, underscoring the pivotal role of cultural sensitivity in effective language teaching.

The content within this section assumes paramount significance in the overall research, as it lays the groundwork for subsequent discussions and analyzes. It offers a framework that facilitates a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between cultural factors and language acquisition, accentuating the necessity for teaching approaches attuned to cultural subtleties. Moreover, these findings make a noteworthy contribution to the existing knowledge based on the assessment and application of cross-cultural competence, furnishing valuable insights for prospective research endeavors in this domain.

### 2.1.2 Cross-cultural Competence in English Language Contexts

Educational globalization has increased contact between different language groups, leading to the need for cross-cultural communication. Wright (821) noted the emergence of a global lingua franca, which makes English an imperative component of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, scholars have begun to concentrate on cross-cultural proficiency in English contexts across diverse cultural backgrounds. This aptitude necessitates the ability to communicate effectively and comprehend different cultures (Cai 2).

Nevertheless, there are conflicting opinions and approaches regarding the appraisal and assimilation process of globalization and higher education systems. These trends might impact the social, economic, and cultural spheres. Cross-cultural competence is a complex field that encompasses language, as well as the development of personal linguistic paradigms in multicultural settings, establishing harmonious relationships and understanding between language and culture (Shmeleva 271).

Currently, research into cross-cultural communicative competence primarily centers on cross-cultural English education and communicative proficiency within cultural interactions, as well as business communication and communicative competence in cross-cultural contexts. Studies in English education reveal that the integration of cultural factors into teaching enhances learners' grasp and practical application of English language and culture. Further research is required to effectively cultivate cross-cultural communicative competence in learners within cross-cultural settings (Smith 234-256). There is a need for in-depth exploration and analysis of cultural communicative competence in business communication to adapt to the global business environment (Shmeleva 279).

However, there are still limitations in the current research. Firstly, it is necessary to enhance research methodology, improve measurement tools, and conduct comprehensive qualitative research. Secondly, there is a lack of research on the teaching practices and

professional development of cross-cultural educators and their cultural communicative competence in the realm of global business communication and education in China. Further exploration of effective teaching strategies and methods is necessary to cultivate cross-cultural communicative competence within varied cultural backgrounds and in the context of global business communication.

In conclusion, the study of cross-cultural communicative competence primarily focuses on English education and cultural communicative competence, as well as business communication and cultural communicative competence. However, there are still some limitations in these fields, necessitating further exploration and research.

### 2.1.3 Creating a Theoretical Model Study for English Language Education

The former analysis of theoretical models of cross-cultural communicative competence allows to see that the field of English language education generally accepts that this competence can be broken down and measured in terms of affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Byram argues that critical cultural awareness is central to cross-cultural communication competence in English language education (Chen 197). Cushner and Mahon (304-320) posit that the enhancement of students' international worldview within multicultural education serves as a catalyst for the cultivation of cross-cultural competence. The proposition underscores the significance of incorporating a global perspective to foster a more robust cross-cultural understanding.

The inclusion of a theoretical model equips researchers and educators of English language with a systematic means to analyze diverse dimensions of cross-cultural communicative competence, namely the affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Such a model provides a structured foundation for research and pedagogical practices,

enabling a more nuanced exploration of the multifaceted aspects inherent in cross-cultural communicative competence.

A theoretical model enhances the understanding of cross-cultural communicative competence by providing a systematic approach to examining its components and their interrelationships. It allows for breaking down the complex process of cross-cultural communication into manageable elements, enabling the identification of specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes that contribute to effective cross-cultural communication. A theoretical model is essential for understanding cross-cultural communicative competence in English language education. It fosters the analyzing and measuring its dimensions, guiding instructional practices and interventions, and establishing a common language for researchers and educators.

Ting-Toomey (100-120) has pinpointed that the ability to resolve cross-cultural conflicts is crucial in an era of global economic integration, while Kim proposes that the analysis of cultural identity is an effective path to a deeper understanding of cultural competence (110-120). Previous studies have argued that cognitive and behavioral adaptation is a core element of cross-cultural competence, enabling people to think positively in different cross-cultural contexts, so that they can strategically overcome cultural differences, avoid cultural conflicts, and adapt to new cultural situations to successfully achieve their communicative goals.

Cross-cultural competence is reflected emotionally in cross-cultural sensitivity and cognitively and behaviorally in flexibility, enabling communicators to demonstrate adaptability in their communicative behavior. Cross-cultural sensitivity is observed in the willingness to approach new cultures with an open and curious mind, to discover, understand, tolerate and overcome cultural differences, and to respect each other's cultural identity, cultural diversity and values.

Appropriateness and effectiveness constitute the expected effects and evaluation criteria for adaptive performance of cross-cultural competence. Communicative appropriateness refers to the extent to which communicators demonstrate the suitability of the expected communicative behavior of cultural members in each cultural situation, so that they behave in a reasonable manner that is recognized and accepted by other cultural members, hence all participants feel comfortable and satisfied with the communicative process. Communicative effectiveness refers to all participants negotiating and regulating cultural conflicts, constructing shared meanings, and achieving communicative goals.

In the context of college education and overseas students and employees working in China, establishing a theoretical model for the development of cross-cultural communication competence in English language education is of great significance. By understanding the different dimensions of cross-cultural communication, including emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects, educators and researchers can effectively design instructional strategies and interventions to enhance students' cross-cultural communication competence and workplace adaptability. This will contribute to the overall quality and level of students in universities.

To further investigate this hypothesis, a mixed methods approach will be employed. Firstly, a quantitative survey will be conducted to collect data on the cross-cultural communication competence levels of Chinese university students and overseas students studying or working in China. This survey will include items related to the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, such as their self-perceived cultural awareness, knowledge of different cultures, and adaptability in cross-cultural interactions.

The second phase of the research will involve qualitative interviews with a group of high-achieving English language students and professionals, including overseas students and employees studying or working in China and human resources managers in Chinese companies. These interviews will provide insights into specific skills, knowledge, and

attitudes related to effective cross-cultural communication and workplace adaptability. The findings from these interviews will complement the quantitative data and provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between cross-cultural communication competence and workplace adaptability. The aim is to contribute to the field of English language education by providing evidence-based insights into the importance of cross-cultural communication competence for academic and career success among Chinese university students. The findings of this study can guide the development of English cross-cultural courses, curriculum design, cross-cultural teaching practices, and career support services in university environments to better meet the academic and workplace needs of diverse student populations.

#### 2.1.4 Measuring Cross-cultural Competence: Effectiveness and Appropriateness in Cross-cultural Communication

The determination of criteria for obtaining cross-cultural competence is related to the setting and achievement of objectives in cross-cultural education and training as well as to the choice of criteria for assessing cross-cultural communication competence. Scholars have largely been able to agree on a binary standard of effectiveness and appropriateness. For example, Hymes (269) explores communicative competence in three ways: to what extent it is formally feasible, contextually appropriate, and used. Hymes believes that the requirements for communicative competence are formal accuracy and contextual appropriateness, and a sense of degree, from which the prototypes of effectiveness and appropriateness can be seen.

In terms of measuring cross-cultural communication competence, scholars also generally agree with Spitzberg's criteria of effectiveness and appropriateness. In Deardorff's (232) definition of cross-cultural competence, effectiveness and appropriateness draw on Spitzberg's (241) view that 'appropriateness' refers to the avoidance of violating the accepted

rules of the other party, while 'effectiveness' refers to the achievement of mutually desired goals.

However, according to Hsu (142), the determination of what is considered effective and appropriate communication is subjective and requires wisdom (147). The term 'effectiveness' refers to the successful attainment of communication objectives by both parties involved. On the other hand, 'appropriateness' is closely linked to the cultural characteristics of the communicator and the specific context of the communication, on which it becomes very dependent. Therefore, effectiveness and appropriateness can only be used as general requirements for the level of cross-cultural communication competence, while their assessment of this competence in specific situations must be combined with the characteristics and requirements of such specific situations.

As economic globalization continues to deepen, and cross-cultural exchanges become more frequent, cross-cultural competence is becoming an essential survival skill for individuals and organizations in the so called "Age of Globalization" (Sachs1). The assessment of cross-cultural communication skills is a natural consequence of this. This scientific assessment is essential and forms the foundation for developing such skills. It serves as a benchmark for measuring the success of the development process and is also a crucial criterion in selecting cross-cultural staff. Although cross-cultural competence is not the same as cross-cultural business communication competence, it is important to study the former to learn from the latter.

In this sense, cross-cultural business competence can be conceptualized as the capacity to effectively participate in international business communication and collaboration. This proficiency encompasses the comprehension and appreciation of diverse cultural contexts and values, coupled with the ability to adapt and respond to challenges in various cultural environments. The utilization of scientific methodologies and tools for assessing cross-cultural business competence aids individuals and organizations in identifying their

strengths and weaknesses, thereby facilitating the cultivation and augmentation of this aptitude. Consequently, extensive research on the assessment of cross-cultural business competence holds significant theoretical and practical implications. Through the study and application of assessment techniques for cross-cultural business competence, valuable experiences and insights can be acquired, ultimately reinforcing and refining strategies for nurturing and advancing cross-cultural business proficiency.

Dr. Janet M. Bennett (243), President of the American Academy of cross-cultural Communication, in her monograph *The Sage Encyclopedia of Cross-cultural Competence* (2015) shared seven predictions for the future of cross-cultural competence research, highlighting the evaluation of cross-cultural competence. The assessment of cross-cultural competence is already a prominent need in many organizations, and it will flourish further in the future with the development of relevant training and education.

Understanding and measuring cross-cultural communication competence has become increasingly important in the context of the workplace. The ability to communicate and interact effectively with individuals from different cultures is crucial for workplace success. To thrive in a multicultural work environment, individuals need to possess the skills to adapt their communication styles, understand cultural nuances, and bridge potential communication gaps. Therefore, assessing cross-cultural communication competence has become an integral part of evaluating an individual's workplace ability.

Furthermore, the importance of cross-cultural communication competence extends beyond individual employees. Organizations also recognize the significance of cultivating a diverse and inclusive workforce, as it can lead to enhanced creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. Therefore, employers have a vested interest in assessing the cross-cultural communication competence of their employees to ensure that they can effectively engage with clients, customers, and colleagues from different cultural backgrounds.



Establishing criteria and standards for measuring cross-cultural communication competence in the workplace is essential. The definitions and frameworks provided by scholars such as Hymes, Spitzberg, and Deardorff offer valuable insights into understanding the dimensions of effectiveness and appropriateness. By integrating these concepts into the assessment process, employers can gain a comprehensive understanding of an individual's ability to navigate cross-cultural interactions in a professional setting.

Moreover, recognizing the subjective nature of effectiveness and appropriateness emphasizes the need for adaptability and contextual sensitivity in cross-cultural communication. Considering the specific characteristics and requirements of different workplace situations is critical in accurately assessing an individual's level of cross-cultural communication competence.

In conclusion, the determination of criteria for assessing cross-cultural communication competence is fundamental to evaluate workplace ability in the age of globalization. By understanding and measuring an individual's capacity to effectively communicate and interact across cultures, employers can ensure the success of their workforce in today's diverse and interconnected world. Therefore, incorporating these definitions and frameworks into the assessment process can contribute to the development of a culturally competent and globally-minded workforce.

## **2.2 Understanding Workplace Adaptability: Definitions and Classifications**

Adaptive capacity, also known as adaptability, refers to the ability of an organism to maintain a harmonious and dynamic balance with its environment. It is considered essential for practitioners to thrive in unstable environments, as stated by Savickas (254). This quality is closely tied to skills such as planning, the ability to cope with challenges, and the willingness to explore both oneself and the surrounding environment.

Morrison (549) defines adaptive capacity as the tendency to examine situations and respond effectively in changing environments. This includes the exploration and modification of the self, as well as integrating appropriate response behaviors into self-identity. Such development facilitates the growth of individual adaptive capacity (Ryan & Oswald 363-376).

Fugate et al. (14-38) consider adaptive capacity a component of employability and define it as the willingness and ability to change behavior, feelings and thoughts in response to the demands of the environment. They also consider optimism, disposition to learn, openness, internal control, and general self-efficacy (38). This is relevant because understanding adaptive capacity is crucial in assessing an individual's employability in a rapidly changing work environment. Examining the components of adaptive capacity, such as willingness to change behavior, disposition to learn, and general self-efficacy, can provide valuable insights into how individuals adapt to new challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, considering optimism and openness as factors of adaptive capacity can shed light on an individual's ability to embrace change and explore innovative solutions in their professional development (Fugate 267-271).

In the view of Ployhart and Bliese (3-39), adaptive capacity is a construct that exists within individuals and influences the way they make sense of and respond to different environments. Thus, they suggest that individual adaptability includes eight dimensions: crisis concern, creativity, acculturation, interpersonal, learning, environmental concern, dealing with work stress and dealing with uncertainty (Hamtaux et al. 130-141).

McArdle et al. (247) define adaptive capacity as resilience to unstable environments. Individuals with adaptability have a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and do not feel uncomfortable in new and different environments. Fraile-Marcos' research examines resilience from a cultural perspective, comparing beliefs across different cultures by comprehensively exploring their cultural backgrounds, historical contexts, and geographical

environments (17-18). In the same line, Rodríguez-Rodríguez et al. have also integrated research on adaptive capacity and resilience from different cultural contexts (16629).

Hartung et al. (63) classify adaptability in terms of the degree and speed of career progression. The degree of career development refers to the position in the continuum of professional progression t tasks that the individual has completed and is facing. The speed of career development refers to the speed an individual's coping behavior compares to that of others in a reference group facing the same developmental tasks. Adaptability can therefore be defined as the degree and speed of change. The two dimensions allow for the classification given by to adaptive capacity into four categories: advancing, constricting, delaying, thwarting. This is shown by Hartung et al. in Figure 6, attached below:

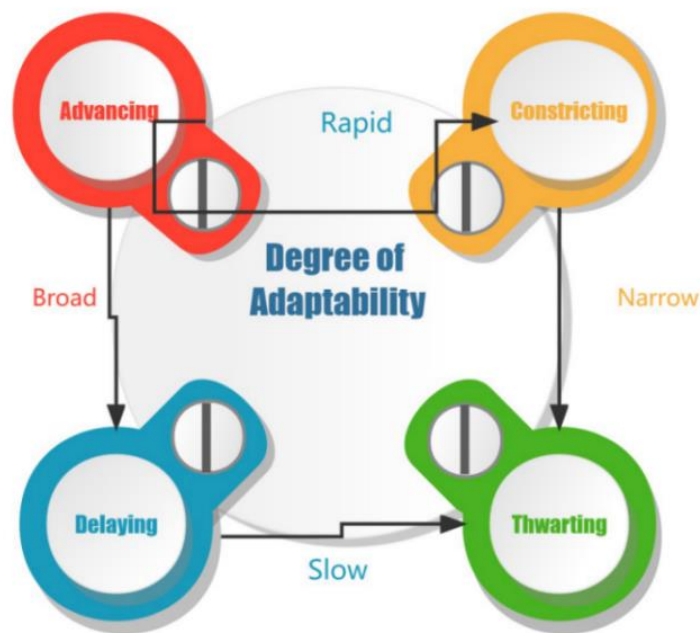


Figure 6. Degree of Adaptability (Hartung et al. 12)

The different definitions of adaptability mentioned above agree on the following: adaptability is an internal disposition as a set of potentials; adaptability responds to unstable, variable, and unpredictable new and different environments; and adaptability is expressed

through appropriate and effective environmental coping behavior. From this perspective, adaptability appears to be a response trait at the personality level.

The definition of adaptability provided by Hartung et al. (63) aligns with the commonly accepted understanding of adaptability as an internal disposition that enables individuals to effectively respond to changing and unpredictable environments. Their categorization of adaptability into four categories, based on the degree and speed of career progression, offers a useful framework for comprehending and investigating workplace adaptability.

This classification proves to this PhD because it examines the role of adaptability in individuals' academic and career success. By employing this framework, the study can evaluate the extent to which individuals exhibit adaptive behaviors in their careers and analyze the impact of different levels of adaptability on career progression.

Furthermore, Hartung et al. (12) had already provided a solid foundation for exploration by establishing the conceptual framework and measurement approach for assessing adaptability. This is key to assess the relationship between adaptability and other variables, such as cross-cultural communicative competence, in English language proficiency, job performance, job satisfaction, and subjective well-being.

In elucidating the intricacies of this subjective well-being, several scholars have delved into the conceptualization of adaptive personality. Kracke (19), Buss (463), and Li (124-137) have proved the ways in which individuals dynamically modify their personality traits and behaviors in response to varying situational and cultural contexts. The conceptual framework of adaptive personality, as elucidated by Kracke (23), posits that individuals possess the capacity to adjust their traits and behaviors in accordance with environmental demands and personal objectives. This perspective, rooted in individual differences, contends that individuals endowed with a heightened adaptive personality exhibit a proclivity for tailoring their behaviors adeptly, facilitating successful navigation of diverse situations and the attainment of desired outcomes (30).

The multifaceted exploration of adaptive personality also draws upon Evolutionary Psychology and Social Cognitive Theory. This interdisciplinary perspective underscores the nuanced interplay between innate predispositions, cognitive processes, and the socio-cultural milieu in shaping an individual's adaptive personality. Further research can take into account Buss (462) and Li (132) to assess the intricate web of influences that mold an individual's capacity to tailor their personality traits and behaviors.

In essence, the study of adaptive personality is a rich tapestry woven from the threads of individual differences, evolutionary psychology, and social cognitive theory. Through the lens of individual differences, it unveils the dynamic nature of personality, portraying it as a malleable construct that individuals adeptly adjust in response to environmental demands and personal goals. This nuanced exploration enriches our understanding of the intricate mechanisms underpinning adaptive personality and its manifold manifestations across diverse contexts.

Evolutionary Psychology provides another angle to understand adaptive personality. It suggests that human traits and behaviors have evolved over time to adapt to changing environments and maximize survival and reproductive success (Buss 459). In this context, adaptive personality can be seen as a mechanism that allows individuals to effectively respond to and thrive in various ecological and social challenges.

Social Cognitive theory also offers insights into the concept of adaptive personality. It emphasizes the role of learning, observation, and self-regulation in shaping an individual's adaptive behaviors (Li1 24). According to this theory, individuals acquire adaptive personality through the process of observing and imitating others, as well as through self-reflection and self-control. They learn how to adjust their behaviors based on the consequences they observe or anticipate.

To sum up, the concept of adaptive personality is multifaceted and can be approached from various theoretical perspectives. By integrating insights from individual differences,

Evolutionary Psychology, and Social Cognitive theory, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of how individuals adapt their personality traits and behaviors to different situational and cultural contexts. It can be said that adaptive personality is a perspective for understanding adaptive behavior and its processes and is an explanation of the internal mechanisms of adjustability. These processes are influenced by a range of factors, including cognitive abilities, emotional intelligence, and social support.

Cognitive abilities play a crucial role in adaptive behavior as individuals need to perceive, process, and interpret information from their environment to make effective decisions and adapt their behavior accordingly. For example, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and flexibility in thinking are important cognitive abilities that enable individuals to find creative solutions to new challenges. Emotional intelligence also plays a significant role in adaptive behavior. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to recognize and understand their own emotions, as well as those of others. This allows them to regulate their emotions effectively, manage stress, and establish positive relationships, which are all important components of adaptive behavior.

Additionally, social support has been shown to be a key factor in facilitating adaptive behavior. The availability of supportive relationships, such as family, friends, and colleagues, can provide individuals with resources, guidance, and encouragement during times of change or adversity. Social support can also contribute to a sense of belonging and self-efficacy, both of which are important for adaptive behavior.

These processes involved in adaptive behavior are influenced by cognitive abilities, emotional intelligence, social support, and motivational factors. By understanding these underlying mechanisms, individuals can enhance their adaptive personality and increase their capacity to navigate various challenges in life.

### 2.2.1 Workplace Adaptability and Career Adaptability

Rottinghaus and Borgen define workplace adaptability as a tendency to plan and regulate skills that influence individuals' perceptions of their ability to adapt to changing career plans and job responsibilities, especially in the face of unexpected events (3). Adaptability should be seen as a psycho-social capacity to self-direct and manage, to develop adaptive strategies, and to take action to achieve adaptive goals.

It is now time to conceptualize the difference between the terms *career adaptability* and *workplace adaptability*, with the term career emphasizing a lifelong professional trajectory, whereas workplace emphasizes the current occupation. In everyday language, however, the terms career and workplace are often used together without distinction, so in the literature review and empirical studies on workplace adaptability that follow, this exploration considers career adaptability and its related studies as workplace adaptability and occupational resilience.

The classic and widely cited definition of occupational resilience was proposed by Super and Knasel in 1997. They saw occupational resilience as a state of readiness required to cope with predictable tasks in present or future job roles and to adapt to unpredictable alterations in the job or work environment, a quality that allows one to make changes to conform to the new environment without much effort (quoted in Savickas 247-259). Later, Savickas defined the concept more succinctly: the preparation and resources needed to cope with current and anticipated career development tasks (381). Attitudes, abilities, and behaviors that individuals need to match the work that is right for them become part of those tasks and the psychological resources to manage career transitions, developmental tasks, and work trauma (Rossier 734-743).

According to an article on *Your Yale website* (2021), "Learn and Grow: What Adaptability in the Workplace Means," adaptability in the workplace refers to the ability of employees to adjust and thrive in various work situations. It involves being open to change, being able to learn and develop new skills, and being able to handle uncertainty and ambiguity. Adaptability is considered a crucial skill in today's dynamic and ever-changing work environments. Employers value adaptable employees as they can quickly adjust to new technologies, processes, and challenges, contributing to the success of the organization. Therefore, fostering adaptability among employees is important for both individuals and businesses to thrive. Workplace adaptability refers to an individual's ability to adjust and thrive in various work environments and situations.

Cross-cultural communication competence plays a crucial role in workplace adaptability as it involves the ability to effectively communicate and interact with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Individuals who possess strong cross-cultural communication skills are better equipped to navigate through cultural differences, understand different communication styles, and build meaningful relationships with their colleagues, clients, and superiors. For instance, research findings highlight that individuals with high cross-cultural communication competence are more likely to adapt to new work environments, understand and respect cultural norms, and collaborate efficiently with international teams.

### 2.2.2 Career Competency and Career Adaptability

Career competency was first coined by Hackett (1933) to describe the competences necessary for women to pursue high levels of academic careers. Defillippi and Arthur first defined the concept of career competency as an asset or accumulation of skills in an organization that can contribute to the success of an individual's career, including know-why, know-how, and know-what (Defillippi & Arthur 1998). The *know-why* refers to the extent to which the



individual develops transferable skills and knowledge related to work. The *know-how* refers to the extent to which the individual understands the needs, abilities, interests, values, career-related aspirations, and choices related to his or her own work experience. Finally, the *know-what* refers to the extent to which the individual develops transferable skills and knowledge related to work.

Akkermans et al. (3566-366) also propose a three-dimensional approach that includes reactive career competencies, communicative career competencies and behavioral career competencies. Reactive career competencies involve components that reflect one's professional values, feelings, and motivation, as well as qualities such as personal strengths, weaknesses, and professional skills (356), whereas communicative career competencies include contact and expressive abilities (363). The former is a part of existential awareness and networking career values, as well as of the capacity to expand one's network for career-related purposes. The latter refers to the ability to present one's knowledge and skills to the internal and external labor market (366). Behavioral career competencies include job exploration and career control. Job exploration is the search for and pursuit of job or career-related opportunities. Career control is the ability to positively influence the learning and work processes in an individual's career by setting goals and developing plans.

Although there are different conceptual and structural models of career competencies, two main characteristics can be identified: those related to job performance and those involved in career development. Career competencies are important criteria for distinguishing between good and bad job performance. In a Chinese setting, Ye Long and Chu Fulei (55) found that employees with high levels of career competencies, such as strong problem-solving skills, effective communication abilities, and a proactive attitude towards work, were more likely to perform well in their jobs. These competencies enabled them to handle challenges, collaborate effectively with colleagues, and achieve their goals.

In addition to superficial characteristics like knowledge and skills in specific fields, career competencies also encompass deeper characteristics such as values, personality, and attitudes in work situations. These characteristics play a crucial role in determining employees' adaptability and long-term success in their careers. Having a growth mindset, being resilient in the face of setbacks, and possessing strong ethics and integrity are considered important career competencies that contribute to professional growth and development. It is important to note that career competencies are distinct from occupational adaptability. While occupational adaptability focuses on the ability to adjust to the internal and external workplace environment, career competencies comprise a broader range of skills, knowledge, and attributes that enable individuals to navigate their career paths successfully.

In conclusion, career competencies have two main characteristics: those related to job performance and those involved in career development. By strengthening and improving these competencies, individuals can enhance their job performance, adapt to evolving work environments, and achieve long-term career success.

### 2.2.3 The Conceptual Structure of Career Adaptability

Career adaptability has referred to various aspects of individual career development, including planning, exploration, decision-making, and the acquisition of realistic information (Koen 1178-1194). Some scholars have subsequently taken a qualitative approach to constructing adaptive capacity theory from a skills perspective. For instance, Blustein et al. (272) analyzed the adaptive skills needed during the transition from school to the workplace using grounded theory techniques. These skills include career decision-making, self-exploration, understanding the professional environment, and seeking solutions from others. Cronshaw and Jethmalani (75), through interviews and analysis, identified the following occupational adaptability skills: "mental planning, initiative, flexibility, conflict

management, decisiveness, leadership, continuity, continuous learning, ethical awareness, adapting to change, empathy, impulse control, and teamwork".

The most representative conceptual structure is that proposed by Savickas. Initially, he suggested operationalizing career adaptability as a developmental strategy of self-regulation, with four dimensions of self and environmental exploration, career planning, career decision-making and self-management (Savickas 1880). These dimensions encompass various abilities and behaviors that individuals need to possess during the process of adapting to occupational changes. Self and environmental exploration refers to individuals' cognition and exploration of themselves and the occupational environment. Career planning refers to individuals setting goals and developing plans for their professional development. Career decision-making involves individuals making decisions among different career choices, considering factors such as their own values, interests, and skills. Self-management refers to individuals taking actions to steer their career development, including skill improvement, seeking guidance from mentors, and adjusting strategies. Inspired by this, Baumeister and Vohs identified four dimensions of career adaptability: seeking opportunities; planning for the future; making choices; and self-regulation (351).

Later, Savickas revised the conceptual structure of career adaptability from his own theory of career constructs. Based on the core components of professional development, career adaptability is divided into four dimensions: career decision-making, career planning, career exploration and career confidence (Savickas1880) As can be seen from the evolution and development of the concept of workplace adaptability described above, the model of workplace adaptability is closely linked to the understanding and definition of the concept. Conversely, this is based on the theoretical framework of workplace development and is constructed based on the workplace development tasks to be addressed. For example, is the task of career development to be understood in terms of so-called self-development needs or

is the problem facing career development to be defined in terms of the characteristics of the real environment?

#### 2.2.4 Measurement of Workplace Adaptability

Quantitative research in the field of career development often involves defining career adaptability using various sub-concepts proposed in career development theory. These sub-concepts are commonly measured using readily available scales such as planning, exploration, decision making, information, and realism (Bocciardi et al. 67-82). Additionally, other studies have measured career adaptability through concepts like self-efficacy, problem solving, openness to new experiences, and low irritability (Kracke 19-30), as well as career decision self-efficacy and career choice commitment (Wang et al. 312-332).

Career adaptability has been examined through the dimensions of career planning and career exploration, as studied by Creed et al. (219-229). Examples include vocational competence adaptation, vocational interpersonal adaptation, and vocational psychological adaptation (Rudolph 17-34); proactive personality and boundary-free tendencies (Gaile et al. 1607-1625); career planning, self-exploration, career exploration, decision-making; and self-management (Creed et al. 221); environmental identity, coping with change, job competence, and interpersonal interactions (Hamtiaux et al. 130); and career choice adaptability, career mindset adaptability, career environment adaptability, learning and skills adaptability, and career interpersonal adaptability (Hamtiaux et al. 141). To address problems faced by employees in work scenarios such as lack of motivation and job satisfaction, conflicts with colleagues or supervisors, and difficulties in career advancement, the career adaptability scale is reflected in five areas: organizational synergy, work communication, career learning, emotional regulation ability and career psychological resources (Hur 477).

