

INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF FOURTH-YEAR ENGLISH MAJORS
IN A THAI PUBLIC UNIVERSITY



A MASTER'S PROJECT
BY
SUREEPORN MANANUAM

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University

May 2014

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AN ABSTRACT
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The current study's objectives were to assess the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors attending a Thai public university in Bangkok and to explore whether there were differences in intercultural sensitivity levels between students with and without international travel experience. Sixty-eight target participants completed a questionnaire that was adapted from the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000). The scale consisted of the following five factors representing intercultural sensitivity: Interaction Engagement, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Confidence, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Attentiveness. The data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. *T*-tests were also employed to determine any differences in intercultural sensitivity levels between students with and without international travel experience.

The results of this study revealed that the fourth-year English