Considering the multidimensional construct structure that creates dimensional separation in data analysis, some researchers advocate the use of uni-dimensional measures. For example, Skorikov combined career decision, career planning and career confidence as reflective variables for the latent variable of career readiness (8-24). Other researchers have used joint construct measures. For example, Hirschi (145-155) used a four-item composite of career choice readiness, career planning, career exploration and career confidence to measure career adjustment. The difference among joint measures and multidimensional measures is that multidimensional measures assume that there is a common latent variable and that several dimensions are reflective of that latent variable. Each dimension participates in the statistical treatment separately. In contrast, joint measures do not have a common latent variable, with each variable measuring an aspect of the construct independently. The indicators are then combined in the statistical treatment.

Career adaptability findings across cultures and countries were facilitated by an international team of eighteen psychologists, organized by Savickas and Porfeli et al. (661-673), who developed an international version of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) based on Savickas' theoretical framework of career constructs. The international form of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) was developed and tested across cultures in thirteen countries. The scale is still based on the four constructs of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, which form four separate sub-scales. The results of the factor analysis showed that the structure of the scale was cross-culturally consistent and that the internal consistency coefficients for both the sub-scales and the total scale were good (Porfeli & Savickas 672).

However, this attempt to develop a cross-cultural conceptualization and measurement tool is likely to prove futile. It is undeniable that psychological resources are culturally common, but the concept of career adaptability that they reflect and represent is not suitable for measuring workplace adaptability. For example, are the psychological resources of

Chinese people the same as those of the US citizens? Is there a positive correlation between cross-cultural competence in different cultures and workplace adaptability? This doctoral thesis combines common measurement tools, the cross-cultural Competence Scale, and the Career Adaptation Scale, with interviews and data research to develop a model of cross-cultural and workplace adaptability for the Chinese workplace in the context of economic and educational globalization during the past five years.

### **2.3 Shortcomings of the Current Research**

This section addresses the limitations in existing research on cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability. It highlights the importance of adopting a dialectical approach and continuously re-evaluating the definition and assessment methods of cross-cultural competence. Additionally, it discusses the distinction between generic cross-cultural communication skills and occupational cross-cultural communication skills. The section also points out the gap in exploring the relationship between dynamic measures of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability in different occupational characteristics.

The focus here shifts to the deficiencies in current workplace adaptability research and the conceptual construction of career resilience. It notes the predominant examination of career adaptability in lifelong career perspectives and abnormal career situations, with less exploration in stable career situations. The aim is to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between workplace adaptability and a specific topic related to English Studies in the context of China.

Overall, I have connected the shortcomings identified in previous research on cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability. I emphasized the need for a dynamic understanding and measurement of cross-cultural competence and explores the relationship

between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability within different occupational characteristics, including the one related to English Studies in China. The organization of this section follows a logical progression, addressing each research gap in succession.

### 2.3.1 Shortcomings of Existing Cross-cultural Competence Research

In an overview of the research on cross-cultural communication competence in domestic and international academia, this doctoral thesis puts forward the view that a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of this competence must consider its dynamic nature and adaptability to different occupational characteristics. I argue that a dialectical approach is crucial in defining and assessing cross-cultural communication competence, considering the evolving demands of society.

The connotation of competence is contemporary in nature, and so the limitations in existing research should be regarded. With the development of economic globalization, the demands of society on competences are changing, and so are the demands on cross-cultural competences. Advances in cross-cultural business communication technology and changing realities have placed new demands on practitioners' competences.

As Darla K. Deardorff (258) proclaims, the definition of cross-cultural competence is constantly evolving. Therefore, its definition and assessment methods need to be continuously re-evaluated. Cross-cultural competence should be measured in a dynamic model taking into consideration the contextual factors and the changing needs of different occupational fields. This doctoral thesis aims to contribute to the existing body of literature by proposing a comprehensive framework for evaluating cross-cultural communication competence within the context of English Studies in China. A qualitative and quantitative research design has been used to gather data from various sources, including surveys, interviews, and case studies. By examining the relationship between cross-cultural

competence and workplace adaptability, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for educators, practitioners, and policymakers in enhancing cross-cultural communication competence training programs in educational and professional settings.

Secondly, a distinction should be made between cross-cultural competence and occupational cross-cultural competence. In recent years, cross-cultural competence and related factors have emerged for different occupational characteristics, such as the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), the cross-cultural Adaptation Potential Scale (ICAPS) and the cross-cultural Communication Motivation Scale (ICMS) for international business talent management, and the cross-cultural Counseling Competence Scale (1994) for cross-cultural doctor-patient communication. This shows that there has been research on generic cross-cultural communication skills and on occupational cross-cultural communication skills that are applicable to different professional aspects. However, the relationship between dynamic measures of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability has not yet been studied. One of the issues that this study investigates, in relation to workplace adaptability, is the role of language proficiency in cross-cultural communication. While previous research has examined the importance of language proficiency in cross-cultural interactions, there is a need for further exploration of how language proficiency specifically relates to workplace adaptability.

By examining the relationship between language proficiency, cultural competence, and workplace adaptability within the scope of English Studies, exploration will not only contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of cross-cultural communication but will also provide practical insights for individuals seeking to enhance their adaptability in diverse work environments. The findings will have implications not only for language teachers and learners but also for employers and organizational leaders who strive to create inclusive and productive workplaces.



### 2.3.2 Shortcomings of Existing Workplace Adaptability Research

The primary focus of this doctoral thesis is to investigate the concept of workplace adaptability in the specific context of China. By examining the factors influencing workplace adaptability and its impact on employee performance and organizational outcomes, this study seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge base on this topic. Through a comprehensive analysis of data collected from various organizations in different industries across China, the aim is to provide insights into the unique challenges and opportunities related to workplace adaptability in the Chinese context. The research findings will not only enhance theoretical understanding but also offer practical implications for organizations operating in China, enabling them to effectively manage and promote workplace adaptability to achieve optimal performance and success. In terms of the conceptual construction of career resilience, almost all researchers have tended to situate career adaptability from a lifelong career perspective in the context of coping with, for example, career transition scenarios or abnormal career situations such as dealing with occupational trauma, and less in the context of normal, more stable career situations.

Savickas et al. (665-668) have redefined the theoretical construct of career adaptability, shifting its focus from solving professional development tasks to coping with unpredictable and unstable situations. This transformation has turned traditional concepts such as career planning, career exploration, career decision making, and career confidence into abstract notions of psychological resources. These resources, namely concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, lack the stability found in real-life situations. Although there are no major problems with this kind of career resilience construct that emphasizes the positive power of the self, it overemphasizes the individualistic cultural value tradition and is not in line with the characteristics of Chinese culture.

In the context of globalization, the enhancement of English fluency becomes a critical factor. As economic and educational globalization strengthens connections between different language groups, English, as a global lingua franca, becomes indispensable in cross-cultural communication. Scholars have increasingly focused on cross-cultural proficiency in English contexts across diverse cultural backgrounds. This aptitude necessitates the ability to communicate effectively and comprehend different cultures.

There is a lack of empirical evidence for the construction of workplace adaptability and cross-cultural competence in China in the context of economic and educational globalization, and it has therefore become necessary to reconstruct the conceptual structure of career adaptability. For example, it is possible to consider connecting the concept of vocational adaptability with factors such as teamwork and interpersonal relationships in Chinese culture. Such reconstruction may involve redefining the constituent elements of vocational adaptability to reflect more characteristics related to Chinese culture.

At the same time, empirical research is needed to validate the construction of work adaptability and cross-cultural competence in the Chinese context. Through empirical research, it can be determined which factors have a significant impact on individuals' adaptation and cross-cultural communication abilities in the work environment under the Chinese background, thus providing guidance for practical applications.

In the past, the measurement of career adaptability has been based on traditional aspects, i.e. a combination of career development tasks, such as career planning and career exploration. Although Savickas et al. developed the Career Adaptabilities Scale-International Form (Hou 686-691), it is not satisfactory due to the shortcomings of the theoretical constructs. This is displayed in Figure 7 describing career adaptabilities:

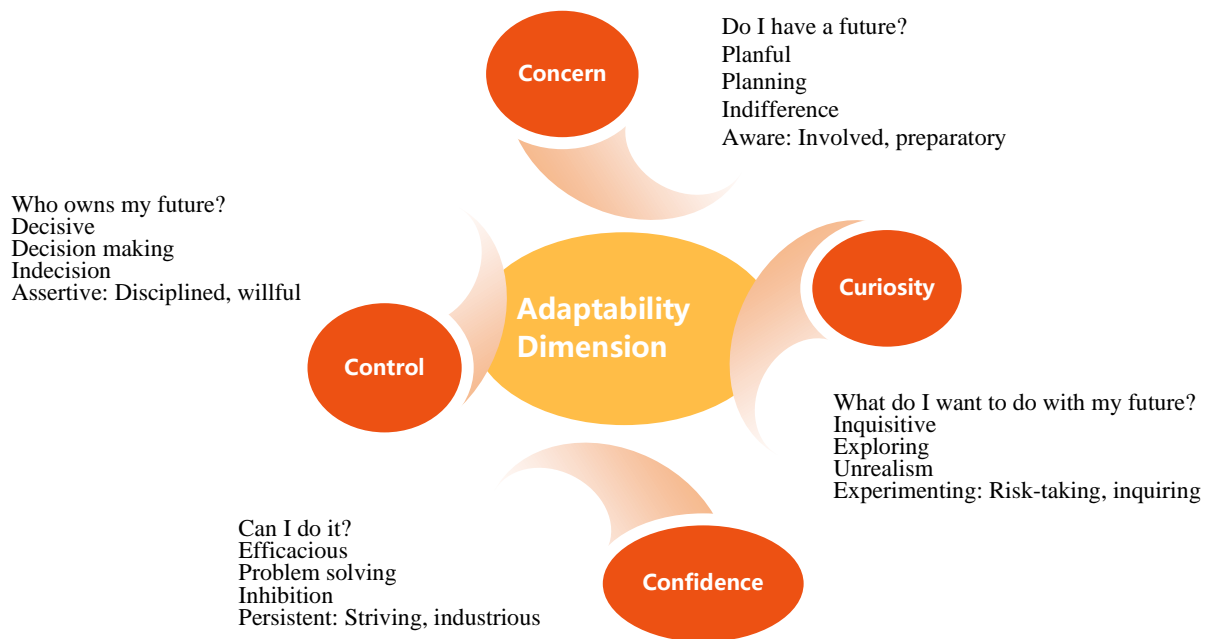


Figure 7. Career Adaptabilities Scale-International Form (Savickas 2005: 670)

The dimensions of career adaptability are based on the issues that individuals address in their career planning, as can be seen in Figure 7. The completion of the corresponding tasks enhances psychological resources such as concern, control, curiosity, and self-confidence, thus developing the individual's career resilience. However, the scale is based on a general psycho-energetic and self-conceptualization view and many of the item variables lack contextual relevance. For example, the items reflecting concerns are: Thinking about my future, Recognizing that my present choices are my future, and Preparing for the future. The items displaying control are: Staying optimistic, Making my own decisions, and Fighting for what I believe in. The items which analyze curiosity are: Look for opportunities to grow as a person, Do what I believe in, and Do what I think is right. The items explaining confidence are: Looking for opportunities to grow as a person, Overcoming obstacles, and Solving problems.

The scale used to assess career adaptability might not be fully applicable to Chinese practitioners due to the cultural differences in self-concept. Chinese individuals may have a

different emphasis on self-concept compared to individuals from other cultures. Therefore, some of the variables in the scale may not align with Chinese practitioners' understanding of career adaptability. Self-concept refers to an individual's perception and understanding of themselves (Epstein 404). It includes beliefs, attitudes, and opinions about one's own abilities, characteristics, values, and identity. Self-concept plays a role in understanding and interpreting the items reflecting career adaptability (concerns, control, curiosity, and confidence) in the Chinese cultural context. When the international version of the Career Adaptability Scale was administered to Chinese people (Hou, Li & Xu 686-691), not only did it ignore the authors' emphasis on the possibility of adding culturally specific items to the scale, but it also copied the scale concept and its items without any revision, and only selected a group of university students range in age from 18 to 22 with no work experience.

In summary, empirical studies that construct models of cross-cultural competence and workplace environments from different perspectives have enriched the theory and practice of cross-cultural competence. However, several problems can be found in the existing studies (Hou et al. 686; Savickas 670):

- 1- A unified definition and a complete structure are lacking.
- 2- In the pursuit of operationalization, most research starts with quantifiable personal characteristics and overlooks non-personal factors that are not easily measured (how and by which instruments?).
- 3- The reasons behind individuals' maintenance of high or low levels of cross-cultural competence after cross-cultural training are not explained.
- 4- The analytical framework does not include the outcomes of cross-cultural competence performance.
- 5- Most studies adopt a psychological perspective, focusing on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of individuals or analyzing one of these characteristics. However, individual characteristics alone are insufficient

to explain cross-cultural competence; they are only part of the conditions for cross-cultural competence and do not encompass other variables.

- 6- The existing scales for measuring cross-cultural competence are all sub-scales for specific competences and do not constitute a systematic methodology.

In conclusion, while empirical studies examining cross-cultural competence have made significant contributions to the field, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and gaps that exist. The identified problems, including the lack of a unified definition and a complete structure, the neglect of non-personal factors, the absence of explanations for the persistence of cross-cultural competence after training, the exclusion of performance outcomes, and the overemphasis on individual characteristics, highlight areas for further investigation and improvement.

Moving forward, this thesis addresses these limitations and provides a more comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural competence. Specifically, a conceptual framework will be proposed that integrates both personal and non-personal factors, considering diverse dimensions such as cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and contextual influences. Additionally, a new measurement scale will be introduced that encompasses a systematic evaluation of cross-cultural competence. By addressing these gaps, this study provides practical implications to enhance individuals' abilities in succeeding at multicultural work environments.

### **Chapter 3. Research Methodology**

The research methodology of this paper presents a comprehensive account of the research methods and design employed in this study. The primary aim of this chapter is to investigate the correlation between workplace adaptability and cross-cultural competence among Chinese university students, international students studying in China, and overseas employees. To accomplish this objective, an examination of their English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence will be conducted.

As globalization continues to advance at a rapid pace, China has emerged as a key economic and educational hub, attracting a growing number of individuals who wish to study or work within its borders. Consequently, enhancing and comprehending the cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability of those working and studying in China has become an imperative task.

Regarding the research subjects, the primary focus lies on Chinese university students, international students studying in China, and overseas employees working in China. These groups represent individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences who are required to apply both English language and cross-cultural skills in their daily lives and professional settings. By exploring their English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence, and establishing correlations with workplace adaptability, valuable insights into their adaptability in the workplace can be obtained.

To achieve the research objectives, quantitative methods were used. Questionnaires were created to collect data and appropriate scales measured English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. The sample consisted of respondents from various universities and industries. Through statistical and correlation analysis, the data will be thoroughly examined, and multiple regression analysis will be employed to investigate the impact of English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence on

workplace adaptability. To ensure the study's reliability and validity, tests will be conducted to ensure the accuracy and dependability of the chosen scales. Additionally, internal consistency analysis and test-retest methods will be employed to ensure the stability and consistency of the research findings.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study utilizes both empirical and mixed research types. Empirical research aims to validate or refute hypotheses or theories through data collection and analysis, providing evidence-based conclusions.

Qualitative Data has been gathered through a questionnaire which included questions about personal background information (such as age, gender, and educational background), assessment of English language proficiency, assessment of cross-cultural competence, and self-assessment of workplace adaptability. To collect public data, such as student graduation transcripts and English exam scores, I contacted different departments at the organizations. These data helped gain a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' English language proficiency.

In-depth Interviews were sources to garner qualitative data. to participate in face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews focused on topics such as cross-cultural communication, language barriers, workplace culture, etc., and record their viewpoints and experiences. Observational Research on those who participated in workplace activities and cross-cultural communication scenarios allowed me to record the behaviors and reactions of the participants in these environments, collecting relevant qualitative data.

### 3.1.1 Analysis of Data

Quantitative data were entered into statistical software for analysis, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, to explore the relationship between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. Qualitative data will undergo content analysis and be combined with quantitative data for comprehensive interpretation and explanation.

The potential limitations to be acknowledged are in the use of methods such as questionnaires and interviews for data collection. These include subjective factors of the respondents, biases in memory recall, and sampling biases. To address these limitations, we will employ a range of robust data collection and analysis methods. We will also ensure diversity and comprehensiveness in our sample selection to enhance the reliability and credibility of this exploration. The objective of the variables manipulation and measurement section is to identify and describe the key variables employed in the study, as well as to provide operational definitions and measurement methods for quantifying these variables. Given the focus of this thesis, special attention needs to be given to three variables: cross-cultural competence, English language proficiency, and workplace adaptability.

### 3.1.2 Analysis of Cross-cultural Competence

The experiment and survey were outlined according to a scheme which encompassed an operational definition and a measurement method. The *operational definition* involved Cross-cultural competence refers to an individual's capacity to comprehend, adapt to, and communicate with others in diverse cultural settings. The *measurement method* included a validated scale that can be utilized to assess cross-cultural competence, such as Bennett's



Developmental Model of Cross-cultural Sensitivity, which encompasses an individual's response patterns in different cross-cultural situations.

To assess the English language proficiency, the process followed the same outline. An *operational definition*, where English language proficiency denotes an individual's level of competence in expressing oneself orally and in writing using the English language. Then a *measurement method*, using standardized English language tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Main Suite Examinations at Level 5, as well as self-assessment, to evaluate participants' English language proficiency. Self-assessment will allow participants to reflect on their own language skills and provide an additional perspective on their proficiency level.

To evaluate workplace adaptability, the *operational definition* considered workplace adaptability pertains to an individual's ability to adjust to changes, undertake new tasks, and collaborate with diverse work teams within the workplace. The *measurement method* took hold of the Workplace Adaptability Questionnaire by Hofstede and Spielberger. This questionnaire comprises various dimensions of an individual's adaptability in the workplace, including flexibility, learning ability, and teamwork.

In the research design, this study employed the aforementioned operational definitions and measurement methods to assess the cross-cultural competence, English language proficiency, and workplace adaptability of Chinese university students, international students studying in China, and international employees working in China. Through the collection of relevant data and subsequent statistical analysis, a more comprehensive exploration of the relationships between these variables and their impact on workplace adaptability was achieved.

### 3.1.3 Data Analysis Methods

The research design incorporates data analysis methods to investigate the connection between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability among Chinese university students, international students studying in China, and overseas employees. Effective data analysis approaches will be employed to achieve this objective.

To begin, suitable tools or tests evaluated the English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence of the participants. This involved using standardized English language tests (such as TOEFL or IELTS) and specific measurement tools for assessing cross-cultural competence (like Bennett's Developmental Model of Cross-cultural Sensitivity).

After completing the data collection, statistical software (such as SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) were used to process and analyze the data. The following steps outline the specific data analysis methods and the associated objectives:

- Descriptive statistical analysis: To calculate statistical measures such as the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution of participants' English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence to gain an understanding of the overall characteristics of the sample.
- Correlation analysis: To determine the degree of correlation between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability using correlation coefficients (such as Pearson's correlation coefficient). Examine linear relationships between any two variables, such as the correlation between English language proficiency and workplace adaptability, cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability, etc.
- Multiple regression analysis: To employ multiple regression analysis to examine the predictive role of English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence on

workplace adaptability. During the model-building process, introduce other potential influencing factors (such as educational background, work experience, etc.) to control these confounding variables.

The mediation analysis involved that, if there is evidence of a mediating mechanism through which English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence affect workplace adaptability, mediation analysis methods (such as Baron and Kenny's method or Preacher and Hayes' framework) should be applied to analyze this mediating relationship. Given the different research subjects of Chinese university students, international students studying in China, and overseas employees, there was a subgroup to explore differences among various subgroups through subgroup analysis. For instance, compare groups with different educational backgrounds or work experiences in terms of English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, etc.

### **3.2 Subject of Study**

The sample selection for this study primarily focused on Chinese university students, supplemented by the inclusion of international students and overseas employees working in China. The study aims to investigate the correlation between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability among Chinese university students, encompassing institutions such as Heilongjiang International University, Northeast Forestry University, and Heilongjiang University. To achieve this goal, the selection of a representative sample is crucial. The following strategies were used:

- **Random Sampling:** Participants were randomly chosen from universities across diverse regions, ensuring inclusivity and enhancing the generalizability of results.

- Stratified Sampling by Grade Level: To maintain balance across different academic levels, stratified sampling was conducted, offering insights into the developmental trajectory of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability.
- Diversity in Majors and Disciplines: The sample included students from various majors, allowing an examination of differences in cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability across fields of study.
- Native Language Background: Both English and non-English native-speaking university students were considered, enabling a comparative analysis of the impact of different language backgrounds on English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence.
- Gender Balance: Efforts were made to ensure a balanced male-female ratio in the sample, mitigating potential gender bias in research findings.

By employing these selection strategies, this study aimed to obtain a comprehensive and representative sample of Chinese university students, thereby enhancing the reliability and applicability of the study's outcomes. The inclusion of international students and overseas employees added depth to the study, providing a broader cultural and professional context and contributing to a more holistic understanding of the relationship between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability.

### 3.2.1 Data Collection Tool

Data collection is a pivotal aspect of this study, which involved the use of multiple tools. These were:

- Questionnaire Survey: A structured questionnaire was administered to gather information on participants' personal background, English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability.

- In-Depth Interviews: Representative students underwent in-depth interviews, providing valuable insights into their practical experiences and perspectives on workplace adaptability.

- Observation Method: Participant or non-participant observation was employed to analyze the behaviors and interactions of Chinese university students and international students in workplace settings, shedding light on their cross-cultural competence and adaptability.

- Literature Analysis: Relevant literature, including academic papers and research reports, was analyzed to contextualize English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability among Chinese university students.

This doctoral thesis centers on Chinese university students, examining their English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. The study employs the following analytical approaches to develop the processing of data and its analysis:

- English Language Proficiency Analysis: Statistical methods will assess Chinese university students' English language proficiency, including scores, oral expression, and writing abilities, offering insights into current trends and developmental aspects.

- Cross-cultural Competence Assessment: Through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the study will evaluate students' abilities in cultural adaptation, communication skills, and cultural sensitivity.

- Relationship Analysis: Statistical methods, such as correlation and regression analysis, will be utilized to explore the interplay between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. The study aims to uncover issues related to students' proficiency and competence, providing practical recommendations for improving workplace adaptability.

In conclusion, this thesis delves into the dynamic relationship among English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability among Chinese university students. Through comprehensive analysis, the study aspires to offer practical recommendations, enhancing the competitiveness and adaptability of this student demographic in the professional arena.

### 3.2.2 International Students Studying in China

The sample source selected aims to respond to the global appeal of China as a major educational destination. Five universities (Heilongjiang International University, Northeast Forestry University, Heilongjiang University, Kunming College of Arts and Sciences, Huaiyin Institute of Technology), encompassing diverse academic disciplines and hosting students from various countries, were meticulously chosen as the study's sample source. The selected sample source aims to address the increasing global recognition of China as a significant educational destination. The choice of five universities, namely Heilongjiang International University, Northeast Forestry University, Heilongjiang University, Kunming College of Arts and Sciences, and Huaiyin Institute of Technology, was made with careful consideration of their diverse academic disciplines and their role as hosts to students from various countries.

Each of these universities brings distinct characteristics and strengths to the study. Heilongjiang International University, for instance, is known for its international orientation, attracting a diverse student body from around the world. Northeast Forestry University stands out for its emphasis on forestry-related disciplines, contributing to the diversity of academic fields within the sample. Heilongjiang University, being a comprehensive university, provides a broad spectrum of academic disciplines, reflecting the overall diversity of higher education in China.

Kunming College of Arts and Sciences adds an artistic and cultural dimension to the sample, offering programs in arts and sciences. Lastly, Huaiyin Institute of Technology contributes a focus on technological and engineering disciplines, enriching the overall representation of academic diversity within the selected universities.

By including these universities in the study, this exploration aims to capture a holistic view of the educational landscape in China, considering not only the varied academic disciplines but also the multicultural environment created by hosting students from different parts of the world. This diversity in university selection ensures a comprehensive exploration of China's appeal as a global educational hub.

The characteristics of the sample ensured a balanced representation across key factors such as nationality, gender, age, study duration, and academic background among international students. By considering these factors during sample selection, the study aims to enhance the universality and applicability of its findings.

To assess English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability among international students, a multifaceted data collection approach was adopted. Internationally recognized scales informed the design of questionnaires, ensuring standardized evaluation. The questionnaire survey, interviews, and on-site observations served as complementary methods, providing a comprehensive understanding of the targeted variables.

Rigorous organization, analysis, and interpretation of collected data followed a meticulous protocol. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, facilitated by statistical software, were instrumental in exploring the intricate relationships among variables. Additionally, a comparative analysis, considering diverse characteristics among international students, sought to unveil individual variations and influential factors shaping their experiences.

### 3.3 Variable Manipulation and Measurement

I have chosen different tools for measurement to gauge the English language proficiency of participants in the surveys, which included Chinese university students, international students studying in China, and overseas employees. Two widely recognized scales were selected after careful consideration. Firstly, Cambridge English Main Suite Exams (MSE), which comprises prominent language proficiency exams, including the First Certificate in English (FCE), Certificate in Advanced English (CAE), and Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE). Secondly, International English Language Testing System (IELTS), that is, an internationally acknowledged proficiency measurement tool, IELTS evaluates participants across listening, reading, writing, and speaking domains.

Additionally, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), renowned in higher education circles, was also incorporated. TOEFL assesses participants across listening, reading, writing, and speaking sections, providing a comprehensive evaluation of language proficiency more focused on American standards of English language.

In the pursuit of ensuring the chosen scales possess reliability and validity, a systematic approach was undertaken to involve internal consistency and external validity. Internal Consistency made use of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the coherence among items within each scale was evaluated by analyzing participants' questionnaire data. A higher Cronbach's alpha signifies robust consistency among scale items. External Validity refers to the correlative analysis conducted to scrutinize the relationship between the chosen English language proficiency scales and other validated measurement tools. Scores from IELTS and TOEFL were correlated with participants' self-assessment scores in the Cambridge English: Preliminary (PET) examination. A heightened correlation would substantiate the external validity of the selected scales.



Through the steps of scale selection and rigorous testing, assurance is garnered that the chosen English language proficiency scales exhibit commendable reliability and validity. This forms a robust foundation for subsequent research endeavors delving into the intricacies of participants' English language proficiency levels.

To assess the English language proficiency of participants, the study intentionally incorporated a diverse cohort, including Chinese university students, international students currently enrolled in educational institutions within China, and overseas employees working in various fields and receiving some sort of instruction in English language. This broader participant pool provided a comprehensive understanding of English language proficiency across diverse demographic backgrounds within the Chinese context.

Careful consideration was given when selecting established and validated measurement tools. After thorough evaluation, two widely recognized scales were chosen to demonstrate reliability and validity in assessing English language proficiency across different demographic groups. These are The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) and the Intercultural Adjustment Scale (IAS). This approach ensures that the assessment of language proficiency is robust and applicable, considering the varied linguistic backgrounds represented by the study participants. This will be assessed in the following section.

### 3.3.1 Cross-cultural Competence

This investigation centers on cross-cultural competence and employs chosen scales to assess this construct accurately. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) and the Intercultural Adjustment Scale (IAS) serve as representative instruments, measuring individuals' sensitivity, respect for cultural differences, and cross-cultural communication skills (ISS) and coping abilities towards cultural differences (IAS). The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) is a psychological tool designed to assess an individual's ability to be effective and appropriate

in cross-cultural interactions. It was developed by Dr Milton Bennett, a developmental psychologist specializing in cross-cultural communication. The Intercultural Adjustment Scale (IAS) is a scale designed to measure the changes and adaptations individuals undergo when adjusting to a new cultural environment. IAS assesses an individual's level of adaptation to various cultural factors, including but not limited to social customs, language, values, and cultural expectations. To determine the dependability and validity of the selected scales, a battery of tests was executed. Primarily, internal consistency for each scale was computed using metrics such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with results falling within an acceptable range, signifying commendable reliability.

Additionally, content validity assessment involved cross-cultural experts and seasoned educators to scrutinize scale content comprehensively, ensuring coverage across diverse facets of cross-cultural competence. Experts and educators concurred that both scales adequately encapsulate the fundamental dimensions of cross-cultural competence. Structural validity was further affirmed through methods like factor analysis, confirming alignment with the theoretical framework for both scales.

Moreover, the validity of the scales was scrutinized by analyzing correlations with pertinent variables like English language proficiency and workplace adaptability. Outcomes unveiled a substantial positive relationship between cross-cultural competence and both English language proficiency and workplace adaptability.

Criterion validity was substantiated by comparing predictive outcomes of the cross-cultural competence scales with established benchmarks, such as interview performance and colleague evaluations. Findings demonstrated a noteworthy positive correlation between predictive results of the scales and these benchmarks. In conclusion, the tests undertaken in this study affirm that the selected cross-cultural competence scales exhibit robust reliability and validity. Their applicability extends to diverse samples, including Chinese university students, international students studying in China, and overseas employees

in Chinese workplaces. This confirms their utility for a nuanced analysis of the intricate relationship between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability.

### 3.3.2 Workplace Adaptability

I employed the Workplace Adaptability Scale (WAS), inspired by Pulakos (2000), which encompasses various sub-dimensions such as adaptive thinking, adjustment ability, interpersonal relationships, and emotional coping. These sub-dimensions comprehensively evaluate an individual's adaptability in the workplace. So, to ensure the applicability of the scale in China, necessary modifications and adaptations were made based on cultural differences. For example, some question wordings were adjusted to better reflect the workplace backgrounds and needs of Chinese university students and international students studying in China. Additional questions related to workplace adaptability were selected to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the scale content.

There were two main methods used to confirm the reliability and validity during the process: Internal Consistency reliability and those regarding construct validity. The internal consistency of the scale was evaluated by calculating the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient of each item in the scale. The value of the  $\alpha$  coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, where a value closer to 1 indicates higher correlations among the scale items and higher reliability. The construct validity of the scale was assessed by comparing it with other relevant and validated measurement tools. For example, it can be compared with existing cross-cultural adaptability scales to determine the correlation and differences between them.

### 3.3.3 Overseas Employees working in China

This study forged collaborative partnerships with government agencies, enterprises, institutions, universities, and foreign-funded enterprises in China. These entities (Shenzhen Aoji Technology Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Bangguo Technology Co., Ltd., E Su Tong Group, and Shanghai Yousutong Co., Ltd.) were chosen for their inherent emphasis on cross-cultural communication and adaptability in recruiting overseas employees. Adhering to principles of voluntary participation, employees from these organizations were included in the research sample upon providing informed consent.

Data collection tools for overseas employees included a comprehensive questionnaire survey, personal interviews, and observation records (see Appendix 2, page 212). The questionnaire, conducted anonymously, covered diverse aspects related to English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. In-depth individual interviews were conducted to delve into nuanced experiences, focusing on cross-cultural encounters and language use. Observation records documented workplace behaviors, communication skills, and teamwork, providing a holistic assessment of workplace adaptability and cross-cultural competence. By employing these varied data collection methods, a nuanced understanding of the experiences of overseas employees in China was obtained, contributing valuable insights to the overarching research objectives.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Methods

Descriptive statistics is a method used to summarize and interpret the characteristics of data by organizing, calculating, and presenting the data, providing basic statistical information about the sample. In the pursuit of understanding the intricate dynamics surrounding English

language proficiency and cross-cultural competence among Chinese university students, international students, and employees in China, this doctoral thesis embarks on a comprehensive series of steps for descriptive statistical analysis.

The initial phase involved meticulous data collection, wherein relevant information pertaining to language proficiency and cross-cultural competence was gathered. Key indicators encompassing speaking ability, listening skill, reading proficiency, cross-cultural sensitivity, and adaptability were systematically acquired.

Following this, a judicious process of data cleaning ensued. This stage was critical for ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the dataset. It included the removal of invalid or duplicate entries, as well as the implementation of essential data transformations to address any anomalies. Mitigating the impact of missing values was also part of this cleansing process.

Subsequently, the cleaned data underwent descriptive statistical analysis. This analytical phase encompassed the computation of central tendency measures such as mean and median, along with variability measures including standard deviation and range. Additionally, distribution charts and frequency tables were crafted to visually encapsulate the nuances of the data distribution.

A meticulous interpretation of the statistical findings follows. This involves delving into the nuanced relationships between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. By discerning variations across diverse sample groups, the analysis aims to unravel the intricate interplay of these competences. Moreover, the exploration will extend to considering potential influencing factors such as educational background and work experience to provide a comprehensive contextualization of the statistical insights that study the ways these competences interconnect with workplace adaptability, laying the groundwork for subsequent research methodologies and scholarly discussions.

### 3.4.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis serves as a valuable statistical tool utilized to gauge both the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. Within the context of this study, the variables of particular interest encompass English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. The ensuing steps outline the systematic approach to conducting correlation analysis.

The variable selection involves identifying and delineating specific variables associated with English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. Noteworthy indicators may include facets such as speaking ability, listening acuity, reading proficiency, cross-cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural adaptation, and metrics indicative of workplace adaptability.

Following variable identification, the next phase involved the collection of relevant data pertaining to the delineated variables (English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability). This data acquisition process was executed through surveys and questionnaires which targeted Chinese university students, international students, and employees in China. Then the verification and completion of missing values (personal data, contact emails) and ensuring uniformity in the measurement scales of the variables followed.

Once the data had been prepared, the subsequent analytical step addressed computing Pearson's correlation to quantify linear relationships between the continuous variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient, often denoted as 'r', is a statistical measure that quantifies the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables. These refer to English language proficiency (composed of variables such as speaking ability, listening acuity, and reading proficiency), cross-cultural competence (composed of variables such as cross-cultural sensitivity) and cross-cultural adaptation. I later analyzed the

ramifications for the relationship between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability in the Chinese context to comprehend the significance of these competences within the Chinese milieu and provide insights that can guide future research endeavors in this academic domain.

### **3.5 Technical Route**

A qualitative research methodology was the most adequate to evaluate intertwining questionnaire research, in-depth interviews, and observation records. The nuanced steps constituting the technical route are expounded below.

There was a previous account of prior scholarly work in the former chapter that provided a comprehensive literature review to delineate cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability within the Chinese context. The next step formulated the research questions:

- How do individuals in the Chinese context perceive and experience cross-cultural competence in professional settings?
- What are the factors influencing workplace adaptability among individuals in China, considering cultural nuances?
- How do questionnaire responses, in-depth interviews, and observation records contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability in the Chinese context?

The next phase attested the interviews and methodical documentation of findings derived from both the questionnaire research and interviews, adhering to a systematic organizational framework that led to the analysis of the data.

Standardized English language proficiency tests served as a robust tool to assess the language abilities of the participants. Categorizing participants into different proficiency levels based on test scores facilitated an exploration of the nuances in workplace adaptability

across varying levels of English language proficiency. A structured questionnaire survey was instrumental in evaluating the cross-cultural competence of the participants, and this document can be seen in Appendix 1. Adapted and modified from existing assessment tools, the questionnaire kept rigor in terms of reliability and validity, providing a nuanced understanding of the participants' cross-cultural competence. Finally, the measurement of workplace adaptability amalgamated subjective reports and objective indicators. Incorporating self-assessments from participants alongside evaluations from supervisors or colleagues, this approach aimed to cultivate a comprehensive and objective perspective on workplace adaptability.



## **Chapter 4. Cross-cultural Competence, Workplace Adaptability, and English Language Proficiency**

In this chapter, an exploration of the pivotal role played by cross-cultural competence in English language contexts is undertaken. I start examining in section 4.1 the ways in which cultural dimensions exert influence on the use of the English language, elucidating the intricate sociolinguistic aspects of cross-cultural communication. the sociolinguistic facets of cross-cultural communication in English, encompassing language variation, dialects, and registers, are comprehensively scrutinized in this section with the objective to furnish a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship between culture and the utilization of the English language in China. Accordingly, Subsection 4.1.1 explores the sociolinguistic aspects of cross-cultural communication in English, elucidating how social factors such as age, gender, and social status influence language choices and communication styles in diverse cultural contexts. This nuanced examination seeks to enhance comprehension of effective communication across cultures. Subsection 4.1.2 highlights the role of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication in English. This focuses on challenges and strategies inherent in navigating cultural differences in speech acts, indirectness, politeness, and nonverbal communication. The objective is to provide profound insights into the pragmatic aspects of cross-cultural communication in English.

Section 4.2 addresses the challenges confronted by English language learners in cross-cultural communication, offering strategic insights to surmount these hurdles. The discussion spans barriers arising from cultural disparities, varying language proficiency levels, and unfamiliar communicative norms. Practical strategies for effective cross-cultural communication in English are delineated. In Subsection 4.2.1, specific challenges

encountered by English language learners in cross-cultural communication are identified and analyzed. These difficulties encompass language barriers, miscommunication due to cultural differences, and problems with understanding idiomatic expressions and cultural references. The aim is to discern these burdens and formulate targeted strategies supporting English language learners in cross-cultural communication. Subsection 4.2.2 unveils a spectrum of strategies designed to enhance effective cross-cultural communication in English. These approaches comprise the development of cultural awareness and sensitivity, improvement of language proficiency, acquisition of knowledge regarding diverse communication styles, and adaptation of communication strategies based on cultural contexts. The goal is to equip individuals with the requisite skills for successful cross-cultural communication in English in China.

Section 4.3 shifts the focus to the significance of cross-cultural competence in English language workplaces and examines how English language proficiency correlates with career advancement in multicultural environments. The benefits of cross-cultural competence in professional settings are expounded upon, alongside a discussion on the contribution of language skills to career success.

Subsection 4.3.1 accentuates the significance of cross-cultural competence in English language workplaces. It elucidates how individuals possessing said competence can adeptly navigate diverse work environments, foster robust professional relationships, and contribute meaningfully to collaborative endeavors. The intention is to underscore the pivotal role of cross-cultural competence in attaining success in multicultural workplaces. Subsection 4.3.2 inspects the impact of English language proficiency on career advancement in multicultural workplaces. It explores the ways individuals endowed with strong English language skills garner greater opportunities for professional growth, expanded job prospects, and heightened communication effectiveness. The objective is to emphasize the crucial role of English language adaptation in achieving career success in multicultural settings in China.

Section 4.4 focuses on the indispensable role of English language proficiency the challenges of contemporary global workplaces. It sheds light on the multifaceted aspects of English as a lingua franca and the competencies crucial for workplace adaptability in English language settings. Drawing parallels with the exploration of sociolinguistic aspects in Subsection 4.1.1, the discussion on English as a lingua franca underscores the transformative impact of linguistic diversity in global workplaces. It aligns with the examination of how social factors influence language choices, highlighting the universal role of English in fostering seamless communication and collaboration.

Section 4.4.2 complements the earlier insights into cross-cultural communication challenges by delving into competencies essential for workplace adaptability. The emphasis on linguistic fluency and English language proficiency resonates with Subsection 4.2.2, where strategies for effective cross-cultural communication are delineated. Both sections converge to underscore the significance of language skills for successful interaction within diverse workplaces.

The final section, 4.4.3, echoes the discussions in Section 4.3, which explores the impact of English language proficiency on career advancement. It specifically addresses how language schools and corporate training programs contribute to enhancing employees' English language skills, aligning with the overarching theme of the chapter on cross-cultural competence.

By seamlessly weaving together these insights, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural competence and English language adaptation in multicultural workplaces, with a particular focus on the Chinese context. The examination of challenges, competencies, and training initiatives offers valuable knowledge for effective cross-cultural communication, making it an essential resource for navigating the complexities of multicultural environments in China.

It is believed that there will be knowledge and strategies addressed that prove essential

for effective cross-cultural communication and adept adaptation in multicultural environments from the case study of China, this PhD seems to inform about the intricacies of Chinese students, companies and foreigners and offer questions and answers that engage in a cross-cultural discussion.

#### **4.1 The Influence of Cultural Dimensions in English Language Use**

The dissemination of English language has been shaped by a myriad of factors, rendering its global influence unparalleled in the history of world languages. Since the era of colonization, English has attained a stature unattained by other natural languages such as French, Spanish, or Arabic. In stark contrast, constructed languages like Novial, Interlingua, Volapük, Ido, or Esperanto appear unimaginably distant from achieving such widespread recognition. The ascendancy of English can be ascribed to the dominion exerted by the British over vast regions in Africa and Asia (Leite 54).

Despite the questionable waning political influence of the British Empire since the 1950s worldwide, and the transformation of the global political landscape, the legacy of the empire remains resilient, showing no signs of fading (Manjapra 2018). English language, in its diverse forms and functions, is spoken by over 500 million people across all four continents. It has achieved an almost universal status, nearing what could be deemed a linguistic miracle (Helms 1083).

In response to an increasing push from non-native English speakers, bilingual usage of English is witnessing widespread proliferation. The diffusion of the English language is profoundly influenced by cultural dimensions and, accordingly, language choices, styles, and norms in diverse cultural backgrounds are shaped by inherent cultural differences (Gumperz 66).

In her study, Holmes (212-220) examines the use and communication of English as a

global language within various cultural contexts. Her research unveils the diversity and cultural disparities inherent in the utilization of the English language. This perspective closely aligns with the thematic discussion, wherein further exploration is undertaken regarding the myriad cultural dimensions impacting the use of the English language in cross-cultural communication. The examination places emphasis on understanding how cultural differences influence language choices, styles, and norms. Additionally, sociolinguistic aspects of English cross-cultural communication, encompassing language variations, dialects, and registers, are scrutinized.

#### 4.1.1 Sociolinguistic Aspects of Cross-cultural Communication in English

Cross-cultural communication stands as a pivotal facet of globalization, where individuals hailing from diverse cultures and backgrounds engage in contact and interaction. English, recognized as a global language (David 62), assumes the role of a common denominator in facilitating cross-cultural communication. Nevertheless, effective communication across cultures extends beyond language itself, necessitating an understanding and respect for sociolinguistic differences. This subsection delves into the sociolinguistic dimensions of cross-cultural communication in English.

Jandt (165) asserts that "language choices in cross-cultural communication are often shaped by social factors such as age, gender, and social status" (168). Notably, younger individuals may gravitate towards informal language, while their older counterparts may exhibit a preference for a more formal tone. Gender, too, exerts influence on language choice, with discernible differences in language styles between males and females. Furthermore, social status becomes a determining factor, as higher-status individuals tend to employ more formal language compared to their lower-status counterparts.

Jandt (152) contends that "communication styles are influenced by cultural norms and

values, and individuals need to be aware of these differences to effectively communicate across cultures" (158). Direct communication styles find prevalence in individualistic cultures, whereas collectivist cultures lean towards more indirect styles. Additionally, monochronic cultures favor a linear and sequential communication style, while polychronic cultures embrace a more flexible and open approach.

The sociolinguistic dimensions expounded earlier wield a substantial impact on the efficacy of cross-cultural communication. Language choices and communication styles deemed suitable in one cultural context may prove inappropriate or ineffective in another. Thus, a nuanced understanding of the sociolinguistic norms within the target culture becomes imperative to ensure effective communication. Studies have elucidated that misunderstandings and miscommunications often arise when individuals neglect to acknowledge these sociolinguistic disparities (Smith et al. 159).

Sociolinguistic aspects emerge as pivotal players in cross-cultural communication in English. A grasp of how social factors, such as age, gender, and social status, shape language choices and communication styles are essential for fostering effective communication across cultures. Heightened awareness of these sociolinguistic nuances serves as a proactive measure to circumvent misunderstandings and elevate the overall communication process.

#### 4.1.2 Role of Pragmatics in Cross-cultural Communication in English

Pragmatics, as a subfield of Linguistics, directs its focus toward elucidating how context influences meaning in communication. Within the realm of cross-cultural interactions, the comprehension and application of pragmatic knowledge emerge as imperative elements for achieving successful communication.

Numerous challenges characterize cross-cultural communication, necessitating a profound understanding of pragmatics (Bonvillain et al. 42). A notable challenge lies in the

diverse cultural norms and expectations surrounding speech acts. Across cultures, speech acts exhibit significant variations, and actions considered appropriate or polite in one cultural context may be perceived as rude or offensive in another. Thus, an awareness of these cultural disparities and the ability to adapt speech acts accordingly become indispensable for fostering understanding and cultivating positive relationships in cross-cultural communication.

Pragmatics assumes a prominent role in cross-cultural communication concerning the dynamics of indirectness. Different cultures exhibit varying degrees of directness in their communication styles. While some cultures favor a more direct approach, others place value on indirectness and the use of implicit cues. Misinterpreting these indirect cues can precipitate misunderstandings and miscommunication. Proficiency in understanding the subtleties of indirect communication and the capacity to interpret and respond adeptly to implicit messages constitute essential skills in navigating cross-cultural interactions. In the context of China, the significance of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication is particularly pronounced. Chinese culture is characterized by a high-context communication style, where individuals often rely on implicit cues, nonverbal signals, and contextual factors to convey meaning. Understanding the nuances of Chinese pragmatics becomes crucial for effective communication.

One specific challenge in cross-cultural interactions with Chinese individuals involves the use of politeness strategies and the concept of 'mianzi'. In Chinese culture, maintaining harmony and preserving 'mianzi' are paramount. Politeness is often expressed through indirect speech and subtle gestures. Therefore, a deep appreciation of Chinese pragmatics is essential for navigating social interactions, as misinterpretations may lead to unintended offense or disruption of harmonious relationships.

Furthermore, the role of indirectness in Chinese communication, where explicitness may be considered impolite, adds another layer of complexity. Proficiency in recognizing and

responding to indirect cues becomes vital for successful communication in a Chinese cultural context.

This research studies the ways Chinese university students and employees navigate these pragmatic aspects in cross-cultural communication. Accordingly, it explores how cultural norms and expectations surrounding speech acts influence communication dynamics, and how individuals adapt their pragmatic knowledge to foster positive relationships in the specific cultural context of China.

Norms of politeness, inherently diverse across cultures, require an understanding of these variations for successful cross-cultural communication. Behaviors deemed polite and respectful in one culture may not hold the same connotations in another. Pragmatic knowledge equips individuals to navigate these differences, allowing them to adapt their communication style to align with the expectations of other cultures while preserving the integrity of their own cultural values. Recognition and respect for cultural norms of politeness empower individuals to sidestep unintended offense and sustain harmonious communication within cross-cultural settings. As talked previously, in Chinese culture, 'Mian zi' is a crucial notion linked to an individual's dignity, social standing, and relationships with others. To preserve the 'Mian zi' of others, individuals often choose to employ subtle and indirect expressions, avoiding direct articulation of viewpoints that might be perceived as offensive or impolite. Consequently, for individuals in China, refraining from causing loss of face to others is considered a manifestation of respect and politeness. In the realm of cross-cultural communication, understanding and respecting these nuances, along with the avoidance of direct expressions that may lead to discomfort, emerge as pivotal factors in fostering successful communication. Nonverbal communication stands as another domain where pragmatics exerts a significant influence on cross-cultural communication (Noels et al. 55).

Nonverbal cues, encompassing facial expressions, gestures, and body language, convey meanings and emotions that may not find explicit expression in words. However, the



interpretation of these nonverbal cues can diverge across cultures. Heightened awareness of these differences and a nuanced understanding of the cultural context become pivotal in avoiding misinterpretations and enhancing overall communication effectiveness.

In summary, Pragmatics assumes a central role in cross-cultural communication in English, offering insights into how context shapes meaning. It aids individuals in navigating cultural divergences in speech acts, indirectness, politeness, and nonverbal communication. By comprehending and applying pragmatic knowledge, individuals can effectively bridge cultural divides, fostering harmonious and successful cross-cultural interactions. In the case of China, the significance of pragmatics in cross-cultural communication is particularly pronounced. Pragmatics plays a central role in providing insights into how the cultural context shapes meaning, aiding individuals in navigating diverse speech acts, managing indirectness, understanding politeness norms, and interpreting nonverbal communication cues.

By comprehending and applying pragmatic knowledge within the Chinese cultural context, individuals can effectively bridge cultural divides, thereby fostering harmonious and successful cross-cultural interactions. The nuanced understanding of linguistic and cultural intricacies in communication proves essential for individuals engaging in cross-cultural exchanges, ensuring a more profound and respectful engagement with the unique aspects of Chinese communication dynamics.

#### **4.2 Challenges and Strategies for Cross-cultural Communication in English**

In the realm of globalized cultural, economic and educational interactions, the significance of cross-cultural communication in English has surged (Harzing 243-266). The ability of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to effectively communicate and comprehend one another has become indispensable. Nonetheless, the intricacies of cross-cultural

communication are compounded by disparities in cultural practices, varying levels of language proficiency, and unfamiliar communicative norms.

A crucial challenge in cross-cultural communication emanates from the divergence in cultural practices and expectations. Distinct cultures exhibit unique methods of expressing ideas, greetings, and nonverbal cues, engendering potential misunderstandings and misinterpretations, thereby complicating effective communication (Farndale et al. 132-148).

Another difficulty resides in the varying language proficiency levels of English language learners. Non-native speakers often grapple with issues related to vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency, impeding their capacity to accurately convey intended messages. This language barrier, in turn, can obstruct effective cross-cultural communication, fostering a sense of frustration or confusion among all involved parties. For instance, consider a multinational team collaborating on a project, where team members with varying levels of English proficiency may struggle to articulate their ideas clearly, leading to potential misinterpretations and project inefficiencies.

Moreover, the unfamiliarity with communicative norms introduces additional hurdles. Each culture adheres to its distinct social conventions and communication rules, wherein disparities in humor, directness, indirectness, and body language abound. Proficiency in comprehending and adapting to these norms is paramount to circumvent misunderstandings and cultivate successful communication.

The present thesis delves into practical strategies conducive to effective cross-cultural communication in English. Such strategies encompass the cultivation of cultural awareness and sensitivity, the augmentation of language proficiency through targeted practice, and the proactive acquisition and adaptation to diverse communicative norms. In conclusion, cross-cultural communication in English confronts distinctive challenges due to disparities in cultural practices, language proficiency levels, and unfamiliar communicative norms. In the Chinese context, addressing these challenges requires the implementation of various

strategies. Success depends on comprehending and adapting to differences, necessitating tactics like fostering cultural awareness, improving language proficiency through targeted practice, and proactively acquiring and adapting to diverse communicative norms. Consequently, achieving effective English cross-cultural communication in the Chinese context demands meticulous consideration and the application of targeted approaches.

#### 4.2.1 Cross-cultural Communication Challenges Faced by English Language Learners

In the contemporary globalized landscape, the heightened importance of cross-cultural communication is evident. English language learners face distinctive challenges within this realm. This subsection undertakes an exploration of the specific difficulties faced by English language learners in cross-cultural communication, with the aim of identifying these obstacles and formulating effective strategies to bolster and refine their cross-cultural communication skills.

A primary challenge confronting English language learners in cross-cultural communication revolves around language barriers. Negotiating the intricacies of expressing oneself proficiently in a non-native language, marked by struggles involving vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, poses a formidable hindrance. This complexity may result in misunderstandings, inaccuracies, and a deficiency in fluency, ultimately hindering learners' capacity to accurately convey their thoughts and ideas. This is proved by Igor, who states that "language barriers present a significant obstacle for English language learners in cross-cultural communication, as they struggle to express themselves accurately and confidently in a non-native language" (234).

In tandem with language barriers, English language learners grapple with miscommunication issues arising from cultural differences. The diversity in communication styles, norms, and values across cultures can lead to misunderstandings and confusion.

Learners may lack familiarity with the cultural nuances and subtle cues influencing communication in specific cultural contexts. Pacheco et al. underscore this challenge, emphasizing that "miscommunication often arises from cultural differences, as English language learners may not possess the necessary cultural knowledge to navigate cross-cultural interactions successfully" (1).

Further complicating cross-cultural communication for English language learners are idiomatic expressions and cultural references. These linguistic elements, deeply embedded in culture, lack direct translations or equivalents in other languages. Consequently, learners may struggle with grasping the intended meaning behind idioms or cultural references, leading to confusion and potential misinterpretation. As highlighted by Yağiz et al. "the difficulties in understanding idiomatic expressions and cultural references hinder English language learners' ability to fully comprehend and participate in cross-cultural conversations, as they may miss out on important contextual cues" (92). This is relevant for the Chinese context because Chinese learners of English may encounter similar challenges in comprehending idiomatic expressions and cultural references. The intricacies of these linguistic elements, deeply rooted in the cultural context of English language, may pose obstacles for Chinese learners due to the lack of direct translations or equivalents in their native language. Consequently, navigating these challenges is crucial for enhancing the ability of Chinese learners to fully engage in cross-cultural conversations and avoid potential misunderstandings, as emphasized by Yağiz et al.

Then, English language learners encounter a spectrum of challenges in cross-cultural communication, encompassing language barriers, miscommunication due to cultural differences, and difficulties in understanding idiomatic expressions and cultural references. The resolution of these difficulties mandates the development of targeted strategies. Equipping English language learners with the requisite linguistic and cultural knowledge becomes imperative to empower them to navigate cross-cultural interactions effectively.

#### 4.2.2 Strategies for Effective Cross-cultural Communication in English

In the contemporary era marked by escalating globalization, the recognition of adept cross-cultural communication in English spans various domains, including academia, business, and international relations. Proficient engagement in such communication is considered essential for fostering understanding, collaboration, and cooperation amidst diverse cultural contexts (Merkin et al. 1-23). To achieve this objective, individuals must cultivate strategies and skills that nurture cultural awareness, enhance language proficiency, and facilitate adaptive communication styles tailored to specific cultural nuances. This doctoral thesis aims to explore and present these strategies, providing individuals with the requisite tools for augmenting cross-cultural communication competence in English language.

From an economic perspective, the processes of globalization have fostered closer economic interdependence among states, necessitating effective communication and collaboration between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds within the spheres of business and organizational environments. Also, there has been an implementation of neoliberal strategies which favor some states above others (the USA, the UK, or China) (Gopal 34). Proficiency in cross-cultural communication in English equips businesses and organizations to comprehend and navigate diverse cultural landscapes, promoting international cooperation, broadening market reach, and ultimately enhancing economic performance.

Within the realm of education, the phenomenon of globalization has underscored the importance of cross-cultural communication. As international education advances, students and educational practitioners find themselves increasingly required to communicate and collaborate with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds. Proficiency in cross-cultural communication in English empowers them to comprehend and respect cultural differences

effectively, facilitating international educational collaborations, elevating educational quality, and providing students with broader opportunities for personal and academic growth.

The exploration of strategies for enhancing cross-cultural communication in English, as undertaken in this paper, assumes great significance in the context of economic and educational globalization. These approaches enable individuals to effectively navigate the trends of globalized economies and international education, enhance their competitiveness, and establish a solid foundation for personal and professional development.

A fundamental strategy for effective cross-cultural communication involves the development of cultural awareness and sensitivity. Understanding cultural nuances, values, beliefs, and norms enables individuals to navigate different cultural contexts with respect and empathy. As noted by Katan "cultural understanding is a key component of successful cross-cultural communication" (35). This can be achieved through exposure to diverse cultures, engaging in cross-cultural experiences, and actively seeking knowledge about different cultural practices.

Language proficiency plays a significant role in cross-cultural communication and individuals need to possess a solid command of the English language to effectively convey their thoughts, ideas, and emotions across cultural boundaries. In addition to acquiring grammatical accuracy and vocabulary, it is crucial to develop fluency, pronunciation, and intonation to ensure clear and effective communication. As emphasized by Seregina, et al., "language proficiency is the foundation of successful cross-cultural communication" (243).

Different cultures exhibit distinct communication styles and preferences. Acquiring knowledge of these styles can facilitate smoother cross-cultural communication in English. For instance, some cultures may value direct and explicit communication, while others may prefer indirect and implicit communication. As stated by Chen "adapting communication styles based on cultural preferences is crucial for effective cross-cultural communication" (44). Making sense of these differences allows individuals to tailor their communication

approaches accordingly.

Effective cross-cultural communication necessitates individuals to adapt their communication strategies based on the cultural context in which they are interacting. This involves being mindful of cultural norms, etiquette, and nonverbal cues. For instance, in some cultures, maintaining eye contact during communication is seen as a sign of respect, while in others, it may be considered rude or confrontational. By adjusting their communication strategies, individuals can build rapport and establish trust across cultural boundaries.

Thus, the enhancement of effective cross-cultural communication in English entails a range of approaches that promote cultural awareness, improve language proficiency, facilitate knowledge of different communication styles, and foster adaptability to cultural contexts. Through the acquisition of these skills, individuals can adeptly navigate cultural differences, bridge communication gaps, and establish meaningful connections in a globalized world. It is imperative for both academic institutions and individuals to recognize the significance of cross-cultural communication and invest in developing the necessary strategies and skills.

### **4.3 Cultivating English Language Adaptation and Success in Multicultural Workplaces**

In today's economically globalized world, the ability to effectively communicate in English has become increasingly essential, especially in multicultural workplaces (Park 110). The significance of cross-cultural competence in these environments cannot be overstated, as it promotes cultural sensitivity, empathy, and adaptability among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, language proficiency in English plays a crucial role in career advancement, enabling professionals to communicate ideas, negotiate, and build relationships across borders (Clement 10).

Cross-cultural competence brings numerous benefits to professional settings (Matveev 978-3). It equips individuals with the skills to navigate cross-cultural interactions, resolve conflicts, and foster inclusive work environments. By understanding diverse perspectives, professionals can enhance their problem-solving abilities and decision-making skills, contributing to effective teamwork, innovation, and creativity.

Overall, cultivating cross-cultural competence and mastering the English language are essential for success in multicultural workplaces. By engaging in language learning and cross-cultural experiences, individuals can enhance their career prospects and thrive in diverse professional environments. Promoting cross-cultural competence and language proficiency fosters a more inclusive and successful global workforce.

#### 4.3.1 Importance of Cross-cultural Competence in English Language Workplaces

In the contemporary English language workplace, cross-cultural competence assumes a pivotal role, serving as a cornerstone for individuals to navigate diverse professional environments, foster robust relationships, and actively contribute to collaborative endeavors. The escalating forces of different processes of globalization and heightened multicultural interactions underscore the imperative of possessing the ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This subsection accentuates the paramount significance of cross-cultural competence in achieving success within multicultural workplaces.

Cross-cultural competence, defined as the proficiency to comprehend and adapt to diverse cultural norms, values, and behaviors (Leung et al. 489), involves an individual's awareness of their own cultural biases and a receptivity to learning from others. Those possessing such competence adeptly bridge cultural gaps, communicate effectively across cultural boundaries, and cultivate mutual understanding and respect.



An instrumental advantage of cross-cultural competence in the English language workplace lies in its capacity to navigate diverse work environments. In the contemporary globalized landscape, workplaces increasingly embody multicultural dynamics, with professionals from varied cultural backgrounds collaborating. Individuals with cross-cultural competence deal with potential misunderstandings or conflicts arising from cultural differences with understanding and appreciation, thereby adapting to new environments and collaborating effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds (Ting-Toomey et al. 370).

Moreover, cross-cultural competence plays a pivotal role in cultivating strong professional relationships (Matveev 978). Effective communication forms the bedrock of successful professional relationships, and individuals equipped with cross-cultural competence are adept at understanding and interpreting non-verbal cues, adapting communication styles to suit the cultural context, and expressing themselves appropriately. This proficiency enables the establishment of trusting and meaningful connections with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, cross-cultural competence contributes significantly to collaborative efforts in the English language workplace. Successful collaboration with individuals from differing cultural origins necessitates a heightened level of cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity. Individuals with cross-cultural competence exhibit a propensity to embrace diversity, appreciate varied perspectives, and actively contribute to team discussions (Bennett 1-34). Their ability to tap into the collective knowledge and experiences of colleagues augments creativity and innovation in collaborative problem-solving endeavors.

In the context of China, where cultural diversity is rich and varied, cross-cultural competence becomes an essential asset for professionals. Those with this proficiency in China can effectively bridge cultural gaps, fostering collaboration and understanding among colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, their adeptness at navigating

potential conflicts arising from cultural differences enhances the overall effectiveness of collaborative efforts in the dynamic Chinese workplace.

#### 4.3.2 Impact of English Language Proficiency on Career Advancement

Proficiency in English language is recognized as key in career advancement, facilitating interaction with colleagues, clients, and customers from diverse cultural backgrounds. This section examines the impact of English language proficiency on career advancement in multicultural workplaces, delving into how individuals with robust English language skills gain greater opportunities for professional growth, increased job prospects, and enhanced communication effectiveness. The objective is to underscore the significance of adapting to English language to achieve career success in diverse work environments.

Proficiency in English language unfolds a spectrum of career advancement opportunities for individuals navigating multicultural workplaces. Employers actively seek candidates with strong English language skills, enabling effective communication with stakeholders across countries and cultures. According to Yamao's research (168-179), employees showcasing higher levels of English language proficiency are more likely to be considered for promotions and leadership roles within organizations. Their ability to collaborate seamlessly with international teams, negotiate with global partners, and represent their companies in international forums positions them favorably for career progression. Hence, individuals excelling in English language adaptation are poised to ascend the corporate hierarchy and achieve career success. In the case of Chinese multinationals such as Huawei, proficiency in the English language is paramount for career advancement. Employees with strong English language skills at Huawei, for instance, can seamlessly engage with a global clientele, negotiate international partnerships, and represent the company in diverse cultural settings. As observed in Yamao's research (168-179), individuals excelling in English language

adaptation within Chinese multinationals are not only favored for promotions but also stand out in leadership considerations. This highlights the indispensable role of English proficiency in fostering career success, enabling professionals to thrive in the globalized landscape of Chinese multinational corporations.

Beyond advancement within their current organizations, individuals with strong English language skills enjoy augmented job prospects in the global job market. Multinational companies and organizations operating globally actively seek employees proficient in English. Candidates demonstrating proficiency in English gain a competitive edge in the job market. A study by Park (443) found that job applicants with strong English language skills were more likely to receive job offers and secure employment in multinational corporations. Employers value candidates capable of contributing to organizational success by effectively engaging with international clients and expanding global market presence.

Effective communication stands as a crucial skill in any workplace, especially in multicultural environments. English language proficiency empowers individuals to articulate their ideas, thoughts, and concerns clearly and confidently. Employees adept in effective English communication build robust professional relationships with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds. A study by Negretti et al. (21) revealed that individuals with strong English language skills exhibited better interpersonal relationships with colleagues and were adept at resolving conflicts. Their ability to understand and adapt to cultural norms and communication styles fostered improved collaboration and teamwork.

English language proficiency thence influences career advancement in multicultural workplaces. Individuals possessing strong English language skills find themselves presented with greater opportunities for professional growth, increased job prospects, and enhanced communication effectiveness. Employers highly value candidates fluent in English, recognizing their ability to interact effectively with stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is imperative for individuals working in multicultural settings to prioritize the

development of their English language skills, enhancing both their career prospects and their contributions to organizational success in the global marketplace.

#### **4.4 Workplace Adaptability and English Language Proficiency**

In the context of Workplace Adaptability and English Language Proficiency, this segment delves into the intricate dynamics of the contemporary globalized work environment, where English serves as a linchpin for navigating professional landscapes. Examining the competencies essential for workplace adaptability in English language settings, the section underscores the transformative impact of linguistic fluency and proficiency in fostering effective communication, comprehension, and career progression.

The discussion begins by unraveling the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca in global workplaces, illuminating its role as a universal language fostering seamless communication and collaboration. A global workplace is associated to the professional environments or virtual offices through and where multinational companies such as Huawei, Microsoft or Apple operate. The section explores how technological integration has revolutionized English language communication, providing a consistent platform for cross-border connectivity, collaboration, and information sharing.

Transitioning into competencies for workplace adaptability, the section emphasizes the significance of linguistic fluency and English language proficiency as foundational elements. Proficiency in these areas is portrayed as essential for effective communication, comprehension of information, and overall career advancement. Cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication in English are also highlighted as critical components for fostering harmonious interactions within diverse workplaces, particularly when engaging with colleagues from distinct cultural backgrounds.

The thesis shifts its focus to the instrumental role played by language schools and

institutions in enhancing employees' English language proficiency. Through a detailed exploration of language schools and corporate training programs, the section sheds light on comprehensive training initiatives targeting language skills encompassing grammar, vocabulary, speaking, and writing. The emphasis is placed on the tangible benefits derived from these programs, which go beyond linguistic enhancement to include bolstering employees' confidence and efficiency in English language communication, ultimately contributing to seamless workplace adaptation.

In summary, English proficiency is explored alongside cultural sensitivity, because it is integral to workplace adaptability in the momentum of globalized multinational companies. It offers a nuanced understanding of the competencies required to navigate the complexities of contemporary workplaces, making it a valuable resource for professionals, particularly within the unique linguistic and cultural context of China.

#### 4.4.1 Shaping the Changing Work Environment Through the Use of English

An influential aspect that has significantly impacted the work environment is the prevalence of English as a lingua franca in global workplaces. As businesses expand their operations across borders and engage in collaborations with international partners, effective communication emerges as an indispensable requirement. The adoption of English as a common language facilitates seamless communication among professionals hailing from diverse linguistic backgrounds. It not only enables cross-cultural understanding but also fosters teamwork by bridging potential language barriers.

The integration of technology has catalyzed a revolution in the way people work and communicate using English. Technological advancements have facilitated connectivity and collaboration across geographical distances, transforming the work environment into a virtual space, and using English as vehicle. The incorporation of various innovations, such

as video conferencing, instant messaging, and collaborative platforms, has facilitated English language communication. These tools contribute not only to heightened efficiency but also offer flexibility in the conduct of work. Examples of these technologies are video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, which enable real-time virtual meetings among professionals from different corners of the world. Another notable example is instant messaging applications such as Slack or WeChat, which provide a quick and efficient means of communication, fostering collaboration regardless of geographical distances. These technological tools have become integral in promoting English language communication, breaking down barriers, and enhancing the overall efficiency and adaptability of the contemporary globalized work environment.

In the context of Chinese multinational enterprises, companies like Huawei and Alibaba utilize these technologies extensively for cross-border communication and collaboration. Huawei, for instance, relies on video conferencing tools to connect its teams across diverse locations, ensuring effective communication in real-time. Similarly, Alibaba utilizes instant messaging platforms to facilitate quick exchanges and coordination among its international teams, exemplifying how these technologies bridge language gaps and contribute to seamless global collaboration within Chinese multinational enterprises.

The convergence of economic and educational globalization, coupled with the use of English as a lingua franca in the integration of technology, brings both opportunities and challenges to the work environment. Some of the opportunities and challenges arising from the convergence of economic and educational globalization, along with the use of English as a lingua franca in the integration of technology, include opportunities in respect to *Global Market Access* because businesses can tap into a broader and more diverse global market, facilitating international trade and collaborations. It also gathers *Enhanced Communication* because the use of English as a lingua franca fosters effective communication among professionals from different linguistic backgrounds, promoting cross-cultural understanding.

*Technological Integration* is also developed because it offers and facilitates opportunities for increased efficiency, collaboration, and flexibility in the multinational workplace scenario.

There are also challenges in respect to cultural and linguistic barriers and technology-related issues. As for the former, despite using English as a common language, cultural and linguistic differences can still pose challenges in effective communication and collaboration. Regarding the latter, dependency on technology introduces challenges such as cybersecurity threats, digital divides, and potential disruptions to workflow. Educational disparities also rise because globalization may exacerbate educational inequalities, with some individuals having better access to resources and opportunities than others.

transformative changes become key to allow organizations and individuals to capitalize on the benefits of effective communication, improved collaboration, and heightened productivity. However, it is imperative to address potential implications such as cultural sensitivity, cybersecurity risks and work-life balance, arising from language and technology barriers, along with the emergence of a digital divide.

Thriving in today's globalized and digitalized world necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of language and technology in the work environment. This section provides valuable insights into how the utilization of English as a lingua franca and the integration of technology shape the evolving work environment. It fosters individuals and organizations to adapt strategically, raising excellence in the face of continual transformation.

#### 4.4.1.1 English as a Lingua Franca in Global Workplaces

As businesses extend their operations across borders and engage in collaborations with international partners, effective communication becomes an imperative. The utilization of English as a common language facilitates fluent communication among professionals hailing

from diverse linguistic backgrounds, thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding, promoting teamwork, and overcoming potential language barriers. The language of marketing, computers or mainstream use terms borrowed from English that reach worldwide definitions created in English.

English, functioning as a bridge language (or chosen as main language for economic globalization), nurtures these cross-cultural understanding within global workplaces. The adoption of English as a lingua franca garners employees from varied linguistic backgrounds to surmount cultural disparities and engage in effective collaboration. According to Baker, "the use of English as a lingua franca helps break down cultural barriers and enables individuals to explore different cultural perspectives, fostering a sense of mutual respect and appreciation" (567). Through communication in a common language, individuals gain insights into each other's perspectives, values, and cultural norms, while they still can keep their intrinsic linguistic peculiarities.

The utilization of English enhances teamwork dynamics within global workplaces. Effective communication in a shared language streamlines collaboration, rendering it more efficient and productive. Team members can freely exchange ideas, deliberate on solutions, and collectively make decisions, irrespective of their native languages. This catalyzes synergy among team members, optimizing their collective intelligence. As Jenkins affirms, "English as a lingua franca allows team members to focus on the content of their discussions rather than language barriers, leading to enhanced collaboration and problem-solving (200).

The diverse linguistic backgrounds of employees in multinational organizations can pose challenges to effective communication. Nevertheless, the adoption of English as a common language serves as a unifying force, enabling individuals to bridge language gaps and ensure seamless communication. This eliminates the need for translation services or reliance on a singular individual as a language intermediary and, as Baker observes, "English as a lingua franca provides a neutral ground for communication, allowing



individuals with different native languages to interact without feeling disadvantaged" (25).

The prevalence of English as a lingua franca in global workplaces yields a profound impact on the work environment. By facilitating effective communication, English fosters cross-cultural understanding, augments teamwork, and transcends language barriers. This contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and collaborative atmosphere, nurturing cultural diversity (although it may favor only specific specificities which collaborate economically with English language) and technological innovation. As businesses continue their global expansion, the significance of English as a lingua franca remains paramount. In the case of China, companies such as Huawei, Alibaba, and Tencent adopt English as the official working language. Huang indicates that these companies extensively utilize English for internal communication within global teams, aiming to enhance operational efficiency and drive innovation (12). For instance, Tencent employs English as the official working language within its international teams, facilitating teamwork and fostering cross-cultural understanding (Li 7). Additionally, Alibaba Group has implemented a policy of English communication in its global offices to enable employees to engage in communication and collaboration more seamlessly (Xiao 2). These examples underscore the practical application of English as a universal working language in Chinese corporations, further emphasizing the significance of English as a common language in the globalized work environment.

#### 4.4.1.2 Integration of technology and English language communication

The integration of technology favors transformative changes in the modes of work and communication in contemporary professional landscape. Technological advancements have reshaped the work environment into a virtual realm, fostering seamless connections and collaborations among individuals located in diverse geographical settings. This section

analyzes the impact of technology on English language communication, focusing on the innovative tools and platforms that have revolutionized the ways in which individuals interact and collaborate.

Technology assumes a pivotal role in augmenting English language communication by furnishing tools and platforms that facilitate effective interaction (Ahmadi 115-125). Video conferencing (using programs such as Zoom, Google Drive, TenCent Meeting, Ding Talk and WeChat Work) stands out as a prominent technological innovation, enabling face-to-face interactions irrespective of physical distances. According to John Doe, "video conferencing has revolutionized the way people communicate, bridging the gap between distances and enabling seamless collaboration in a globalized world". Through this medium, individuals engage in real-time conversations, discern non-verbal cues, and establish a more personalized connection with counterparts. Particularly advantageous in international collaborations and remote work scenarios, video conferencing has been acclaimed for its transformative impact on global communication.

Another technological advancement significantly influencing English language communication is instant messaging. Instant messaging platforms provide a swift and efficient means for real-time message exchange. Some of the platforms used are Wechat, QQ and WeChat work. The asynchronous nature of instant messaging allows individuals to communicate at their convenience, rendering it an ideal tool for time-sensitive discussions and coordination. Waizenegger et al. underscore the significance of instant messaging in modern communication, stating that "instant messaging has not only transformed the way we communicate but also enhanced our ability to coordinate and collaborate efficiently" (429).

Furthermore, these platforms often support features such as file sharing and group chats, fostering collaborative communication within teams. The adoption of collaborative platforms has brought about a paradigm shift in English language communication, providing a centralized space for collaborative project work. These platforms facilitate document sharing,

simultaneous editing, and version control, enabling multiple individuals to collaborate on the same document in real-time. This not only enhances productivity but also eliminates the necessity for physical meetings, allowing for flexible work arrangements. Camarinha-Matos et al. highlight the flexibility provided by these tools, stating that "collaborative platforms have enabled individuals to work from anywhere, breaking the barriers of time and location, and transforming the way we approach work" (5431).

The integration of technology has exerted a profound influence on English language communication, introducing innovative tools and platforms that enhance efficiency and flexibility. Video conferencing, instant messaging, and collaborative platforms have become integral components of professional communication, shaping the evolving landscape of English language interaction. As technology continues to advance, individuals are challenged to adapt and harness these tools effectively in navigating the dynamic terrain of English language communication. Despite the difficulties of using programs such as Zoom, Google Drive, and other international platforms in China due to certain restrictions, Chinese companies and apps have developed equivalent services to meet the demands of collaborative communication. For instance, Tencent Meeting is a widely used video conferencing platform in China, offering features similar to Zoom, such as virtual meetings, screen sharing, and interactive presentations. Additionally, Wechat Work serves as a comprehensive platform for real-time messaging, document sharing, and collaborative project work within teams, addressing the need for efficient communication in the Chinese business context.

Moreover, the Chinese app Ding Talk, developed by Alibaba Group, provides a platform for instant messaging, video conferencing, and project collaboration. Ding Talk has gained popularity as an integrated solution for workplace communication and collaboration, offering features that align with the functionalities of international platforms.

These examples showcase how Chinese companies have responded to the challenges by creating localized solutions that comply with the regulatory environment while meeting the

communication needs of businesses. Despite the unique technology landscape in China, the adaptability and innovation demonstrated by these platforms contribute to the continued evolution of English language communication in the globalized workplace. As technology continues to play a transformative role, individuals and organizations must navigate the complexities of varying platforms and adapt to ensure effective and collaborative communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

#### 4.4.2 Competences for Workplace Adaptability in English Language Settings

In today's interconnected global scenario, individuals aspiring to succeed in their careers recognize the paramount importance of adapting to diverse workplace environments. This necessity is particularly accentuated in English language settings, where proficiency in the English language and cultural sensitivity emerge as foundational elements for fostering effective communication and collaboration.

Two crucial competences stand out as instrumental for achieving workplace adaptability in English language settings: linguistic fluency and English language proficiency, and cultural sensitivity coupled with cross-cultural communication in English. The development of these competences is imperative for individuals seeking to not only navigate but also thrive in work environments where the English language serves as the primary medium of communication.

In English language settings, linguistic fluency represents a cornerstone competence. This entails not only a command of the English language but also the ability to express ideas, thoughts, and information with precision and clarity. English language proficiency extends beyond mere grammatical correctness, encompassing the nuances of vocabulary, syntax, and appropriate language use in professional contexts. Individuals possessing high levels of linguistic fluency can effectively articulate their perspectives, fostering seamless

communication in diverse workplace scenarios.

Cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication form the second pivotal competence for workplace adaptability. Beyond linguistic proficiency, understanding and navigating cultural nuances play a central role in successful professional interactions. Cultural sensitivity involves recognizing and respecting diverse cultural perspectives, norms, and behaviors. In the context of English language settings, cross-cultural communication in English becomes essential. This competence allows individuals to communicate effectively not only with native English speakers but also with colleagues from various cultural backgrounds who utilize English as a shared language. Mastering cross-cultural communication ensures that individuals can bridge cultural gaps, navigate potential misunderstandings, and cultivate a collaborative and inclusive work environment.

By prioritizing the development of these competences, individuals position themselves to excel in English-speaking workplaces. The fusion of linguistic fluency and English language proficiency with cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication facilitates individuals to adapt to diverse workplace dynamics and contribute meaningfully to collaborative endeavors. In an economical globalized professional landscape, the cultivation of these competences is integral to personal and professional success.

#### 4.4.2.1 Linguistic fluency and English Language Proficiency

Linguistic fluency is deemed a pivotal skill, allowing individuals to communicate effortlessly and accurately in each language (Suzuki et al. 143). This proficiency includes the capacity to speak, read, write, and comprehend a language with ease. In English language settings, linguistic fluency assumes particular significance as individuals need to demonstrate a robust command of grammar and vocabulary. This entails a comprehensive understanding of language rules and structures, coupled with a diverse repertoire of words

and phrases. However, linguistic fluency extends beyond mere grammatical knowledge and vocabulary, encompassing the adept use of idioms, expressions, and cultural references.

Proficiency in the English language empowers individuals to articulate their thoughts and ideas with clarity (Aizawa et al. 1362). It facilitates effective expression and the conveyance of intended meanings. Moreover, linguistic fluency streamlines the sharing of information in a succinct and coherent manner. Whether presenting research findings, delivering presentations, or participating in discussions, possessing linguistic fluency in English enhances an individual's communicative efficacy.

The development of linguistic fluency and English language proficiency necessitates ongoing learning and practice (Jarvis 39). Participating in language courses focused on improving grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills proves to be an effective method. Such courses offer learners the opportunity to receive guidance from experienced instructors and engage in structured language practice activities.

An alternate approach to enhance linguistic fluency involves participation in language exchange programs. These programs afford individuals the chance to interact with native English speakers, practicing language skills in authentic contexts. Engaging in conversations with native speakers facilitates improvements in pronunciation, fluency, and understanding of cultural nuances. In the specific context of China, based on my research findings, it can be additionally noted that Chinese learners of English may encounter specific challenges, such as differences in grammar, pronunciation difficulties, or cultural barriers. Consequently, customized language courses and exchange programs may require a more nuanced focus on these aspects to better cater to the needs of learners.

Immersing oneself in English-speaking environments stands as another effective strategy for developing linguistic fluency (Shih 407). This can be achieved through travel to English-speaking countries or spending time in multicultural communities where English is prevalent. Exposure to authentic English language materials such as newspapers, books,

movies, and podcasts aids in expanding vocabulary, refining comprehension skills, and familiarizing individuals with idiomatic expressions.

In conclusion, linguistic fluency emerges as a requisite for effective communication in an English language setting. It mandates not only a solid foundation in grammar and vocabulary but also the adept usage of idioms, expressions, and cultural references. Through sustained language learning and practice, individuals can cultivate their linguistic fluency and English language proficiency. Language courses, language exchange programs, and immersion in English-speaking environments serve as viable avenues for achieving this development. Ultimately, linguistic fluency empowers individuals to articulate thoughts clearly, share information effectively, and engage in meaningful discussions.

#### 4.4.2.2 Cultural sensitivity and Cross-cultural communication in English

Effective cross-cultural communication is acknowledged as essential for both individuals and organizations to thrive in diverse environments. English language, being globally influential and widely spoken (Crystal 1-5), assumes (and is assumed to play) a significant role in facilitating cross-cultural communication. However, to navigate cross-cultural contexts successfully in English, individuals need to cultivate cultural sensitivity and a nuanced understanding of cross-cultural communication dynamics.

Cultural sensitivity, as defined by Foronda (207-212), involves the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to understand and adapt to cultural differences. It requires recognizing that individuals from diverse cultures hold distinct values, beliefs, customs, and communication styles. When engaging in English communication, individuals must approach interactions with mindfulness towards these cultural differences. Accordingly, Resnicow defines cultural sensitivity as "the ability to recognize and appreciate the

differences between individual identities and group memberships, particularly when those differences are infused with power dynamics" (10). Embracing cultural sensitivity enables individuals to avoid misunderstandings, respect cultural norms, and establish trust and rapport across diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, it equips them to effectively navigate challenges in cross-cultural communication, including language barriers, non-verbal cues, and varied communication styles.

Cross-cultural communication skills, as outlined by Jhaiyanuntana et al. (204-235), encompass the abilities and strategies required to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultures, particularly in the context of the English language. Developing these skills is crucial for bridging cultural gaps and fostering meaningful connections. One example of this in the studied scenario is the corporate environment in China, where professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds collaborate within multinational companies. In this context, cultural sensitivity plays a pivotal role in ensuring harmonious communication and collaboration. For instance, understanding the hierarchical nature of Chinese workplaces and the importance of saving face in interactions is crucial for effective communication. Without cultural sensitivity, misinterpretations of gestures, communication styles, or workplace etiquette could lead to potential misunderstandings and hinder collaborative efforts. Moreover, in cross-cultural communication within the Chinese corporate setting, being culturally sensitive involves recognizing the significance of relationships, or Guanxi, in business interactions.

Building and maintaining positive relationships are essential, and individuals need to navigate these nuances to establish trust and rapport with their colleagues. An instance of cultural sensitivity in action could be observed in acknowledging traditional Chinese festivals or business customs, demonstrating respect for cultural values. Therefore, in the Chinese business landscape, integrating cultural sensitivity into cross-cultural communication skills is imperative for successful collaboration, effective problem-solving,



and building strong professional relationships.

Ni et al. (167-183) describe cross-cultural communication skills as involving openness, empathy, and adaptability to different cultural perspectives and practices. One fundamental skill in cross-cultural communication is active listening. This skill enables individuals to accurately understand and interpret verbal and non-verbal cues. Active listening in English communication involves paying careful attention to the speaker, seeking clarification when necessary, and empathizing with their perspective. Cultivating active listening skills helps overcome language barriers and uncover underlying cultural meanings in conversations.

Interpreting non-verbal communication cues is another critical skill in cross-cultural communication. Different cultures may utilize distinct body language, facial expressions, and gestures, each conveying specific meanings. Proficiency in interpreting these non-verbal cues enhances communication effectiveness and mitigates the risk of misinterpretations.

Adaptability and flexibility in communication styles are also integral cross-cultural communication abilities. Recognizing that diverse cultures have unique preferences regarding directness, formality, and hierarchy, individuals can adjust their communication styles accordingly. This adaptability fosters understanding and contributes to positive relationships in cross-cultural interactions. Developing cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication skills in English requires a proactive approach (Altan1-17). Here are some strategies that individuals can employ with its associated results:

1-Education and Cultural Awareness: To seek opportunities to learn about different cultures, their values, customs, and communication styles. Participate in cultural exchange programs, diversity workshops, or language courses to broaden one's cultural awareness (Byram 5-13).

2- Respect and Open-mindedness: To approach interactions with humility, respect, and an open mind. Avoid assumptions or stereotypes and be willing to challenge preconceived notions to foster genuine understanding (Spiege 27-38).

3-Active Engagement: To engage actively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Initiate conversations, ask questions, and listen attentively to gain insights into their perspectives and experiences (Cavanagh 23-33).

4-Sensitivity to Non-verbal Cues: to pay attention to non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. Be mindful of cultural differences in these cues and adjust interpretations accordingly (Christensen et al. 146-156).

5-Reflective Practice: to reflect regularly on personal communication experiences and identify areas for improvement. Seek feedback from cross-cultural peers or mentors to enhance one's cross-cultural communication skills (Falender et al. 45).

To sum up, cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communication skills are vital for effective communication in English across cultures. By developing cultural sensitivity and employing appropriate cross-cultural communication strategies, individuals can navigate cultural differences, build meaningful connections, and contribute to successful cross-cultural interactions.

#### **4.4.3 English Language Training and Development Programs for Workplace Adaptation**

English language training and development programs assume an indispensable role in preparing individuals for workplace adaptation in the contemporary globalized landscape. English language training and development programs used in China include Virtual Language Academy's Business English Immersion Program and Corporate Language Masters' Cross-Cultural Communication Workshop. The demand for effective communication in English has surged in the professional realm, prompting employers to seek individuals with robust English language skills to bolster their competitiveness on the global stage. In response, language schools, institutions, and corporate training programs

have emerged to meet the escalating need for enhancing workplace English proficiency.

Language schools and institutions contribute significantly to advancing English language proficiency among individuals. Through structured courses and training programs, these establishments target the development of diverse language skills, comprehending listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Backed by experienced instructors and well-crafted curricula, language schools and institutions create an environment conducive to learning, fostering improvements in individuals' English communication abilities.

Embracing a learner-centered approach, language schools and institutions tailor their programs to align with the unique needs and goals of individuals. They offer a spectrum of courses adapted to different industries and professions, enabling learners to acquire industry-specific vocabulary and language skills pertinent to their workplaces. Practical opportunities for language practice and interaction provided by these institutions instill confidence in individuals' English language abilities, facilitating more effective adaptation to workplace demands. In the case of China, this learner-centered approach to English language training is particularly crucial as the country plays a significant role in the global business arena. Language schools and institutions in China have recognized the importance of tailoring their programs to meet the specific requirements of professionals engaging in diverse industries (Wei 7).

For instance, China International Communications Group Education and Training Center, offers specialized courses designed for professionals in technology, finance, and international trade. These courses not only focus on general English language proficiency but also incorporate industry-specific vocabulary, terminology, and communication skills. Learners, ranging from IT specialists to finance professionals, benefit from a curriculum that directly addresses the linguistic demands of their respective fields.

By tailoring language programs to align with the unique needs of professionals in various industries, training centers in China contribute significantly to the effective

adaptation of individuals to the demands of the globalized workplace. This adaptability is not only reflected in improved language proficiency but also in the practical application of English within specific professional contexts.

Complementing the role of language schools and institutions, corporations are increasingly investing in tailored training programs to enhance the workplace English skills of their employees. These programs are strategically designed to elevate employees' capacity to communicate and collaborate in English within the context of their specific work environments. The overarching objective is to furnish employees with the language skills requisite for proficient job performance and effective interactions with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders.

Corporate training programs for workplace English skills prioritize the development of both general language proficiency and job-specific language skills. Incorporating elements such as language training workshops, one-on-one coaching sessions, and online resources, these programs are customarily configured to address the distinct needs of each company. Factors such as industry specifics, job roles, and the unique linguistic challenges faced by employees are considered in the program design. Some of these examples are corporate training programs for workplace

English skills prioritize the development of both general language proficiency and job-specific language skills. Incorporating elements such as language training workshops, one-on-one coaching sessions, and online resources, these programs are customarily configured to address the distinct needs of each company. Factors such as industry specifics, job roles, and the unique linguistic challenges faced by employees are considered in the program design. Some of these examples include programs provided by reputable language training institutions like New Oriental Language School and Global Business English Solutions. These organizations tailor their training initiatives to cater to diverse industries, offering specialized courses in areas such as finance, technology, and healthcare. Such

targeted programs aim to enhance employees' English language skills relevant to their specific professional contexts, ensuring a more effective and tailored approach to workplace language development. Companies such as Huawei and Tencent invest in corporate training courses to enhance workplace English skills and underscore their commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment. Beyond elevating individual language proficiency, these courses contribute to improve communication, collaboration, and overall productivity within the organization. Employees who engage in such programs are better positioned to navigate global business demands, cultivate relationships with international clients, and seize opportunities for career advancement.

In summary, English language training and development programs, whether offered by language schools, institutions, or corporate entities, play a pivotal role in augmenting workplace English proficiency. These programs equip individuals with the requisite language skills for effective professional communication, translating into improved career prospects and heightened competitiveness in the global job market.

#### 4.4.3.1 Role of Language Schools and Institutions in Enhancing English Language Proficiency

Language schools and institutions play a critical role in cultivating the proficiency in English language for individuals and teams. They offer diverse programs and resources to improve language skills. This section delves into the multifaceted contributions of language schools and institutions to enhance English language proficiency.

An integral advantage of language schools and institutions lies in the implementation of a structured and comprehensive curriculum. These organizations meticulously design their courses to include all facets of language learning, ranging from grammar and vocabulary to listening comprehension, speaking, and writing skills. According to Calderón et al., "the

systematic progression provided by language schools helps learners build a solid foundation and advance their language skills effectively" (103). This progression, categorized from beginner to advanced levels, allows learners to increment and build a robust foundation, facilitating an effective language skill advancement.

In addition to their curriculum, language schools and institutions provide an environment for/within English language learning. Equipped with audiovisual devices such as projectors and interactive whiteboards, classrooms facilitate multimedia learning. These organizations frequently employ experienced teachers specializing in teaching English as a second language. Leveraging their expertise, educators create engaging and interactive lessons tailored to diverse learning needs. This creates a dynamic and effective learning atmosphere.

Language schools and institutions also afford students opportunities for practical English usage through activities and immersion programs. IN China, companies which offer face to face experience of English learning include EF English First ([www.ef.com.cn](http://www.ef.com.cn)), Shanghai International Studies University (SISU, [www.sisu.edu.cn](http://www.sisu.edu.cn)) or Wall Street English (WSE, [www.wallstreetenglish.com](http://www.wallstreetenglish.com)). As highlighted by Avci et al., "participation in extracurricular activities, such as language clubs and conversation circles [facilitated in the three former companies], allows learners to interact with native speakers and fellow learners, thereby enhancing their language fluency and communicative skills" (55). Moreover, study abroad programs and online platforms organized by these institutions immerse students in true English-speaking environments, further elevating their language proficiency.

In conclusion, language schools and institutions play a vital role in augmenting English language proficiency. Through their structured curriculum, conducive learning environment, immersive activities, and technological resources, these organizations significantly contribute to the development of language skills. Given the escalating importance of language proficiency in today's globalized world, the impact of language schools and

institutions in supporting English language learners remains substantial.

Corporate training programs contribute to foster English skills for employees in the workplace. They adopt a structured approach to elevate language proficiency, communication skills, and overall workplace effectiveness. This section explores the benefits associated with corporate training programs for improving workplace English skills and delineates various strategies and methods that can be seamlessly integrated into such programs.

Foremost among the benefits of corporate training programs is the refinement of effective communication skills which, according to Okoro et al., is "crucial in today's globalized business environment" (62). Employees often grapple with challenges in articulating ideas clearly, especially when engaging with clients, stakeholders, or colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds. As Songsiri states, "through these interactive activities, employees can gain confidence in expressing their thoughts and ideas in English" (88). Corporate training programs serve as a platform for employees to prepare their communication skills through role plays, group discussions, and presentations.

Moreover, these approaches provide a gateway for employees to enhance their language proficiency. The focus on improving vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation through diverse language exercises and activities contributes to a stronger command of English. And, as Tange et al. remark, "by engaging in regular language practice, employees can develop a more robust language foundation, which ultimately leads to better workplace communication" (232). These programs often incorporate real-life business scenarios and industry-specific terminology, enabling employees to apply language skills in relevant contexts.

Additionally, corporate programs foster a collaborative learning environment which, according to Slotte et al., "encourages employees to support and learn from each other, promoting a positive learning culture within the organization" (172). Incorporating group

activities, pair work, and peer feedback sessions allows employees to practice English skills in a supportive setting.

Various strategies and methods can be incorporated to ensure the effectiveness of corporate training. For instance, integrating technology, such as online language learning platforms or virtual reality simulations, provides employees with additional opportunities for language practice. Kearsley & Ben have argued that these "technology-based learning tools can enhance employee engagement and provide personalized learning experiences" (23). Furthermore, as remarked by Tran et al. (1-22), incorporating authentic materials, such as business reports, emails, and presentations, helps employees develop the necessary language skills for real-life workplace situations. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology is key in this aspect, and many studies have researched about it (as well as the numerous bibliography which has been already written). Future research in English teaching in China could study the specificities, challenges, and future of the methodology.

Corporate training programs stand as indispensable tools to improve workplace English skills among employees. Through meticulously designed courses, individuals and teams undergo comprehensive development in communication skills, language proficiency, and overall workplace efficacy. The integration of diverse strategies and methods enables organizations to formulate all-encompassing training initiatives tailored to meet the specific needs of their workforce. Furthermore, these initiatives foster a culture of continuous learning and development within the organizational framework. This is the educational layout of companies and programs such as Corporate English Training Solutions (CETS) and English for Business Advancement (EBA), which exemplify the comprehensive approach organizations undertake to enhance workplace English skills among their employees.

Corporate English Training Solutions (CETS) is a renowned corporate training program that tailors its courses to the specific needs of businesses. Their methodology combines language proficiency development with industry-specific communication skills. For instance,



they integrate case studies, role-playing scenarios, and business simulations into their training modules. This ensures that employees not only acquire language fluency but also gain practical skills applicable to their job roles. The program further emphasizes real-world application, encouraging participants to implement their language skills in their daily work environments.

English for Business Advancement (EBA) is an innovative program designed to elevate English language skills for professional growth. It incorporates a blended learning approach, combining in-person classes with interactive online resources. EBA focuses on enhancing workplace communication by addressing challenges specific to different industries. For instance, it offers modules tailored for the IT sector, finance, and customer service, recognizing that each field has distinct language requirements. This targeted approach ensures that employees receive training that directly aligns with the linguistic demands of their roles.

By participating in programs like CETS and EBA, employees not only improve their language proficiency but also gain a deeper understanding of how to effectively apply these skills in their respective professional contexts. These initiatives showcase the commitment of organizations to create an educational landscape that nurtures continuous learning, thereby fostering a workforce equipped with the necessary language and communication tools for success.

The exploration conducted in this chapter has delved into the intricate relationship between workplace adaptability and English language proficiency together with the influence of technology in English language communication. Workplace adaptability, as explored in this paper, encompasses a spectrum of abilities, including language fluency, English language proficiency, cultural sensitivity, and adeptness in cross-cultural communication. This will be analyzed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5. Research Findings and Analysis

In the backdrop of globalization, the significance of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability has surged within the English-speaking milieu of Chinese workplaces. With an increasing number of individuals opting to work and reside in this environment, the necessity for possessing specific cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability addresses challenges stemming from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, the current body of research on cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability in China's English-speaking workplace remains limited. This study contributes with practical insights that can facilitate the success of individuals and organizations navigating cross-cultural work environments. I have collected testimonies, questionnaires and researched theoretical frameworks (both within and outside China) to explain some specific necessities at university teaching and learning of English proficiency in relation to the corporate world.

I have already reviewed the escalating global interconnectedness and the pivotal role of English language proficiency in facilitating effective communication and enhancing workplace adaptability. Quantitative data gathered through questionnaires (See Appendix 1, 2 and 3) have revealed intriguing patterns concerning the English language proficiency levels exhibited by overseas employees working in China, emphasizing the potential for improvement in language skills. These findings underscore the importance of ongoing language training programs, particularly in cross-cultural work environments.

The undeniable impact of globalization on the economy and education necessitates proactive measures. This doctoral thesis integrates knowledge, experience, and data from Chinese educational, professional, and demographic contexts to contribute to a transnational assessment of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability. My study focuses on aspects such as cultural awareness, sensitivity, and adaptability, utilizing Byram's model to measure cross-cultural competence, assessing cognitive and behavioral dimensions. Research

on workplace adaptability, defined as the ability to adjust to new work environments, tasks, and challenges, aids in a comprehensive understanding of individuals' and organizations' adaptability when facing cross-cultural challenges.

In summary, my hypothesis suggests that enhancing English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence plays a crucial role for individuals and companies seeking career progression in the context of educational, economic, and professional globalization. It is my/our role to elucidate the intricate relationship between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability in the some of the economic and cultural processes of globalization in China.

### **5.1 Data Collection Methods in English Language Research**

Within China, the ability to communicate effectively in English significantly influences an individual and a team's capacity to acclimate to the workplace and navigate cross-cultural interactions. exploration endeavors to scrutinize the impact of English language fluency on workplace adaptability and cross-cultural abilities within the Chinese professional context. As China fortifies its presence in the global market (Yeung et al. 76), professionals become increasingly tasked with engaging with international clients and colleagues. English fluency proves indispensable for effective interaction with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Through English proficiency, professionals can bridge linguistic and cultural divides, thereby fostering understanding and collaboration (Gerrish et al. 407). This study employs a mixed-methods approach to garner comprehensive data in the realms of English Language Research, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. Quantitative data was initially collected through surveys measuring participants' levels of English language fluency, workplace adaptability, and cross-cultural competence. These surveys assessed various facets of language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening

proficiency (see Appendix 1). Respondents, drawn from diverse industries and organizations in China such as Shenzhen Aoji Technology Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Bangguo Technology Co., Ltd., E Su Tong Group, and Shanghai Yousutong Co., Ltd. These findings furnish insights into their workplace experiences and their ability to adapt to varying cultural settings through the learning of English at university programmes. Statistical methods were employed to analyze the survey data, unveiling patterns and trends in participants' language fluency and workplace adaptability.

Qualitative data was acquired through in-depth interviews with select participants. Conducted in a semi-structured format, these interviews aimed to unravel participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the influence of English fluency on their workplace and cross-cultural interactions. Questions were meticulously designed to explore themes such as communication barriers, cultural differences, and the impact of language proficiency on career progression. Recorded and transcribed, the interviews underwent further analysis.

By harmonizing quantitative and qualitative methods, this study aspires to derive a holistic and nuanced understanding of the interplay between English language fluency, workplace adaptability, and cross-cultural competence. The synthesized data aims to offer valuable insights into the role of language skills in professional settings and the significance of cross-cultural competence in today's globalized world.

The adopted methods for data collection encompassed a Questionnaire Survey, comprising fifty distributed questionnaires to Chinese enterprises, with forty-three valid responses (see Appendix 4). The survey evaluated English language proficiency on a scale of 1-10, supplemented by qualitative feedback. Interviews were conducted with HR directors, HR assistants, and department heads of companies, totaling ten participants, offering in-depth insights through direct communication. Observation, involving the systematic observation of behaviors related to English language use in the workplace, was carried out with twenty-nine

student groups and twenty employee groups, providing a multi-dimensional understanding of English language proficiency in Chinese workplaces.

## 5.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation in English Language Contexts

The analysis in Table 1 below delineates the demographic characteristics of the study's participants. This tabular representation furnishes statistical insights into the participants' gender distribution, age ranges, and their respective English proficiency levels. The systematic examination of these demographic variables serves the purpose of illuminating the composition of the study's participants. Furthermore, it serves as a foundation for subsequent data analyzes, offering valuable insights that inform and guide the researcher's comprehensive understanding of the collected data. The discernment of patterns and trends within the demographic variables becomes key. The gender distribution within the participant pool, the age range diversity, and the spectrum of English proficiency levels collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of the research context, where potential correlations and disparities are identified.

Table 1- Participant Demographics (overseas employees working in China)

Demographic		Frequency
Gender	- Man	23
	- Woman	20
Age Range	Under 18 years old	0
	18-25 years old	0
	26-35 years old	27
	36-45 years old	11
	46-55 years old	3

	56 years old or above	1
Education Level	High School or below	0
	Bachelor's Degree	13
	Master's Degree	21
	PhD or above	9
Employment Status	Employed full-time	32
	Employed part-time	5
	Self-employed	4
	Unemployed	0
	Retired	2
English Level	- Basic	27
	- Intermediate	10
	- Advanced	5
	- Native	1

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants involved in this study. A total of 43 individuals participated, with a distribution of 23 (53.5%) male and 20 (46.5%) female participants. The majority of the participants, comprising 62.8% (n=27), belonged to the age group of 25-34 years, while 25.6% (n=11) were aged between 35-44 years. Additionally, 7% (n=3) fell into the 45-54 years age range, and 2.3% (n=1) were aged 55 years or above.

Examining the educational background of the participants, it was found that 30.2% (n=13) held a Bachelor's degree, while 48.8% (n=21) possessed a Master's degree. Furthermore, 20.9% (n=9) of the participants held a PhD or higher qualification.

Regarding employment status, a substantial proportion of the participants, accounting for 74.4% (n=32), were employed full-time. Meanwhile, 11.6% (n=5) were employed part-time, and 9.3% (n=4) were self-employed. Notably, there were no unemployed individuals or students included in the study. Additionally, 4.7% (n=2) of the participants reported being retired.

Participants were asked to self-assess their proficiency in the English language, using a scale ranging from 1 to 10. Among the participants, 27 individuals rated their fluency level as basic, while 10 indicated an intermediate level. Five participants considered themselves advanced in English proficiency, and only one participant reported being a native English speaker. In conclusion, the participant demographics for this study portray a diverse and heterogeneous sample, contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the data.

Five questions were designed to assess the significance of English language research in the workplace in China. By answering these questions, individuals' viewpoints regarding the role of English in career advancement, cross-cultural communication, language learning approaches, job prospects, and the competitiveness of Chinese companies can be understood. These questions encompass different aspects of the impact of English in the Chinese work setting, thereby unveiling the importance of English language research and its subsequent evaluation. The five remarks (called Questions from 5 to 9) follow (and can be later seen in Table 2, on page 131):

*Question 5 (Q5): English language proficiency is essential for career advancement in the Chinese workplace.*

This statement suggests that having a good command of the English language is crucial for advancing one's career in the Chinese workplace. A high rating would indicate that individuals believe English proficiency is essential for career progression, denoting the importance of English language research in this context.

*Question 6 (Q6): English language skills are important for effective communication with international colleagues and clients.*

This assertion highlights the significance of English language skills in facilitating effective communication with colleagues and clients from different countries. A higher rating would signify a recognition of the importance of English language research in improving cross-cultural communication in the workplace.

*Question 7 (Q7): English language proficiency contributes to the development of better language learning methods in the Chinese workplace.*

The role of English language proficiency in driving the application of more effective language learning methods within the Chinese workplace is emphasized. A higher rating would suggest that individuals recognize the value of English language research in enhancing language learning approaches and strategies.

*Question 8 (Q8): The ability to use English in the workplace improves job opportunities in multinational companies.*

It is suggested that that being able to use English effectively in the workplace can enhance job prospects within multinational companies. A higher rating would indicate an awareness of the benefits of English language research in opening employment opportunities in global organizations.

*Question 9 (Q9): English language proficiency enhances the competitiveness of Chinese companies in the global market.*

This statement highlights the idea that English language proficiency can contribute to the position of Chinese companies on the global stage. A higher rating would signify an acknowledgment of the importance of English language research in strengthening the global presence of Chinese firms.



Table 2- Importance of English Language Proficiency in the Chinese Workplace

Questions	Strongly agree(5)	Agree:(4)	Neutral(3)	Disagree(2)	Strongly Disagree(1)
5: English language proficiency is essential for career advancement in the Chinese workplace	14	16	5	6	2
6: English language skills are important for effective communication with international colleagues and clients.	20	14	4	3	2
7: English language proficiency contributes to the development of better language learning methods in the Chinese workplace.	18	14	3	6	2
8: The ability to use English in the workplace improves job opportunities in multinational companies.	15	14	10	2	2
9: English language proficiency enhances the competitiveness of Chinese companies in the global market.	14	15	11	10	3

The data analysis presented in Table 2 underscores the vital role of English language proficiency in the Chinese workplace, as evidenced by the respondents' perspectives. The findings reveal a consensus among participants on the significance of English proficiency across multiple dimensions of professional life.

Primarily, the research findings highlight the critical importance of English language proficiency for career advancement in the Chinese workplace (Q5). The majority of respondents, with 14 strongly agreeing and 16 agreeing, collectively recognize the positive impact of English language proficiency on their professional development. This alignment of perspectives emphasizes the perceived correlation between linguistic proficiency and career

progression, elucidating the overarching influence of English language skills in the context of the Chinese work setting.

Furthermore, the survey results indicate a widespread acknowledgment of the crucial role played by English language skills in facilitating effective communication with international colleagues and clients (Q6). The significant number of respondents, with 20 strongly agreeing and 14 agreeing, underscores the recognition of English proficiency as an essential tool for efficient communication in international affairs. This finding reinforces the notion that English proficiency is not only valuable for individual career development but also contributes to the overall effectiveness of cross-cultural communication within the workplace.

The research outcomes also shed light on the positive relationship between English language proficiency and the development of improved language learning methods in the Chinese workplace (Q7). With 18 respondents strongly agreeing and 14 agreeing, there is a clear acknowledgment that English proficiency can enhance the efficiency of language acquisition methods. This recognition highlights the potential of English language research to influence and improve language learning approaches within the professional sphere, emphasizing its broader impact on educational strategies in the workplace.

Moreover, the survey respondents collectively recognize the strategic advantage of English language proficiency in enhancing job opportunities, particularly in multinational companies (Q8). With 15 respondents strongly agreeing and 14 agreeing, the findings suggest an awareness among participants of the competitive edge that English language skills confer in the global employment landscape. This awareness underscores the practical implications of English language research in shaping employment opportunities and career trajectories in an increasingly interconnected global job market.

Lastly, the data analysis reinforces the notion that English language proficiency contributes to the competitiveness of Chinese companies in the global market (Q9). The

responses, with 14 strongly agreeing and 15 agreeing, reflect a collective acknowledgment that companies with English language proficiency are better equipped to navigate the challenges of globalization. This finding emphasizes the strategic significance of English language research in fortifying the global presence of Chinese firms.

In conclusion, the research findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted importance of English language proficiency in the Chinese workplace. The survey results underscore its positive influence on career advancement, international communication, language learning methods, job opportunities in multinational companies, and the overall competitiveness of Chinese businesses on the global stage. This collective recognition highlights the imperative nature of continuous English language research to meet the evolving demands of the modern professional landscape in China.

The survey results reveal a nuanced perspective on the importance of cross-cultural competence in the context of a multicultural workplace. The data reflected on Table 3 on Cross-Cultural Competence and Workplace Ability (see Appendix 3.1 & Appendix 3.5) indicates that a significant proportion of respondents, encompassing 5 who strongly agreed and 16 who agreed, consider cross-cultural competence as integral for effective functioning in such diverse professional environments. However, it is noteworthy that 13 respondents expressed neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree opinions, reflecting a divergence of viewpoints on the significance of cross-cultural competence.

Table 3- Cross Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree (3 or below)
Cross-cultural competence is important for working effectively in a multicultural workplace	14	1 6	13

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree (3 or below)
Understanding different cultural practices and norms contributes to better teamwork and collaboration	11	2 2	9
Adapting to different work styles and communication patterns is essential for success in a globalized workplace	16	1 5	12
Cross-cultural training programs are beneficial for improving workplace adaptability	15	1 7	11
Cultural intelligence plays a significant role in career advancement opportunities	24	1 2	7

The findings underscore the perceived correlation between understanding different cultural practices and norms and achieving better teamwork and collaboration. The agreement of 5 respondents who ‘strongly agreed’ and 22 who ‘agreed’ supports the notion that cultural understanding positively influences team dynamics. Nonetheless, the presence of 9 respondents with neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree opinions suggests a spectrum of perspectives on the impact of cultural knowledge on collaborative efforts within a multicultural workplace.

Furthermore, the survey shows that a shared belief exists among 5 respondents who strongly agreed and 15 who agreed that adapting to diverse work styles and communication patterns is essential for success in an economic globalized workplace. Despite this consensus, the presence of 12 respondents with differing opinions highlights a range of attitudes toward the perceived necessity of adaptability in professional settings characterized by cultural diversity.

Concerning cross-cultural training programs, most respondents, with 5 ‘strongly agreeing’ and 17 ‘agreeing’, recognize the benefits of such programs in improving workplace

adaptability. However, the data also reveals the existence of 11 respondents with neutral, 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree' opinions, suggesting varying perspectives on the effectiveness of cross-cultural training initiatives in enhancing adaptability within the workplace.

In the realm of career advancement opportunities, cultural intelligence emerges as a significant factor, as indicated by the 'strong agreement' of 24 respondents and the 'agreement' of 12 respondents. The relatively lower count of 7 respondents with neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree opinions suggests a prevailing consensus regarding the influential role of cultural intelligence in shaping career trajectories.

To sum up, the survey results reflect a nuanced landscape of opinions regarding the importance of cross-cultural competence in a multicultural workplace. While there is a discernible recognition of its significance, the existence of diverse viewpoints emphasizes the need for organizations to navigate and address these differences to foster inclusive work environments. The insights derived from the survey can guide organizations in tailoring strategies and implementing targeted training programs to cultivate cross-cultural competence among employees, thereby promoting effective collaboration and career development in today's interconnected professional landscape.

### **5.3 Discussion of Findings in Relation to English Language Proficiency and Workplace Adaptability**

Communicating fluently in English and navigating diverse cultural contexts hold the potential to exert a substantial influence on an individual's success and opportunities within the Chinese workplace. To further unravel the intricate interplay between these variables (English Level, Importance of English Language Proficiency in the Chinese Workplace, and Cross-Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability), a comprehensive study was

undertaken to scrutinize the relationship between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability for Chinese. Table 4 presents the outcomes of the analysis, including the Pearson's correlation coefficients for each variable. Through this meticulous data analysis, the study aspires to offer invaluable insights into the nuanced dynamics of English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence in the Chinese workplace, elucidating their collective impact on workplace adaptability.

Table 4- Variables of English Proficiency and Cross-cultural Competence in Workplace

Variables	English Proficiency	Cross-cultural Competence	Workplace Adaptability
1	16	18	15
2	13	22	16
3	14	15	13
4	7	20	18
5	12	17	20
6	23	14	17
7	10	12	15
8	11	17	15
9	15	16	19
10	16	15	15
11	8	19	17
12	17	13	18
13	14	15	16
14	9	18	13
15	16	16	16
16	13	17	15
17	12	18	17
18	14	17	18
19	11	13	16
20	15	17	17
21	17	16	17
22	16	13	18
23	14	16	17
24	11	12	18

Variables	English Proficiency	Cross-cultural Competence	Workplace Adaptability
25	15	15	19
26	9	13	18
27	8	14	14
28	14	14	13
29	12	19	19
30	14	17	15
31	13	16	15
32	11	14	13
33	12	16	18
34	16	14	13
35	13	17	14
36	12	16	15
37	14	15	16
38	14	16	17
39	10	14	18
40	12	16	19
41	11	12	20
42	13	13	16
43	8	15	15

Pearson's correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of the linear relationship between two variables. Its value ranges from -1 to 1. A value close to 1 indicates a strong positive correlation, a value close to -1 indicates a strong negative correlation, and a value close to 0 indicates no correlation. Based on this provided table, the Pearson's correlation coefficients for the following variables are as follows:

- Pearson's correlation coefficient between English Level and Cross-Cultural Competence: 0.56. This means that a higher level of proficiency in English expression may contribute to individuals engaging more effectively in cross-cultural communication. This could involve using more precise and clear language to articulate one's viewpoints, thereby reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings. Individuals with strong English proficiency may be better equipped to comprehend and adapt to differences between

various cultures, facilitating a smoother process of workplace adaptation. Finally, this positive correlation may also be influenced by other factors, such as educational background and international experience.

- Pearson's correlation coefficient between English Level and Workplace Adaptability: 0.81. This implies that as English language proficiency increases, there is a substantial increase in workplace adaptability. The robust correlation suggests that effective communication in English may play a pivotal role in fostering workplace adaptability, as it enables individuals to comprehend and respond adeptly to dynamic work environments, diverse communication styles, and varied expectations within the professional sphere. However, it is essential to recognize that correlation does not imply causation, and other factors may contribute to the observed relationship. Further research and analysis are needed to explore the nuanced dynamics underlying this correlation and to ascertain potential causal factors.

- Pearson's correlation coefficient between Cross Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability: 0.81. This indicates a strong positive correlation between the two variables. The strong correlation means that possessing effective cross-cultural skills positively influences an individual's ability to navigate and thrive in diverse professional environments. Individuals with a better understanding of different cultures are likely to exhibit greater flexibility, openness to new ideas, and adaptability to varying workplace dynamics.

The data in the table above represents the computed Pearson's correlation coefficients based on the provided information. The calculated Pearson's correlation coefficients for the variables, namely English Level, Importance of English Language Proficiency in the Chinese Workplace, and Cross-Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability, are as follows:

1- Pearson's correlation coefficient between English Level and Cross-Cultural Competence is 0.56, conveying a moderate positive correlation. This suggests that as an



individual's English proficiency level increases, their cross-cultural competence tends to be higher. It implies that better English language skills may contribute to better adaptation to different cultures in the workplace.

2- Pearson's correlation coefficient between English Level and Workplace Adaptability is 0.81, denoting a strong positive correlation. This demonstrates that individuals with higher English language proficiency are more likely to exhibit better workplace adaptability. It prompts that English language proficiency plays a crucial role in enhancing an individual's ability to adjust and thrive in diverse work environments.

3- Pearson's correlation coefficient between Cross Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability is 0.81, designating a strong positive correlation. This means that individuals who demonstrate higher cross-cultural competence are more likely to possess better workplace adaptability. It implies that having the ability to navigate and understand different cultures positively impacts an individual's ability to adapt effectively in various work settings.

Overall, these correlation coefficients emphasize the significant relationships between English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability. They underscore the importance of English language skills in the Chinese workplace and highlight the benefits of developing cross-cultural competence for improving workplace adaptability. These findings have implications for individuals seeking to enhance their employability and succeed in diverse professional environments.

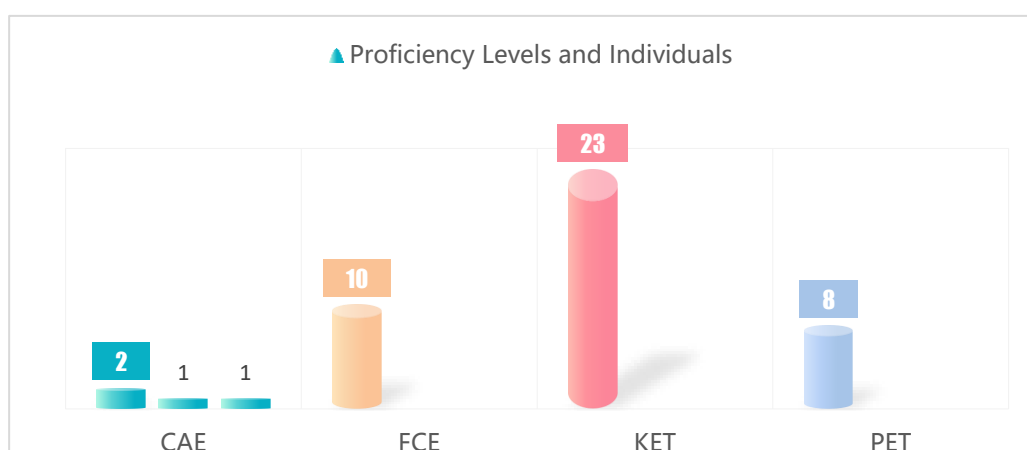
#### **5.4 Implications for English Language Proficiency and Workplace Adaptability in Cross-cultural Contexts**

The escalating global interconnectedness of economies and the ascendancy of multinational corporations have ushered in a pronounced surge in cross-cultural interactions within the

workplace. In this context, English language proficiency emerges as a linchpin for facilitating effective communication and augmenting workplace adaptability (Yamazaki et al. 362-379). The outcomes derived from the experiment bear substantive implications for unraveling the intricate nexus between English language proficiency and workplace adaptability in cross-cultural contexts. Employing a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods, the study meticulously captures a holistic portrayal of participants' language skills and their encounters in navigating cross-cultural work environments.

Primarily, the quantitative data unveiled intriguing patterns concerning the English language proficiency levels exhibited by the foreign employees in the sample (See Table 5). Among the 43 participants, only 2 demonstrated a high level of English language proficiency (such as Certificate in Advanced English, CAE, by Cambridge University), while a more sizable contingent exhibited intermediate-level proficiency (First Certificate in English, FCE). This unveils that there is considerable room for enhancement in language skills among foreign employees engaged in work within China. Such revelations accentuate the imperative of perpetuating language training and development initiatives to elevate the English language proficiency of employees, particularly in the milieu of cross-cultural work environments.

Table 5- Proficiency Levels and Individuals



The qualitative data gleaned through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions provides illuminating insights into the challenges confronted by employees in their daily work interactions. The participants shared their encounters with language barriers, the intricacies of grasping cultural nuances, and the imperative for deploying effective communication strategies in cross-cultural settings. Throughout the interviews, employees consistently grappled with a diverse array of challenges within multinational companies, categorizable into five principal domains: cross-cultural communication, social pressures, technological barriers, conflict resolution, and work-life balance. Regarding cross-cultural communication, there was the following remark retrieved: "As an employee in a multinational company, I often find myself interacting with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. This poses challenges as we have varying languages, communication styles, and behavioral norms. It requires me to understand and adapt to these cultural differences to ensure effective communication and collaboration."

Another reply highlighted social pressure. The interviewee stated: "When working in a multinational company, I frequently encounter situations where I need to socialize with colleagues, including unfamiliar faces or senior management. This can be intimidating and adds pressure to build relationships, showcase my professional abilities, and maintain a positive image within the workplace."

Another subject gave a lot of importance to technological barriers: "in today's fast-paced digital environment, my work tasks often require the use of various software and tools. However, I sometimes struggle with unfamiliar technology or lack proficiency in using electronic devices. Constantly learning and adapting to new technologies is crucial for enhancing productivity and effectively collaborating with other colleagues."

Conflict resolution was another important factor mentioned in another survey: "Working in a multinational company means dealing with diverse perspectives and opinions, which can

lead to conflicts or disagreements. In such situations, I need to possess conflict resolution skills and abilities to establish harmonious work relationships and pursue mutual interests."

The management of work-life was also highlighted: "Balancing work demands with personal life needs is a constant challenge in a multinational company. As an employee, I often face work pressure that may encroach on my personal time and well-being. It is essential for me to strike a balance between work requirements and personal needs to maintain a positive mental state and job performance."

The uncovered insights underscore the importance of not solely prioritizing language proficiency but also emphasizing the cultivation of cross-cultural competence to effectively navigate diverse work environments. It becomes evident that organizations should accord priority to English language training programs and proactively offer avenues for employees to enhance their cross-cultural communication skills. Through investments in language development initiatives, companies have the potential to elevate the workplace adaptability of foreign employees. This, in turn, facilitates improved communication and collaboration across diverse cultures, thereby contributing to an overall enhancement of organizational performance.

The findings underscore the imperative for continual language training initiatives and the development of cross-cultural communication skills to support foreign employees in effectively navigating the challenges inherent in diverse work environments. These implications serve as guiding principles for organizations aspiring to cultivate more inclusive and culturally sensitive workplaces, fostering effective communication, and facilitating successful cross-cultural collaborations.

#### 5.4.1 Testing Cross-cultural Competence and Language Proficiency among College Students

University students constitute a pivotal demographic, positioned at a juncture in their lives where they are on the brink of entering the workforce. The assessment of their English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability is crucial for both their personal and professional development. The students were selected from Chinese institutions such as Heilongjiang International University, Huaiyin Institute of Technology, and Northeast Forestry University.

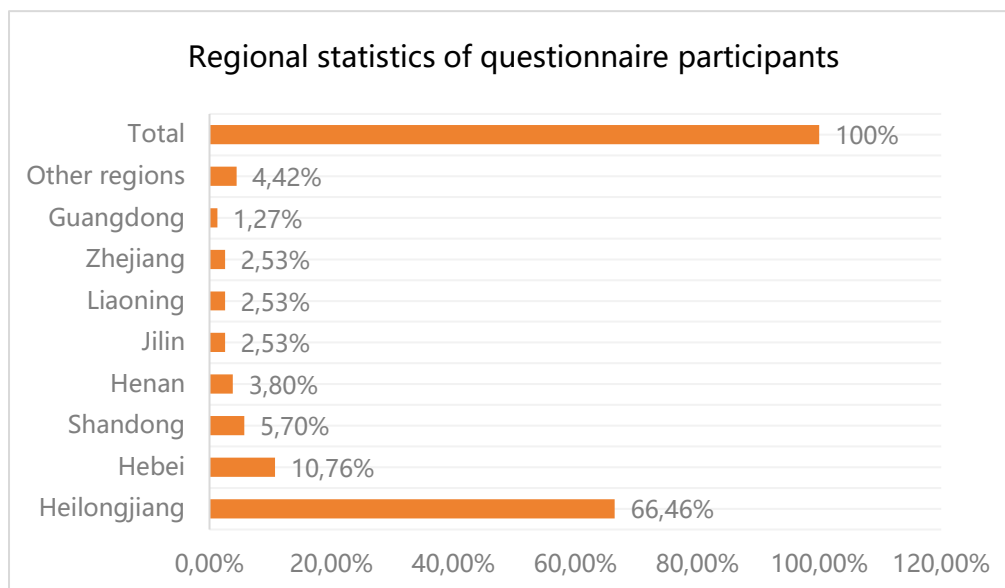
The execution of an English language self-assessment is indispensable to ascertain their own perceptions of their language abilities. This undertaking offered valuable insights into their confidence levels in utilizing English as a medium of communication. Additionally, it served to identify potential gaps or areas for improvement in their language skills. The evaluation of cross-cultural competence assumes significance as it mirrors their capacity to navigate and excel in diverse work environments. This assessment encompasses tasks designed to test their knowledge of different cultures, their adeptness at adapting to cultural differences, and their proficiency in communication and collaboration with individuals from various backgrounds. The outcomes of this evaluation proved a comprehensive understanding of their readiness to engage in work within cross-cultural contexts.

Lastly, the assessment of workplace adaptability displayed their ability to thrive in varied professional settings. This evaluation involved scenarios or simulations replicating real-life workplace situations. Students were assessed based on their problem-solving skills, capacity to handle ambiguity, teamwork, and adaptability to new challenges. This comprehensive assessment pinpointed areas necessitating further development to enhance their workplace adaptability.

Through the inclusion of college students in this study and the evaluation of their English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability, invaluable insights can be gleaned into their preparedness for future career opportunities. exploration endeavors not only to contribute to their personal growth but also to furnish educational institutions and employers with vital information, enabling them to better support these students during their transition from academia to the professional realm.

The study samples were mainly selected from various regions including Heilongjiang, Hebei, Shandong, Henan, Jilin, Liaoning, Zhejiang, Guangdong, and others. A total of 158 questionnaires were collected, and 156 of them were deemed valid, resulting in a questionnaire recovery rate of 98.7%. Results follow in Table 6:

Table 6- Regional Statistics of Questionnaire Participants



The initial phase of assessment involved students undertaking a self-evaluation of their English language abilities. This self-assessment was designed to yield valuable insights into their perceived level of proficiency and confidence in utilizing English for communication. The second component assessed the students' cross-cultural competence. This evaluation gathered tasks that scrutinize their knowledge of diverse cultures, their capacity to adapt to

cultural differences, and their effectiveness in communicating and collaborating with individuals from varied backgrounds. The third component evaluated students' workplace adaptability. By subjecting them to scenarios or simulations that replicate real-life work situations, this component assessed their problem-solving skills, ability to handle ambiguity, teamwork capabilities, and adaptability to new challenges.

Through an examination of the former aspects, the high questionnaire recovery rate attests to the commitment and active participation of the students, underscoring its potential to provide valuable insights contributing to their personal and professional development. Accordingly, the Testing Methodology for university students was structured to furnish a holistic assessment of their readiness for various facets of their academic and professional endeavors. Beyond the self-assessment of English language proficiency, which measures their competence in communicating effectively in an English-speaking milieu, this methodology includes the evaluation of cross-cultural competence. This assessment affords students insights into their awareness, knowledge, and skills in navigating diverse cultural contexts.

Moreover, the evaluation of workplace adaptability constitutes an integral element of the Testing Methodology. This component scrutinizes students' abilities to adapt and thrive in different professional settings, considering factors such as interpersonal skills, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability to change. By appraising these skills, students can identify areas for improvement and enhance their employability prospects.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the Testing Methodology, the utilization of Cronbach's alpha coefficient is emphasized. Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure assessing the internal consistency or reliability of a questionnaire or test, ensures that the items in the scale or instrument are measuring the same underlying construct (Tavakol et al. 53). By establishing high internal consistency, the methodology guarantees that the measurements obtained are reliable and reflective of the constructs under assessment. Additionally, the

validity of the questionnaire is scrutinized to ensure accurate measurement of the intended dimensions of English language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability.

In analyzing the reliability and validity between cross-cultural competence and the self-assessment of English proficiency, specific measurement items mentioned in the provided table merit consideration. For cross-cultural competence, the items listed include learning about the history of the country, understanding social norms, grasping national values, acquiring knowledge of international historical events, familiarizing oneself with external social norms, studying external values, being aware of external cultural taboos, understanding concepts like cross-cultural communication and effective communication, gaining knowledge of language and behavior patterns of expatriates, and acquiring strategies for successful cross-cultural communication. Table 7 displays these aspects:

Table 7- Cronbach Reliability Analysis (1) -Cross-cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability Assessment Form

Cronbach Reliability Analysis--Cross-cultural Competence			
Name	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Alpha if item deleted	Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient
1. Learn about the history of the country	0.655	0.926	0.930
2. Understand the social norms of the country	0.671	0.926	
3. Understand the knowledge of national values	0.605	0.929	
4. Understand international historical knowledge	0.778	0.920	
5. Learn about external social norms	0.815	0.918	
6. Learn about external values	0.798	0.919	
7. Learn about external cultural taboos	0.789	0.919	
9. Understand the basic knowledge of concepts such as cross-cultural communication and communication	0.710	0.924	
8. Understand the language and behavior knowledge of expatriates	0.746	0.922	



Cronbach Reliability Analysis--Cross-cultural Competence			
Name	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Alpha if item deleted	Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient
10. Learn some strategies and skills for successful cross-cultural communication	0.718	0.923	
Standardized Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient: 0.931			
Cronbach Reliability Analysis--Workplace Adaptability			
Name	Corrected Item-Total Correlation(CITC)	Alpha if item deleted	Cronbach $\alpha$ coefficient
11. Willing to communicate and learn with international individuals from different cultures	0.807	0.911	0.921
12. Willing to respect the lifestyle and customs of expatriates	0.828	0.894	
13. Willing to learn non-native languages and cultures well	0.883	0.849	
Standardized Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient: 0.921			

The analysis of these items reveals a moderate to strong positive correlation with the total score, as indicated by the corrected item-total correlation (CITC) values ranging from 0.605 to 0.815. Furthermore, the alpha item deleted values range from 0.918 to 0.929, suggesting that each item consistently contributes to the overall internal consistency of the measurement scale. The standardized Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient for the entire scale is 0.931, reflecting a high level of reliability.

Regarding the self-assessment of English proficiency, the measurement items mentioned in the table include being willing to communicate and learn from foreigners of different cultures, showing respect for the lifestyles and customs of foreigners, and demonstrating a strong commitment to learning foreign languages and cultures.

The CITC values for these items range from 0.807 to 0.883, indicating a strong positive correlation with the total score. However, it should be noted that the alpha if item deleted

value for item 12 is not provided in the table. Nonetheless, the overall internal consistency of this scale is supported by a Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of 0.921, suggesting accurate measurement.

In conclusion, based on the analysis of the data presented in the table, the measurement items for both cross-cultural competence and self-assessment of English proficiency demonstrate satisfactory reliability. However, it is important to conduct additional analyzes, such as factor analysis or criterion-related validity, to fully assess the construct validity of these scales. This is systematized in *Table 8*, detailing the Cronbach reliability analysis for both cross-cultural competence and self-assessment of English proficiency.

Table 8- Cronbach Reliability Analysis (2) -- Cross-cultural Competence Assessment Form

Cronbach Reliability Analysis (1)			
Name	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient
14. Ability to negotiate with the other party when misunderstandings arise in cross-cultural communication.	0.584	0.901	0.905
15. Ability to use body language or other non-verbal means to communicate when faced with language barriers.	0.667	0.896	
16. Ability to successfully communicate with individuals from different social, cultural backgrounds, and fields using a foreign language.	0.521	0.908	
17. Ability to treat foreign individuals politely during communication.	0.723	0.892	
18. Ability to avoid using inappropriate language and behavior that may offend individuals from different cultures during communication.	0.770	0.888	
19. Ability to avoid developing prejudices and biases when communicating with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.	0.779	0.887	
20. Ability to refrain from discussing privacy-related topics when communicating with	0.634	0.898	

Cronbach Reliability Analysis (1)			
Name	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient
individuals from diverse cultures.			
21. Sensitivity to cultural differences in cross-cultural communication.	0.703	0.893	
22. Ability to view events in other countries from different cultural perspectives.	0.784	0.888	
Standardized Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient:0.908			

Table 8 provides the outcomes of the Cronbach reliability analysis for the Cross-Cultural Competence Assessment Form, a method employed to evaluate the accuracy and internal consistency of the measurement items aids in assessing the impact of each item on the internal consistency of the scale, with higher within the form. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a widely used indicator of internal consistency, is employed, where higher values signify enhanced reliability. Hence, the subsequent statements can be done:

- The Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) column illustrates the correlation between each item and the total score derived from all items in the form, excluding the contribution of that specific item. Elevated CITC values denote stronger relationships between the item and the overall construct being measured.
- The Alpha if Item Deleted column reveals the Cronbach's alpha coefficient that would result if a particular item were omitted from the form. This coefficient r values suggesting a more substantial contribution to overall reliability.
- In the Cronbach  $\alpha$  Coefficient column, the calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire form is displayed, providing an indication of the overall internal consistency. A value closer to 1 indicates heightened reliability.
- Items 14, 16, 18, 19, 22, and 26 manifest moderate to strong corrected item-total correlations, ranging from 0.521 to 0.784. These items establish a significant relationship with the overarching construct of cross-cultural competence.

- Items 21 and 27 exhibit relatively lower corrected item-total correlations of 0.703 and 0.560, respectively. While these correlations remain positive, they suggest a weaker relationship between these items and the overall construct. The calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the entire form are 0.905 and 0.844, respectively. These values denote high internal consistency and reliability for both sets of items.

In summary, the cross-cultural competence Assessment Form showcases commendable internal consistency and reliability, as evidenced by the elevated Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Most items establish robust relationships with the overarching construct of cross-cultural competence, affirming the form's validity. However, items 21 and 27, with weaker correlations, may warrant additional attention.

Moving to the validity test, its significance lies in determining the accuracy and relevance of the measurement instrument employed: the Workplace Adaptability Assessment Form. This test is indispensable for ensuring that the assessment form effectively measures its intended constructs and that the identified factors serve as valid indicators of workplace adaptability.

Conducting the validity test allows researchers to scrutinize the credibility and reliability of the assessment form, instilling confidence in the collected data and the derived conclusions (Borsboom et al. 1061). It serves to validate the robustness of the measurement instrument, ensuring an accurate capture of the various dimensions of workplace adaptability.

Table 9, which follows below, presents the outcomes of the validity analysis, shedding light on the underlying factors of workplace adaptability. Factors 1 through 6 delineate distinct facets of workplace adaptability:

- Factor 1: Thinking about the future and preparing for it
- Factor 2: Having clear career development goals and plans
- Factor 3: Sticking to your choice and working hard for it
- Factor 4: Being good at exploring surroundings and looking for growth opportunities

- Factor 5: Releasing through work, study, or other activities
- Factor 6: Talking with people about inner troubles

These factors were scrutinized for their factor loadings, representing the strength of the relationship between the factors and the items in the assessment form. The commonality values elucidate the variance in the factors explained by each item. Elevated factor loadings and commonality values signify a robust alignment between the items and their respective factors, attesting to a high level of validity. Conversely, lower factor loadings and commonality values may raise concerns about the pertinence and accuracy of certain items.

Table 9 Validity Analysis of Workplace Adaptability Assessment Form

Factor	Factor load factor						Commonality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor6	
1. Reflecting on what my future will be like and preparing for it.	0.719	0.262	-0.086	0.163	0.164	-0.066	0.650
2. Having clear career development goals and plans.	0.795	0.081	-0.227	0.077	-0.129	0.139	0.733
3. Persevering in my choices and working hard for them.	0.818	0.155	0.241	-0.012	-0.021	-0.009	0.751
4. Being adept at exploring my surroundings and seeking growth opportunities.	0.797	0.285	0.182	-0.074	0.028	-0.092	0.764
5. Seek relief through work, study, or other activities.	0.230	0.366	0.499	0.086	0.056	0.076	0.453
6. Talk to others and confide inner worries.	-0.028	0.115	0.071	-0.023	0.143	0.886	0.826
7. Stand firm in one's position	0.167	0.031	0.136	0.819	0.115	0.093	0.740

Factor	Factor load factor						Commonality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor6	
and struggle for what one wants.							
8. Refer to how others solve problems.	-0.261	-0.049	0.517	0.125	0.440	-0.191	0.584
9. Once I have formed my view of things, I will not change it	0.132	-0.058	0.116	0.059	0.713	0.239	0.603
10. It is difficult for me to properly express my emotional reaction to others	-0.073	-0.094	0.015	0.253	0.787	-0.059	0.701
11. Stick to your position and fight for what you want.	0.270	-0.033	0.618	0.261	-0.207	0.174	0.598
12. Refer to other people's ways of solving problems.	-0.087	0.186	0.673	0.002	-0.035	0.422	0.674
13. Comfort yourself.	-0.024	0.087	0.654	0.138	0.197	-0.175	0.524
14. Sometimes I am dissatisfied with my performance in some aspect	-0.067	0.119	0.176	0.768	0.246	-0.094	0.709
15. If I see others in trouble, I will do my best to help them.	0.054	0.761	-0.104	0.200	-0.035	0.310	0.729
16. I am good at turning problems into opportunities.	0.381	0.735	0.139	-0.171	-0.141	-0.021	0.755
17. When I see something I don't like, I will change it.	0.061	0.397	-0.189	-0.432	0.447	0.266	0.655
18. I have been looking for a better way of doing things.	0.251	0.708	0.174	0.290	-0.158	-0.045	0.706

Factor	Factor load factor						Commonality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor6	
19. When I encounter a problem, I will face it directly.	0.203	0.765	0.202	-0.107	0.081	0.012	0.685
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	4.526	2.679	1.792	1.574	1.177	1.093	-
Variance interpretation rate (%)	23.819%	14.097%	9.430%	8.285%	6.196%	5.751%	-
Cumulative variance interpretation rate (%)	23.819%	37.916%	47.346%	55.631%	61.827%	67.578%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.967	2.763	2.134	1.829	1.799	1.347	-
Variance interpretation rate (%)	15.618%	14.544%	11.230%	9.628%	9.471%	7.087%	-
Cumulative variance interpretation rate (%)	15.618%	30.162%	41.392%	51.020%	60.491%	67.578%	-
Kmo value	0.727						-
Bart spherical value	679.847						-
<i>df</i>	171						-
<i>p</i> value	0.000						-

Validity analysis of workplace adaptability assessment was conducted to determine the strength and relevance of the factors identified in Table 4. The factors, labeled as 1 to 6, represent different aspects of workplace adaptability.

Factor 1, "Thinking about the future and preparing for it", assesses an individual's ability to anticipate and plan for future challenges and opportunities. Factor 2, "Having clear career development goals and plans," focuses on the presence of defined career goals and strategies for achieving them. Factor 3, "Sticking to your choice and working hard for it," measures the level of commitment and perseverance towards one's chosen path. Factor 4, "Being good at exploring surroundings and looking for growth opportunities," evaluates the individual's skill in identifying and pursuing opportunities for growth. Factor 5, "Releasing through work, study, or other activities," examines the ability to release stress and maintain well-being through engaging activities. Finally, Factor 6, "Talking with people about inner troubles," weights the inclination to seek support and discuss personal difficulties.

To appraise the validity of these factors, factor loadings and commonality values were analyzed. Factor loadings indicate the strength of the relationship between the factors and the items in the assessment form. High factor loadings indicate a strong alignment between the items and their respective factors, suggesting a high level of validity. Conversely, low factor loadings may raise concerns about the relevance and accuracy of certain items.

The results presented in the table show that all the research items of workplace adaptability have commonality values higher than 0.4. This indicates that the information contained in the research items can be effectively extracted. Furthermore, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (KMO) of 0.727, which is greater than the acceptable threshold of 0.6, suggests that the data can be effectively extracted as information.

The variance interpretation rates of the six factors are as follows: Factor 1 accounts for 15.618% of the variance, Factor 2 accounts for 14.544%, Factor 3 accounts for 11.230%, Factor 4 accounts for 9.628%, Factor 5 accounts for 9.471%, and Factor 6 accounts for 7.087%. These values represent the proportion of variance explained by each factor. The cumulative variance interpretation rate after rotation is 67.578%, which is greater than the



minimum threshold of 50%. This indicates that the information related to workplace adaptability can be effectively extracted from the factors.

In conclusion, the validity analysis confirms that the identified factors of workplace adaptability are strongly aligned with the research items. The high commonality values and factor loadings indicate a strong relationship between the items and their respective factors, suggesting a high level of validity. Additionally, the KMO value and the cumulative variance interpretation rate support the effective extraction of information related to workplace adaptability.

The examination of the data presented in the table reveals satisfactory reliability for both sets of measurement items, namely those related to cross-cultural competence and self-assessment of English proficiency. However, to comprehensively evaluate the construct validity of these scales, additional analyzes such as factor analysis or criterion-related validity should be considered.

The Cross-Cultural Competence Assessment Form demonstrates commendable internal consistency and reliability, substantiated by the elevated Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Most items establish robust relationships with the overarching construct of cross-cultural competence, contributing to the form's validity. Nevertheless, items 21 and 27 exhibit weaker correlations, suggesting a need for further scrutiny and potential refinement.

The validity analysis corroborates the identified factors of workplace adaptability, as indicated by strong factor loadings that denote a robust relationship between the items and their respective factors. This observation suggests a high level of validity. Additionally, the KMO value and the interpretation of cumulative variance support the effective extraction of information pertaining to workplace adaptability.

In summation, the analysis implies that the measurement items for cross-cultural competence and self-assessment of English proficiency exhibit reliability. However, a comprehensive evaluation of construct validity requires additional analyzes. The

Cross-Cultural Competence Assessment Form demonstrates commendable internal consistency and validity, albeit with a suggestion for potential refinement of certain items. The validity analysis substantiates the strong alignment of identified factors with workplace adaptability. Overall, these findings furnish valuable insights into the reliability and validity of the measurement scales employed in this study.

#### 5.4.2 The Relationship between Cross-cultural Competence, Language Proficiency, and Workplace Adaptability among College Students

Despite the inherent connection between cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability, the empirical evidence exploring these associations among college students remains limited. The investigation of this relationship stands as a crucial endeavor, offering valuable insights for educators, employers, and policymakers in devising interventions and programs aimed at fostering cross-cultural competence, enhancing language proficiency, and promoting workplace adaptability among college students.

Byram's theoretical framework serves as a foundational structure for comprehending and evaluating cross-cultural competence. According to Byram (1996), this competence is delineated into three essential components: attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Attitudes encompass an individual's receptiveness and regard for cultural differences, while knowledge pertains to one's understanding of diverse cultures, comprehending values, beliefs, and communication styles. Skills, the third component, involve an individual's proficiency in effective communication and adaptability of behavior within diverse cultural contexts.

Progress in understanding these three components has been substantial within cross-cultural competence research, with numerous studies investigating their development among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Sam 1996, 472-481). Several notable studies have contributed to this understanding. Bennett (1996, 179-196), Chen & Starosta (1998, 433-452) or Ang

et al. (335-371) have revealed that participants engaging in more cross-cultural experiences demonstrated elevated levels of cross-cultural sensitivity.

Sarala et al. (1365-1390) have explored how individuals acquire cultural knowledge through cross-cultural interactions. Sam et al. (472-481) and McArthur et al. (464-472) have indicated a significant improvement in participants' cultural knowledge, suggesting that cross-cultural interactions enhance cultural understanding.

The highlighted studies underscore the significance of investigating the development of attitudes, knowledge, and skills among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions and experiences in cultivating cross-cultural competence. However, several areas necessitate further research. Firstly, a demand exists for more comprehensive and standardized measures of cross-cultural competence. Despite the creation of various assessment tools in existing studies, a lack of consensus persists on which measures are most effective in capturing its multidimensional nature. Secondly, there is a need to explore the impact of cross-cultural competence on various outcomes, including job performance, cross-cultural relationships, and mental well-being.

While existing research has predominantly concentrated on the development of this competence, there is limited understanding of its practical implications and benefits in real-world settings. Additionally, future research should delve into the influence of individual and contextual factors on the development of cross-cultural competence. Factors such as personality traits, cultural background, and educational experiences likely play pivotal roles in shaping individuals' ability to navigate multicultural contexts. A comprehensive understanding of these factors can inform the design of interventions and training programs aimed at enhancing cross-cultural competence.

Based on the previous literature review and questionnaire survey, a range of empirical research methods were employed to investigate the impact of gender on various dimensions

such as cross-cultural competence and language proficiency. One of the statistical analysis techniques utilized was Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which is commonly used to compare the mean differences between different groups (Gelman 3). By applying ANOVA, significant differences in the average scores of these dimensions across gender were determined. This study sought to evaluate any notable disparities between males and females in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. This was achieved by meticulously analyzing the mean and standard deviation values for each dimension. The cognitive dimension concentrates on mental processes and abilities associated with knowledge acquisition, thinking, and problem-solving. The emotional dimension delves into the range and intensity of emotions experienced by individuals. Simultaneously, the behavioral dimension scrutinizes the observable actions and reactions exhibited by individuals in various situations. Recognizing how gender may influence these dimensions is imperative for attaining a comprehensive understanding of human behavior and psychological processes. Table 10 below illustrates this:

Table 10- ANOVA Test of Gender in Each Dimension

Gender	Cognitive		Emotional		Behavioral	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Dimension		Dimension	
			Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
M	4.	0.575	4.	0.552	3.	0.691
Fe	4.	0.447	4.	0.471	3.	0.574
F		1.94		0.113		0.778
<i>P</i>		0.165		0.737		0.379

In terms of the cognitive dimension, males had a mean score of 4.178 with a standard deviation of 0.575, while females had a slightly lower mean score of 4.016 with a standard

deviation of 0.447. However, the difference in means between the two genders was not statistically significant ( $F=1.94$ ,  $p=0.165$ ).

Regarding the emotional dimension, males had a mean score of 4.322 with a standard deviation of 0.552, while females had a comparable mean score of 4.284 with a standard deviation of 0.471. Again, the difference in means between genders was not statistically significant ( $F=0.113$ ,  $p=0.737$ ).

Finally, in the behavioral dimension, males had a mean score of 3.769 with a standard deviation of 0.691, whereas females had a lower mean score of 3.633 with a standard deviation of 0.574. The difference in means between genders was not statistically significant ( $F=0.778$ ,  $p=0.379$ ).

By computing the mean scores and standard deviations separately for males and females, the study aimed to offer a nuanced analysis of any potential gender-related differences or similarities. The mean score, representing the average value of a dimension for a particular gender group, and the standard deviation, providing insight into the variation within each group, were both considered. These findings suggest that there is no significant difference between males and females concerning their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions in relation to the study's variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender does not play a relevant role in these dimensions.

The data analysis relied on the ANOVA test to determine if there were any important differences in these dimensions based on the presence or absence of experience in interacting with individuals from other cultures. Table 11, below, provides answers regarding the cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions:

Table 11- ANOVA Test on Various Dimensions of Communication with Individuals from Different Cultures

Communication or Exchange	Cognitive Dimension		Emotional Dimension		Behavioral Dimension	
NO	4	0.574	4.30	0.53	3.72	0.66
YES	4	0.514	4.33	0.57	3.94	0.69
F	2.719		0.088		3.965	
<i>P Value</i>	0.101		0.767		0.048	
YES	4.230	0.558	4.382	0.487	4.10	0.54
NO	4.083	0.557	4.254	0.581	3.48	0.65
F	3.333		0.101		50.543	
<i>P Value</i>	0.069		2.721		0.000	
LSD					1>2	

In the cognitive dimension, the average score for participants with overseas study/training experience (YES) is 4.230, while the average score for participants without such experience (NO) is 4.083. The ANOVA test result shows an F value of 3.333 and a p-value of 0.069, indicating that there is no significant difference in the cognitive dimension between the two groups of participants.

In the emotional dimension, the average score for participants with overseas study/training experience (YES) is 4.382, while the average score for participants without the experience (NO) is 4.254. The ANOVA test result shows an F value of 0.558 and a p-value of 2.721, indicating that there is no relevant difference in the emotional dimension between the two groups of participants.

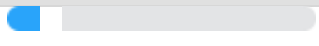
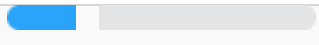

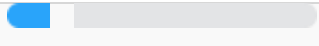
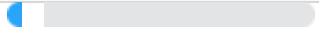
In the behavioral dimension, the average score for participants with overseas study/training experience (YES) is 4.104, while the average score for participants without such experience (NO) is 3.485. The ANOVA test result shows an F value of 50.543 and a

p-value of 0.000, indicating that there is a significant difference in the behavioral dimension between the two groups of participants.

Based on the Least Significant Difference (LSD) result (Williams et al. 840-853), it can be concluded that in the behavioral dimension, the average score of the YES group is remarkably higher than the average score of the NO group. This suggests that overseas study/training experience has a positive impact on participants' behavioral dimension. Overseas study or training experience can enhance individuals' behavioral abilities when engaging with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research question, interview surveys were conducted with employers from 25 the following organizations: Shenzhen Aoji Technology Co., Ltd., Guangzhou Bangguo Technology Co., Ltd., E Su Tong Group, Shanghai Yousutong Co., Ltd, Beijing Beidou Xingguang Technology Co., Ltd., Tianjin Leyitong Translation Co., Ltd., Harbin Hongbo Group, Harbin Cone Foreign Language Training School, Harbin Haikuotian Gao Cultural Training School, and Daqing Xuezi Cultural Training School. Through these interviews, qualitative data and subjective opinions were collected, providing valuable insights into the importance of English language proficiency among employees. Results can be read in Table 12:

Table 12- Description of the Employer's Views on the Importance of Employees' English Language Proficiency

Option	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Very important	8	8% 
B. Relatively important	10	40% 
C. General	2	8% 
D. Unimportant	3	12% 
E. Very unimportant	2	8% 
Number of valid filling times of this question	25	

The importance of employees' English language proficiency, as perceived by employers, was subject to analysis through feedback obtained from 25 interviews involving 12 employers surveyed via a questionnaire. Many of the surveyed employers represented public institutions and state-owned enterprises, constituting over 80% of the total sample. The primary industries covered in the survey were culture, education, and health.

According to the data, 8% of the employers consider English language ability as very important, while 40% regard it as relatively important. Conversely, 20% of the employers perceive English language proficiency as unimportant or very unimportant. The remaining 12% of employers adopt a neutral stance, considering it neither important nor unimportant.

The feedback from interviews indicates that a significant proportion of employers in the surveyed organizations perceive English language proficiency as important or relatively important for their employees. However, a notable portion of employers also considers it unimportant. Further analysis and investigation into the specific reasons behind these



perspectives would be beneficial for a more comprehensive understanding of the significance of English language proficiency in the workplace.

Conducting an experiment and analysis on the description of job requirements for English language ability can provide valuable insights into the relationship between cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability among university students. Through this experiment, relevant data and conclusions were obtained, as it is reflected in the following Table 13:

Table 13- Description of Job Requirements for English Language Ability

Option	Subtotal	Ratio
A. Listening comprehension	3	12%
B. Oral expression ability	8	32%
C. Reading comprehension	7	28%
D. Written expression ability	3	12%
E. Others (such as cross-cultural communication ability)	4	16%

This data helps to better understand the requirements for English language proficiency in the workplace. By analyzing the descriptions and proportions of options A to E, a clearer understanding of the importance and demand for different English language abilities in the work environment can be obtained. The experimental data indicates that option B (oral communication skills) has the highest proportion, accounting for 32% of the total, suggesting that oral communication skills in English are a key factor in the workplace.

Further analysis of the experimental data can explore the relationship between cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability. Statistical

methods can be used to calculate the correlation between different levels of cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability. Such analysis can help determine if there is a significant correlation and identify causal relationships. Based on the provided data, it can be observed that option B (oral communication skills) has the highest proportion, while options C (reading comprehension skills) and E (other abilities such as cross-cultural communication) also have relatively high proportions. This implies that there may be a certain correlation between English oral communication skills, reading comprehension skills, cross-cultural communication skills, and workplace adaptability. In-depth research into these relationships can provide better training and guidance to university students to enhance their adaptability in the workplace.

According to the provided statistics in the upcoming Table 13, option B (oral communication skills) has the highest proportion, accounting for 32% of the total; option C (reading comprehension skills) accounts for 28%; options A (listening comprehension skills) and D (written expression skills) account for 12% each; option E (other abilities such as cross-cultural communication) accounts for 16%. Based on these data, it can be concluded that English oral communication skills, reading comprehension skills, and cross-cultural communication skills have a significant impact on university students' workplace adaptability. Such conclusions can serve as references for research in related fields, while providing targeted training and development recommendations for educational institutions, companies, and individuals.

The survey data provided consists of Likert scale responses ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 represents strongly agree. The data includes responses from college students who have gone abroad and experienced the cross-cultural adaptation process. The data can be analyzed by calculating the mean scores for each item and examining the trends and patterns in the responses. Table 14, below, helps understand the

relationship between cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability among college students:

Table 14- Analysis of Survey Results of Cross-cultural Adaptation Process of Respondents

	1	2	3	4	5
After I decided to go abroad (outside China), I imagined that life abroad would be nice	0	4.35	30.43	30.43	34.78
When I first went abroad (within half a year), everything was new to me, I'm eager to visit my city	0	13.04	13.04	43.4	30.43
I also encountered some hardships and challenges in my life abroad	0	4.35	13.04	47.83	34.78
When encountering difficulties, I feel depressed, sad and at a loss	21.74	17.39	17.39	30.43	13.04
When encountering difficulties, I once blamed the culture and people of other countries	21.74	43.48	26.09	4.35	4.35
I sometimes feel lonely, lost and miss my family	0	30.43	17.39	21.74	30.43
After some efforts, I have solved the original problem	0	0	21.74	43.48	34.78
After living for a period of time, I found that Chinese and foreign cultures have both similarities and differences	0	4.35	13.04	30.43	52.17
Now, I have adapted to living abroad	0	4.35	13.04	43.48	39.13
I have made some progress and achievements in my studies	0	4.35	26.09	47.83	21.74
I can effectively contact and communicate with local college students	0	4.35	26.09	52.17	17.39
I can adapt to local teaching	0	4.35	13.04	47.83	34.78
I often participate in student union, celebration party and other campus activities	13.04	26.09	43.48	13.04	4.35
In my overseas life, I shaped and developed a different character in China	4.35	4.35	34.78	43.48	13.04
Although there are some twists and turns, I am generally	0	4.35	52.17	26.09	17.39

satisfied with the culture of other countries					
I don't think I belong to Chinese culture or other cultures, but both	8.7	17.39	34.78	26.09	13.04
I understand the concept and process of cultural adaptation	0	13.04	34.78	34.78	17.39
When encountering maladjustment and negative emotions overseas, I think this is a normal stage, and I will treat it with a normal mind	4.35	4.35	4.35	56.52	30.43

The overall perception of life abroad among the respondents was positive, as indicated by a high mean score for the expectation of a pleasant life abroad. During the initial adaptation phase, the respondents exhibited a mix of emotions, with excitement and curiosity about their new environment being the prominent responses. However, they also acknowledged encountering hardships and challenges during their life abroad.

When faced with difficulties, respondents reported experiencing feelings of depression, sadness, and a sense of being at a loss. Some attributed these challenges to the culture and people of other countries. Feelings of loneliness, being lost, and missing family were also expressed, underscoring the significant emotional aspect of cross-cultural adaptation.

Despite the obstacles, respondents made concerted efforts to solve their problems and adapt, indicating a level of improvement and overcoming of initial difficulties. Over time, they recognized both similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures.

Most respondents reported having successfully adapted to living abroad, indicating a positive level of adaptation. They also described progress in their studies and effective communication with local university students, suggesting a successful integration into the academic environment.

### 5.4.3 Drawing up a Conclusive Analysis

The integration of ANOVA analysis, interview surveys, and other statistical analysis methods facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the research question, allowing for a deeper understanding of the factors involved in the relationship between cross-cultural competence, language proficiency, and workplace adaptability among university students.

The first objective was to investigate potential gender-related distinctions or similarities in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. This was achieved by calculating separate mean scores and standard deviations for males and females. The results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in these dimensions, suggesting that gender does not have a substantial impact on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects.

Furthermore, the study examined the impact of communication or exchange experience with individuals from different cultures on these dimensions. The findings show that such experiences do not significantly impact cognitive and emotional dimensions but have a positive effect on the behavioral dimension. This implies that engaging in communication with individuals from different cultures can enhance an individual's behavioral abilities in diverse cultural settings.

Additionally, the study investigated the perception of English language proficiency in the workplace among employers. While a significant proportion of employers considered English language proficiency important, some perceived it as unimportant. Further analysis is needed to understand the reasons behind these perspectives for a comprehensive understanding of the significance of English language proficiency in the workplace.

Moreover, the chapter presented conclusions drawn from the interpretation and analysis of experimental data. The data showed that oral communication skills, reading comprehension skills, and cross-cultural communication skills significantly impact university

students' workplace adaptability. These conclusions can serve as references for research in related fields and provide recommendations for targeted training and development for educational institutions, companies, and individuals.

Lastly, the subsection highlighted the respondents' efforts to overcome initial difficulties and adapt to living abroad. They recognized both similarities and differences between Chinese and international cultures, indicating a level of improvement and successful adaptation over time.

Overall, the subsection provides insights into gender-related differences, the impact of cross-cultural communication, English language proficiency in the workplace, and individuals' adaptation to living abroad. These findings contribute to a better understanding of these factors and can guide further research and recommendations.

The undeniable impact of globalization on the economy and education underscores the need for proactive measures. While it has ushered in opportunities for economic growth and educational progress, the attendant challenges necessitate careful consideration and remedial actions. By comprehending and harnessing the positive facets of globalization, individuals and nations can aspire to a more inclusive and sustainable future, ensuring that the advantages are distributed equitably. Embracing the transformative changes instigated by globalization highlights the importance of measuring these skills and how they can be assessed in a professional setting. This PhD incorporates the knowledge, experience and data obtained from Chinese educational, professional, and demographic contexts to contribute to a transnational assessment of cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability.

Accordingly, the results have focused on aspects such as cultural awareness, sensitivity, and adaptability. Ang et al. (335-371) claimed that evaluating the knowledge of an individual along their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward different cultures produces insights into an individual's cross-cultural competence. This doctoral thesis specifically concentrated on the measurement of cross-cultural competence using Byram's model (Byram 889-894), assessing

the cognitive and the behavioral dimension. The results shared in the previous tables can be used to layout practical skills necessary for effective cross-cultural communication, such as language proficiency, cross-cultural communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and decision-making skills.

Workplace adaptability, defined as the ability to adjust to new work environments, tasks, and challenges, has been also assessed to analyze and improve the adaptability of an individual to workplaces (and associated situations and cross-cultural challenges). The examination of past experiences (the Observation Sheet can be seen in the Appendix 2) and their successful adaptation to diverse work situations have been shared and can be used for further studies that can be comparative in as much as the Chinese contexts have been introduced. The hypothesis and expected result reveal that the enhancement of English language proficiency, alongside a cross-cultural competence, plays a key role for individuals and companies seeking career progress in the context of educational, economic, and professional globalization.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter serves as a conclusion of the PhD and as a summary for future research-questions posed within English Studies, Global Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, and multinational and corporate companies. In other words, this doctoral thesis has paved the way to provide a thorough understanding and acknowledgment of English language abilities and cross-cultural competence, delving into the strengths and challenges faced by English learners in terms of language skills. The research has explored the different ways in which English can be effectively applied to establish cross-cultural communication and collaboration (Chapter 1, 2 & 3), emphasizing how students and workers feel around it (Chapters 4 and 5). I expect to have proved that valuable guidance and recommendations for improving English language proficiency and cross-cultural competence are important perspectives to enhance English language teaching programs and workplace training initiatives.

The impact of motivation and self-efficacy on language learning significantly affect the progress and effort of students, companies, managers or, for instance, CEOs. In the context of economic and educational globalization, communication, cultural awareness and sensitivity emerge as indispensable, facilitating effective cross-cultural communication through understanding and respecting diverse cultural values and behavioral norms. Language learning strategies and instructional approaches are important to provide a holistic perspective on the intricate dynamics within English language learning, cross-cultural competence, and workplace adaptability.

The findings of the exploration hold substantial implications for English language education programs. It is evident that the integration of English language learning and cross-cultural competence development into educational curricula can exert a profound



influence on students' language proficiency and their adeptness in navigating the intricacies of a globalized world.

The incorporation of English language instruction into educational programs of companies and university curricula presents students with opportunities not only to enhance their language skills but also to cultivate a profound understanding of different cultures and modes of communication. Learning on cross-cultural competence equips students with the essential skills to effectively communicate and interact with individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. If the learning does not take place, at least the awareness about its importance is clear.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 introduced the main theoretical apparatus of the study, respectively surveying previous research, incorporating Chinese variables and framing the theoretical hypothesis of the present study. The results in Chapters 4 underscore the importance of implementing effective strategies and pedagogical approaches in English language education. Educators can deploy various techniques, such as communicative language teaching, task-based learning, and technology integration, to augment language acquisition and foster cross-cultural understanding. Students and professional markets can actively engage in meaningful language activities, enabling them to apply their language skills in authentic contexts and fostering a deeper appreciation for diverse cultures. The promotion of cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding, along with the provision of opportunities for language practice in real-life situations, English language education programs can prepare students for the challenges of a globalized world and educators, alongside students, acknowledge the role of language proficiency together with knowledge and awareness about appreciation for cultural diversity, career development, motivation in language learning, and cross-cultural competence development into educational curricula.

The research findings in Chapter 5 can be used for workplace training initiatives. The implementation of workplace English language training programs can be used to identify

learning, linguistic, cultural, and professional strategies to foster English language proficiency and enhance cross-cultural competence in the workplace. These recommendations can be laid out within companies and educational institutions as valuable resources for organizations aiming to equip their employees with the necessary skills to navigate cross-cultural interactions and enhance workplace adaptability.

Unlike prior studies concentrating solely on language forms and usage, this framework adopted a comprehensive approach by integrating the relationship between language proficiency and cross-cultural competence. The main target was to acknowledge the pivotal role of language in cross-cultural communication. A significant contribution of this framework lies in its emphasis on the importance of cross-cultural education. It can be used to furnish explicit recommendations for educational practices, enabling educators to cultivate students' language proficiency and cross-cultural competence, thereby supporting their performance in cross-cultural communication.

The data analysis employed in this study demonstrated innovative approaches by integrating various methods, including qualitative and quantitative analysis, observation, interviews, Pearson correlation analysis, and the use of Cronbach's alpha coefficients. An innovative aspect of the exploration incorporated both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Qualitative analysis delves into participants' experiences and perspectives through interviews, while quantitative analysis provides statistical evidence and numerical measurements to substantiate the research findings. The idea was to provide a holistic approach that is linked to the learning, teaching, and use of English as foreign language. The statistical technique used in this doctoral thesis can assess the strength and direction of relationships between variables, allowing researchers to quantify the degree of association.

The research findings can be practical to underscore the significance of designing instructional materials and activities that address the diverse linguistic and cultural

backgrounds of students. The evaluation of the language proficiency levels of students, alongside their cultural experiences and learning styles. Language instructors are encouraged to integrate authentic materials, such as literature, films, and real-life scenarios, to actively engage students and facilitate their cultural understanding. As Rao points out (1-8), the adoption of various instruction techniques can allow students, teachers, and companies to build language skills while concurrently fostering cross-cultural competence. At the same time, educational institutions and company managers realize about the importance of cross-cultural learning through different and new methods beyond grammar and use of English exercises. The guidelines can then integrate the development of instructional materials that reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds and interests of students. Furthermore, other remarks included the incorporation of authentic materials and learning environments (such as CLIL) to enrich cultural understanding, and the use of differentiated instruction techniques to address individual students' language needs and learning styles.

The concluded assumption proves the hypothesis that cross-cultural exchange plans play a pivotal role in promoting cross-cultural education. These programs provide opportunities for students to interact with peers from various cultural backgrounds, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives (Nieto 123-132). Participation in activities such as cultural events, language exchanges, and collaborative projects enables students to enhance their language proficiency, cultural sensitivity, and empathy.

Teachers, language instructors and academic/educational institutions emphasize the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively engage in cross-cultural education. Teachers become aware about enhancing their cultural competence, language proficiency, and pedagogical strategies to create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment (Макарова 144-158). Companies might become interested in the organization of cross-cultural exchange programs to facilitate meaningful interactions among students from diverse cultural backgrounds, the development of collaborative projects

that encourage students to explore and appreciate different cultures and the inclusion of a supportive environment that promotes cultural understanding and appreciation. Similarly, professional development programs should be provided to enhance teachers' expertise in cross-cultural education, encompassing cross-cultural communication, cultural sensitivity, and instructional strategies that promote linguistic and cultural diversity. Teachers and companies become convinced about the important and recurrence of the cross-cultural competence, the effective instructional strategies to address the needs of culturally diverse students, and the reflection among teachers to adapt to evolving student demographics.

The findings shown in Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 hold important implications for policymakers in the field of foreign language education. A key finding highlights disparities in English language learners' proficiency and cross-cultural competence across different language skills. This suggests that there are specific areas where students may face challenges, such as speaking or writing, warranting targeted improvement efforts. Or that these areas and necessities can be found and so companies, teachers and students need to develop on these issues.

The study underscores the urgent need for adequate educational resources and support for language learning. Addressing these resource gaps would then ensure that students have access to diverse learning opportunities tailored to their individual needs. These cultural, learning, and professional gaps can be formulated and adapted for language education policies. Not only educational institutions but also transnational companies can adopt effective strategies for promoting language learning and cross-cultural competence. Workplace adaptability can be proposed not only as a result but the *product* that can be sold by educational training and *consumed* by companies. The recognition of disparities in language proficiency and cross-cultural competence can improve the effectiveness of foreign language education for all learners. This study makes significant contributions to the field of English language studies because it accounts for various theoretical frameworks, providing

innovative data analysis methods, practical guidelines for cross-cultural education, and insights for foreign language education policy. These aspects encourage the further progress and innovation in the field of English language studies regarding the topics, questions and data shown in this thesis.

### **6.1 Practical Recommendations and Limitations to Enhance English Language Proficiency, Cross-cultural Competence, and Workplace Adaptability**

The purpose of this section is to explore practical recommendations to improve English language skills, cross-cultural competence, and adaptability in the workplace. In today's globalized world, where effective communication across cultures is crucial, these skills are increasingly essential. Integrating English language learning and cross-cultural competence development into educational programs is an essential step in equipping individuals with the skills necessary to succeed in a globalized society. By integrating language learning and cross-cultural training into curricula, educational institutions can provide students with the basic knowledge and skills needed to communicate effectively and navigate cultural differences. Accordingly, strategies to promote English language training and cross-cultural competence in the workplace are crucial for organizations operating in multicultural contexts. Effective communication and cultural understanding are key factors in fostering collaboration, increasing productivity, and building successful relationships with clients.

This study has demonstrated that English language learning plays a crucial role in today's globalized world. English language skills not only facilitate effective communication but also improve access to knowledge, opportunities, and resources. Thus, it is essential that educational programs prioritize English language instruction and provide comprehensive language learning support to students. Similarly, this thesis has highlighted the significance of developing cross-cultural competence in educational settings. As societies become more

diverse and interconnected, it is indispensable for educational programs to integrate the development of cross-cultural competence into their curricula.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made for integrating English language learning and cross-cultural competence development into educational programs. In the first place, schools and universities should offer rigorous English language courses and support services to ensure that students achieve a high level of proficiency. This may include language labs, conversation practice sessions, and language exchange programs. Modules on culture learning are pivotal as well to foster the development of the cross-cultural attitudes.

The second recommendation is for educational institutions to establish partnerships or collaborations with international organizations, universities, and cultural exchange programs. These partnerships can facilitate opportunities for students to engage in immersive language experiences, such as study abroad programs, internships, or volunteer work in other countries. These activities not only enhance English language skills but also promote cross-cultural understanding and adaptation.

Additionally, educators should incorporate cross-cultural content and tasks into their teaching materials and methods. This may include exposing students to different perspectives, cultural practices, and global issues. Educators can encourage dialogue, discussion, and group projects that promote cross-cultural communication and cooperation.

Finally, assessment methods should reflect the importance of English language skills and cross-cultural competence. Examinations and assignments can be designed to assess these skills, and students should be provided with feedback and guidance to improve their language skills and cross-cultural competence.

## 6.2 Future Research in English Language Studies and Cross-cultural Competence

This section delves into the limitations of the study in English language research. It also suggests avenues for future investigations. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge the restrictions posed by the study sample size. Due to time and resource limitations, only a small number of participants were included. This limited sample size could impact the applicability of the findings to a population. To address this concern in research, it is recommended to include a diverse and representative sample that ensures broader relevance. The small sample size does not limit generalization. It raises concerns about statistical power during analysis. By involving a range of participants with backgrounds, researchers can obtain reliable and robust results thus increasing confidence in these findings. Collaborating with institutions or research centers would be beneficial in gathering a pool of participants and enabling an exploration of this research topic.

Furthermore, expanding the sample size presents opportunities for examining subgroup differences within the population. Researchers can involve individuals from backgrounds such as varying age groups, education levels, and language proficiency to gain an understanding of how these factors may influence outcomes.

For example, as educators and policymakers explore the effects of different teaching methods on learners with varying proficiency levels, they glean valuable insights. These insights, in turn, serve as a foundation for crafting language learning programs that are not only effective but also tailored to meet the diverse needs of the students.

Including participants from backgrounds or individuals who are native English speakers can offer valuable insights into the challenges they encounter during their language learning journey. To ensure a rounded sample, researchers need to employ sampling techniques. Randomly selecting participants from schools, regions or demographic groups helps

minimize any biases and ensures a representation of the target population. Moreover, collecting data from a variety of settings, such as areas or both public and private institutions allows for an understanding of the factors that influence English language studies.

To ensure the credibility of data, future research should contemplate integrating more objective measures, such as performance-based assessments or conducting longitudinal studies. A mixed methods approach could also prove beneficial in overcoming the limitations associated with solely relying on one research method.

The utilization of self-reported measures and subjective evaluations in this study prompts worries about the validity and reliability of the results. Self-report measures are susceptible to biases like social desirability or response bias, impacting data accuracy and representativeness. By incorporating objective measurements and performance-based assessments, researchers can enhance objectivity and reliability when drawing conclusions from their research.

It would be important to combine self-report measures with additional metrics. For instance, instead of solely depending on participants' self-assessment of their language proficiency, researchers could administer standardized language tests to obtain more unbiased and comparable data. Appraisals based on actual performance, such as presentations or written assignments, can provide a direct evaluation of language skills and abilities. Including these measures in research can help researchers improve the reliability of their findings and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Moreover, conducting longitudinal studies can address the limitations associated with commonly used cross-sectional designs in research. Longitudinal studies involve collecting data from participants over an extended period, allowing researchers to observe changes and progress over time. By tracking participants' language learning journey, researchers can capture the dynamic and intricate nature of language acquisition, leading to a nuanced understanding of the factors that influence language studies. Longitudinal studies also enable



the exploration of causal relationships between variables that would not be feasible using cross-sectional designs.

A mixed methods approach provides a holistic perspective on the research topic at hand. By combining quantitative and qualitative data sources, researchers can strengthen their findings and enhance the credibility and robustness of their results. Quantitative information offers evidence for generalization purposes, while qualitative data provides detailed descriptions and insights into participants' experiences and perspectives. Incorporating both approaches allows for overcoming limitations associated with relying solely on one method and gaining a nuanced understanding of the research topic.

When individuals from varied backgrounds embark on learning English, they often confront substantial cultural differences. Disparities in values, beliefs, and communication styles compared to native English speakers can impact their language acquisition progress. Hence, it is crucial to incorporate diverse cultural backgrounds and also monitor the development of targeted interventions and support systems to address specific needs regarding cross-cultural competence.

While this exploration provides valuable insights into language acquisition, it somewhat underestimates the importance of developing communication skills. Proficiency in a language goes beyond having good grammar; it involves expressing ideas clearly, understanding others effectively, and engaging in interactive conversations. By not giving enough attention to communication skills, an opportunity is missed to explore how language learning can be practically applied in real-life scenarios. It is crucial for studies to prioritize fluency in speaking, active listening abilities, and an understanding of how language functions within diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts and with different individuals.

There are several promising avenues for future research in English language studies if we look ahead the future. One area that warrants further investigation is the impact of technology on language learning. The rapid advancement of digital tools and online platforms

has opened new possibilities for language instruction. It is crucial to examine how these resources can enhance language learning and promote learner engagement. One potential research direction is to explore the efficacy of various technological tools in facilitating language acquisition. For example, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) have gained attention for their potential to create immersive language learning experiences. Research could investigate the effectiveness of VR/AR applications in improving learners' language skills, such as pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and communicative competence.

Another area of interest is the role of online platforms and mobile applications in supporting self-directed language learning. With the proliferation of language learning apps and websites, learners now have access to a vast amount of language resources and opportunities for autonomous practice. Future research could explore how learners utilize these platforms, their perceptions of their effectiveness, and the impact they have on their language learning outcomes.

Additionally, it is important to consider the potential challenges and limitations associated with integrating technology into language learning. Research could investigate issues such as learners' attitudes towards technology, the digital divide and its impact on access to technology, and the need for teacher training to effectively incorporate technology into language instruction.

There are also several promising areas for future research in the field of English language teaching and the development of cross-cultural competence which involve the potentialities for personal growth. Researchers can contribute to improving language teaching and promoting cultural understanding. Future research could focus on investigating effective strategies for integrating cross-cultural competence into English language teaching. This involves investigating how language lessons and materials can be designed to develop not only language skills but also learners' awareness and appreciation of different cultural

perspectives. Understanding how to seamlessly integrate cross-cultural content into the language classroom can help learners become more culturally sensitive and competent communicators. Another important aspect to consider can be the impact of technology (IT, VR/AR...) on the teaching of English and the development of cross-cultural competence. With the rapid development of technology, it is crucial to explore how digital tools and online platforms can be effectively used to enhance cross-cultural understanding. Investigating effective training methods and pedagogical approaches for teachers may enable them to facilitate cross-cultural learning in the classroom. Research into teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices in relation to cross-cultural education can also illuminate the factors that influence their implementation of culturally inclusive teaching practices.

An examination of immersive learning environments, such as language immersion programs or study abroad opportunities, could shed light on their potential to enhance language acquisition. These immersive experiences offer students the opportunity to live in an English-speaking environment, which promotes a more natural and authentic language learning experience. Future research could explore the extent to which these immersive environments contribute to language proficiency and cultural understanding. Exploring experiential learning strategies in English language teaching could also be a fruitful avenue for future research. Experiential learning encourages active participation, hands-on experience, and practical application of language skills. By incorporating real-world experiences such as internships, community service projects, or simulations, researchers can assess the impact of these strategies on language acquisition and overall language proficiency.

To sum up, this PhD not only advances theoretical frameworks in English Language Studies but also provides practical recommendations for educators, institutions, and workplaces to foster a more inclusive and adaptable environment. By incorporating English language learning and cross-cultural competence development into educational programs and

promoting workplace training initiatives, organizations can ensure that individuals are well-equipped to thrive in the era of economic and educational globalization. Despite the study's valuable contributions, it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations, including sample size, research methodology, and scope of investigation. Moving forward, addressing these limitations and exploring new avenues for research will contribute to the ongoing improvement of English language teaching practices and language acquisition outcomes. Through continuous efforts and a commitment to refinement, the field can strive towards more effective educational experiences for English language learners in the ever-evolving global landscape.

## Declaration of Academic Honesty

I hereby affirm that I wrote this thesis independently and that I did not use any literature source and aids other than those quoted. All thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources are properly denoted as such.

Salamanca, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024



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Xiaoyan Chen

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## Appendix 1 - Survey Questionnaire

### English Language Research and Cross Cultural Competence in the Chinese Workplace

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your responses will contribute to our understanding of the importance of English language research in the Chinese workplace and the relationship between cross-cultural competence and workplace adaptability. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability.

#### Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

2. Age:

- Under 18 years old
- 18-25 years old
- 26-35 years old
- 36-45 years old
- 46-55 years old
- 56 years old or above

3. Education Level:

- High School or below
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD or above

4. Employment Status:

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed
- Student

- ( )Retired
- 5. English Language Level
- ( )Basic
- ( )Intermediate
- ( )Advanced
- ( )Native

### Section 2: Importance of English Language Proficiency in the Chinese Workplace

Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Agree".

- 5.( )English language proficiency is essential for career advancement in the Chinese workplace.
- 6.( )English language skills are important for effective communication with international colleagues and clients.
- 7.( )English language proficiency contributes to the development of better language learning methods in the Chinese workplace.
- 8.( )The ability to use English in the workplace improves job opportunities in multinational companies.
- 9.( )English language proficiency enhances the competitiveness of Chinese companies in the global market.

### Section 3: Cross Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability

Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Agree".

- 10.( )Cross-cultural competence is important for working effectively in a multicultural workplace.
- 11.( )Understanding different cultural practices and norms contributes to better teamwork and collaboration.
- 12.( )Adapting to different work styles and communication patterns is essential for success in a globalized workplace.

13.( )Cross-cultural training programs are beneficial for improving workplace adaptability.

14.( )Cultural intelligence plays a significant role in career advancement opportunities.

#### Section 4: Additional Feedback

Please share any additional comments or suggestions regarding English language research and cross-cultural competence in the Chinese workplace.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

## Appendix 2 Observation Sheet

Date:

Time:

Location:

Group Type:

Student Group (A1, A2, ...)

Employee Group (B1, B2, ...)

Observation Content:

Behavior or Interaction:

Description of the observed behavior or interaction related to the use of English in the workplace.

Active participation in English conversations during meetings.	
Asking and answering questions in English during presentations.	
Engaging in English language discussions during work-related activities.	
English Language Proficiency:	

Assessment of English language proficiency for each observed group:

Please rate on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being low proficiency and 5 being high proficiency.

Criteria for assessment:

Fluency: How smoothly and confidently the individuals speak in English.	
Accuracy: The correctness of their grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.	
Comprehension: The ability to understand and interpret English communication.	



<p>Confidence: The level of confidence displayed in using English in the workplace.</p> <p>Job Performance:</p>	
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Assessment of job performance for each observed group:

Please rate on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor performance and 5 being excellent performance.

Criteria for assessment:

<p>Task Completion: The ability to complete assigned tasks efficiently and effectively.</p>	
<p>Quality of Work: The level of accuracy and attention to detail in their work.</p>	
<p>Initiative: The willingness to take initiative and go beyond what is required.</p>	
<p>Problem Solving: The ability to identify and solve problems related to job responsibilities.</p> <p>Collaboration:</p>	

Assessment of collaboration within each observed group:

Please rate on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being low collaboration and 5 being high collaboration.

Criteria for assessment:

<p>Communication: The ability to communicate effectively and share information with team members.</p>	
<p>Cooperation: The willingness to work together and support each other in achieving common goals.</p>	
<p>Conflict Resolution: The ability to resolve conflicts or disagreements within</p>	

the group.	
Contribution: The active participation and contribution to group discussions and activities.	

### **Appendix 3 Self-scale of Cross-cultural Ability and Career Adaptability**

Hello!

The information in this questionnaire strictly adheres to the principle of confidentiality.

Please fill it out truthfully according to your actual situation.

1. Gender [multiple choice] \*

Male

Female

2. Personal status [multiple choice] \*

Students in colleges and universities

Interns

Employed

Unemployed

3. Have you learned a second language (such as English, Spanish, French, etc.) [multiple choice] \*

Yes

No

4. Have you communicated or worked with foreigners [multiple choice] \*

Yes

No

5. Have you ever traveled abroad or studied abroad, or worked abroad [multiple choice]

\*

Yes

No

### Appendix 3.1 Career Adaptability Scale

Guidance: In the process of building one's career growth, each individual possesses different strengths. No one excels at everything, and each person is more adept at certain abilities than others. Please assess your level of development in each skill in the scale below.

#### Scale Items [Matrix Scale Items]

	Very Weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
1.Reflecting on what my future will be like and preparing for it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.Having clear career development goals and plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.Persevering in my choices and working hard for them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.Being adept at exploring my surroundings and seeking growth opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.Observing different ways that others approach tasks and delving into issues that matter to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Appendix 3.2 Simple Coping Strategies Questionnaire

Explanation: The following lists attitudes and approaches you may adopt when facing setbacks or difficulties in your life. Please read each item carefully, then choose the response on the right. "Do not adopt" is 0, "Occasionally adopt" is 1, "Sometimes adopt" is 2, and "Frequently adopt" is 3. Please mark "√" on the number that best fits your personal situation.

#### Attitudes and Approaches

You May Adopt When Facing Setbacks or Difficulties [Matrix Scale Items] \*[Matrix Scale Items]\*

	Do not adopt	Occasionally adopt	Sometimes adopt	Frequently adopt
1. Seek relief through work, study, or other activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Talk to others and confide inner worries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Stand firm in one's position and struggle for what one wants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Refer to how others solve problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Self-soothe and comfort oneself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Appendix 3.3 Initiative Personality Scale

Please evaluate and assess yourself based on your actual feelings and experiences using the 17 descriptions below. Place a circle (○) on the number that best represents your judgment.

The evaluation and judgment criteria are as follows: 1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Uncertain, 4 Agree, 5 Strongly Agree.

#### Matrix Scale Items \*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.If I see someone in difficulty, I will do my best to offer help.	○	○	○	○	○
2.I excel at turning problems into opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○
3.I am always looking for better ways of doing things.	○	○	○	○	○
4.When faced with a problem, I confront it directly.	○	○	○	○	○
5.If I see something I don't like about myself, I take steps to change it.	○	○	○	○	○

### Appendix 3.4 Self-Harmony Scale

Below are some statements about how you perceive yourself. When answering, please read each statement carefully and then circle a number (1 represents the statement completely does not apply to you; 2 represents the statement mostly does not apply to you; 3 represents unsure; 4 represents the statement mostly applies to you; 5 represents the statement completely applies to you) to indicate the extent to which the statement reflects your current view of yourself. Each person's perception of themselves is unique, so there are no right or wrong answers; you just need to answer truthfully.

#### Matrix Scale Items\*

	Completely Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Uncertain	Somewhat Agree	Completely Agree
1.Sometimes I am dissatisfied with my performance in certain aspects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.I find it difficult to express my emotional reactions to others appropriately.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.I have my own opinions on many things, but I don't expect others to share the same views.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.Once I form an opinion about something, I don't change it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5.I often feel lonely and unsupported.	○	○	○	○	○
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### Appendix 3.5 Cross-cultural Competence Self-Assessment Scale

#### I. Knowledge of Own Culture [Matrix Scale Items] \*

	Slightly	A Bit	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much
1. Understanding the history of my own country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Understanding the social norms of my own country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Understanding the values of my own country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### II. Knowledge of International Cultures [Matrix Scale Items] \*

	Slightly	A Bit	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much
4. Understanding the history of other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Understanding the social norms of other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Understanding the values of other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Understanding the knowledge of cultural taboos in other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Understanding the language and behavior of individuals from different cultural backgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Understanding the basic concepts of cross-cultural communication and transmission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Understanding some strategies and skills for successful cross-cultural communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### III. Attitudes [Matrix Scale Items] \*

	Very weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	Very strong
11. Willing to communicate and learn from people from different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Willing to respect the lifestyle and customs of people from other countries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Willing to learn foreign languages and cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### IV. Cross-cultural Communication Skills [Matrix Scale Items]\*

	Very weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	Very strong
14. Ability to negotiate with the other party when misunderstandings arise in cross-cultural communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Ability to use body language or other non-verbal means to communicate when faced with language barriers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Ability to successfully communicate with individuals from	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

different social, cultural backgrounds, and fields using a foreign language.					
17.Ability to treat foreign individuals politely during communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18.Ability to avoid using inappropriate language and behavior that may offend individuals from different cultures during communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19.Ability to avoid developing prejudices and biases when communicating with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20.Ability to refrain from discussing privacy-related topics when communicating with individuals from diverse cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21.Sensitivity to cultural differences in cross-cultural communication.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22.Ability to view events in other countries from different cultural perspectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### V. Cross-cultural Cognitive Skills [Matrix Scale Question]\*

	Very weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	Very strong
23.Ability to acquire cross-cultural communication knowledge directly through contact with individuals from different cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24.Ability to employ various methods, techniques, and strategies to facilitate the learning of languages and cultures from other societies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25.Capability to reflect on and learn from cross-cultural conflicts and misunderstandings, seeking appropriate resolutions when they occur.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### VI.Cross-cultural Awareness [Matrix Scale Questions]\*

	Very weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	Very strong
26.Awareness of cultural similarities and differences when communicating with individuals from other cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27.Awareness of cultural identity differences when communicating with individuals from other cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28.Awareness of the need to examine cross-cultural communication scenarios from different cultural perspectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The data information strictly adheres to the principle of confidentiality and is solely for academic research purposes. Thank you for your cooperation!

### Appendix 4 Participants' Background Statistics

	Gender	Age Range	Education Level	Employment Status	English Level	Importance of English Language Proficiency in the Chinese Workplace	Cross Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability
	Male	18-25	Master's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	16	18
	Female	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Basic	13	22
	Male	26-35	PhD or above	Employed full-time	Basic	14	15
	Female	18-25	Master's	Employed part-time	Advanced	7	20
	Male	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	12	17
	Male	26-35	Bachelor's	Self-employed	Native	23	14
	Female	46-55	High School or below	Retired	Intermediate	10	12
	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	11	17
	Male	26-35	Master's	Employed full-time	Basic	15	16
0	Male	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Basic	16	15
1	Female	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed part-time	Basic	8	19
2	Male	55+	Master's	Self-employed	Intermediate	17	13
3	Female	26-35	PhD or above	Employed full-time	Intermediate	14	15
4	Male	26-35	High School or below	Employed full-time	Intermediate	9	18
5	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed full-time	Basic	16	16
6	Female	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	13	17

	Gender	Age Range	Education Level	Employment Status	English Level	Importance of English Language Proficiency in the Chinese Workplace	Cross Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability
7	Male	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	12	18
8	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	14	17
9	Male	46-55	High School or below	Retired	Intermediate	11	13
0	Female	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Basic	15	17
1	Male	26-35	PhD or above	Employed full-time	Basic	17	16
2	Female	56+	Bachelor's	Unemployed	Intermediate	13	11
3	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	14	16
4	Male	46-55	High School or below	Unemployed	Intermediate	11	12
5	Female	26-35	PhD or above	Employed full-time	Advanced	15	15
6	Male	26-35	High School or below	Self-employed	Intermediate	9	13
7	Female	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	8	14
8	Male	46-55	Master's	Retired	Basic	14	14
9	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed part-time	Basic	12	19
0	Male	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time	Basic	14	17
1	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed full-time	Basic	13	16
2	Male	26-35	Bachelor's	Employed full-time		34	
	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed	Intermediate	13	17

	Gender	Age Range	Education Level	Employment Status	English Level	Importance of English Language Proficiency in the Chinese Workplace	Cross Cultural Competence and Workplace Adaptability
5				part-time			
6	Male	46-55	Bachelor's	Self-employed	Native	12	16
7	Female	26-35	High School or below	Employed full-time	Intermediate	14	15
8	Male	26-35	PhD or above	Employed full-time	Basic	14	16
9	Female	55+	Bachelor's	Retired	Intermediate	10	14
0	Female	26-35	Master's	Employed full-time	Intermediate	12	16
1	Male	46-55	High School or below	Unemployed	Intermediate	11	12
2	Female	26-35	PhD or above	Employed full-time	Advanced	13	13
3	Male	26-35	High School or below	Self-employed	Intermediate	8	15

### Appendix 5 Cross-Cultural Capability and Workplace Adaptability Data Survey

NO.	IP Address	1.Gender	2.Personal identity	3.International language learning experience	Total score
1	43.225.208 .221 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	3	1	208
2	43.225.208 .221 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	1	3	1	153
3	119.54.252 .253 (Jilin - Siping)	2	1	1	179
4	60.15.156. 153 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	143
5	111.41.239 .60 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	143
6	60.233.17. 45 (Shandong - Jinan)	2	2	2	145
7	106.113.54 .160 (Hebei - Shijiazhuang)	2	1	1	154
8	111.41.245 .17 (Heilongjiang - Jiamusi)	2	1	1	155
9	122.158.14 8.172 (Heilongjiang - Mudanjiang)	2	1	1	152



0	1	221.209.89 .182 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	161
1	1	117.179.15 3.99 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	152
2	1	113.6.69.2 22 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	161
3	1	111.41.179 .63 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	1	1	1	138
4	1	111.41.209 .11 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	1	175
5	1	60.219.242 .96 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	190
6	1	112.98.237 .170 (Heilongjiang - Heihe)	2	1	1	142
7	1	117.136.57 .133 (Heilongjiang - Unknown)	2	1	1	156
8	1	36.132.159 .68 (Liaoning - Unknown)	2	1	1	153
9	1	113.4.110. 66 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	147
0	2	223.104.11 3.139 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	2	123
1	2	112.98.145 .210 (Heilongjiang - Jixi)	2	1	2	147

2	2	60.219.108 .133 (Heilongjiang - Yichun)	2	1	1	160
3	2	42.184.185 .18 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	4	1	123
4	2	111.41.23. 5 (Heilongjiang - Jiamusi)	2	1	1	168
5	2	1.60.156.1 54 (Heilongjiang - Yichun)	2	1	2	171
6	2	218.9.230. 161 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	168
7	2	223.104.17 .89 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	2	148
8	2	112.99.83. 27 (Heilongjiang - Jiamusi)	2	1	1	143
9	2	110.240.22 0.253 (Hebei - Shijiazhuang)	2	1	1	144
0	3	117.179.25 2.66 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	163
1	3	111.40.102 .8 (Heilongjiang - Jixi)	2	1	1	163
2	3	1.61.95.18 9 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	122
3	3	60.218.239 .224 (Heilongjiang - Shuangyashan)	2	1	1	152
4	3	117.179.23 9.46 (Heilongjiang -	2	1	1	123

		Harbin)				
5	3	117.179.13 8.134 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	147
6	3	175.19.230 .148 (Jilin - Changchun)	2	1	2	134
7	3	39.128.61. 148 (Yunnan - Dali)	2	1	1	165
8	3	111.43.144 .176 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	2	152
9	3	36.97.185. 172 (Jilin - Changchun)	2	1	2	180
0	4	43.225.208 .241 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	2	121
1	4	123.181.17 1.44 (Hebei - Tangshan)	1	1	1	149
2	4	36.132.136 .104 (Liaoning - Unknown)	2	1	1	134
3	4	113.7.100. 69 (Heilongjiang - Mudanjiang)	2	1	1	151
4	4	221.206.14 1.136 (Heilongjiang - Mudanjiang)	2	1	2	145
5	4	111.41.198 .52 (Heilongjiang - Daxing'anling)	2	4	1	134
6	4	117.136.7. 117 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	190
7	4	1.62.43.93 (Heilongjiang -	2	1	1	154

		Harbin)				
8	4	1.189.238. 143 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	164
9	4	117.179.23 4.195 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	155
0	5	223.104.24 7.6 (Zhejiang - Hangzhou)	2	1	1	134
1	5	103.57.12. 146 (Jilin - Changchun)	2	1	1	169
2	5	223.104.19 2.190 (Shandong - Dongying)	1	1	2	172
3	5	117.136.7. 66 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	2	149
4	5	43.225.208 .141 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	185
5	5	117.179.24 7.111 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	163
6	5	111.41.165 .212 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	163
7	5	43.225.208 .211 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	164
8	5	42.101.250 .81 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	2	149
9	5	221.209.98 .3 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	1	135

0	6	112.103.77 .122 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	135
1	6	111.41.39. 166 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	172
2	6	183.197.12 5.173 (Hebei - Chengde)	2	1	1	189
3	6	117.179.54 .188 (Heilongjiang - Heihe)	2	1	1	170
4	6	117.179.11 4.127 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	2	155
5	6	120.229.22 .92 (Guangdong - Shenzhen)	2	1	1	141
6	6	183.199.51 .6 (Hebei - Langfang)	1	1	1	139
7	6	111.41.230 .42 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	126
8	6	101.24.58. 14 (Hebei - Shijiazhuang)	2	1	1	172
9	6	42.101.111 .172 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	148
0	7	123.167.61 .62 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	1	1	1	145
1	7	111.41.113 .57 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	143
2	7	117.179.23 8.56 (Heilongjiang -	2	1	1	140

		Harbin)				
3	7	39.148.77. 155 (Henan - Nanyang)	2	1	1	139
4	7	61.158.146 .171 (Henan - Pingdingshan)	2	1	1	185
5	7	36.132.193 .150 (Liaoning - Unknown)	2	1	1	170
6	7	122.156.98 .238 (Heilongjiang - Jixi)	2	1	1	141
7	7	111.41.114 .52 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	157
8	7	218.8.83.1 22 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	155
9	7	60.219.155 .48 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	148
0	8	111.41.111 .242 (Heilongjiang - Yichun)	1	1	2	151
1	8	125.211.13 9.117 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	1	1	1	145
2	8	42.184.181 .114 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	178
3	8	43.225.208 .193 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	139
4	8	111.41.234 .63 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	159

5	8	1.62.75.91 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	173
6	8	39.189.48.54 (Zhejiang - Ningbo)	1	1	1	149
7	8	111.42.93.130 (Heilongjiang - Heihe)	2	4	1	121
8	8	117.179.167.198 (Heilongjiang - Jiamusi)	2	1	1	133
9	8	43.225.208.136 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	137
0	9	111.30.120.138 (Tianjin - Tianjin)	2	1	1	139
1	9	125.37.189.179 (Tianjin - Tianjin)	1	1	1	156
2	9	117.136.56.106 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	153
3	9	111.43.209.198 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	164
4	9	60.14.69.148 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	151
5	9	112.98.17.27 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	1	1	1	144
6	9	117.179.143.126 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	155
7	9	221.207.197.25 (Heilongjiang -	2	1	1	169

	Harbin)				
8	9 111.41.200 .98 (Heilongjiang - Mudanjiang)	2	1	1	163
9	9 112.101.99 .202 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	1	1	1	144
00	1 117.179.19 2.62 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	1	1	1	177
01	1 117.179.21 7.22 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	132
02	1 223.96.215 .177 (Shandong - Heze)	2	1	1	157
03	1 42.185.164 .164 (Heilongjiang - Shuangyashan)	2	1	1	140
04	1 117.136.7. 79 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	148
05	1 42.103.15. 21 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	1	159
06	1 113.1.86.2 9 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	1	148
07	1 39.188.206 .52 (Zhejiang - Ningbo)	2	1	1	135
08	1 42.185.110 .103 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	1	1	1	139
09	1 223.104.11 3.137 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	155



10	1	111.58.248 .247 (Guangxi - Qinzhou)	2	1	2	160
11	1	124.239.56 .187 (Hebei - Chengde)	2	1	1	129
12	1	124.240.86 .216 (Guangdong - Guangzhou)	2	1	1	180
13	1	112.98.155 .32 (Heilongjiang - Jixi)	2	1	1	153
14	1	110.52.127 .68 (Hunan - Xiangtan)	2	1	1	179
15	1	42.227.197 .249 (Henan - Xinyang)	2	1	1	170
16	1	36.143.49. 18 (Hebei - Handan)	2	1	1	145
17	1	112.36.206 .65 (Shandong - Jinan)	2	1	1	170
18	1	27.187.114 .137 (Hebei - Baoding)	2	1	1	174
19	1	218.66.44. 166 (Fujian - Fuzhou)	2	1	1	169
20	1	182.51.86. 193 (Hebei - Shijiazhuang)	2	1	1	138
21	1	112.9.188. 74 (Shandong - Qingdao)	2	1	1	159
22	1	39.183.133 .110 (Zhejiang - Jinhua)	1	1	1	155
23	1	183.199.25 2.150 (Hebei - Baoding)	2	1	1	168
24	1	106.8.144. 21 (Hebei - Zhangjiakou)	2	1	1	160

25	1	120.7.240. 106 (Hebei - Langfang)	2	1	1	153
26	1	221.215.63 .243 (Shandong - Qingdao)	1	1	1	169
27	1	120.8.147. 99 (Hebei - Handan)	2	1	1	167
28	1	182.97.79. 83 (Jiangxi - Nanchang)	2	1	1	173
29	1	1.189.214. 75 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	1	1	1	173
30	1	117.179.22 2.107 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	177
31	1	218.9.46.2 30 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	2	85
32	1	111.41.202 .47 (Heilongjiang - Mudanjiang)	1	1	1	205
33	1	111.41.232 .41 (Heilongjiang - Daqing)	2	1	1	124
34	1	221.209.96 .45 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	1	155
35	1	117.179.25 2.172 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	193
36	1	117.179.19 8.199 (Heilongjiang - Qiqihar)	2	1	1	173
37	1	106.115.11 1.96 (Hebei - Handan)	2	1	1	152

38	1	111.41.44. 50 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	2	136
39	1	36.132.193 .145 (Liaoning - Unknown)	2	1	1	168
40	1	183.197.18 9.190 (Hebei - Zhangjiakou)	2	1	1	155
41	1	223.90.11. 119 (Henan - Jiaozuo)	2	1	1	136
42	1	111.42.140 .250 (Heilongjiang - Jixi)	2	1	1	145
43	1	223.90.44. 119 (Henan - Jiaozuo)	2	1	1	141
44	1	117.179.15 .143 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	149
45	1	111.14.16. 250 (Shandong - Heze)	2	1	1	165
46	1	42.236.129 .160 (Henan - Zhengzhou)	2	1	1	166
47	1	111.41.244 .119 (Heilongjiang - Jiamusi)	2	1	1	150
48	1	223.104.11 3.84 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	147
49	1	43.225.208 .246 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	142
50	1	111.41.123 .249 (Heilongjiang - Heihe)	2	1	1	171

51	1	111.41.132 .14 (Heilongjiang - Suihua)	2	1	1	150
52	1	60.219.242 .37 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	142
53	1	101.21.211 .76 (Hebei - Baoding)	2	1	1	156
54	1	117.179.54 .156 (Heilongjiang - Heihe)	2	1	1	155
55	1	39.144.109 .77 (Shandong - Unknown)	2	1	1	151
56	1	144.255.87 .254 (Shandong - Weifang)	1	1	1	167
57	1	111.41.46. 100 (Heilongjiang - Harbin)	2	1	1	160
58	1	117.179.18 1.99 (Heilongjiang - Mudanjiang)	2	1	1	146

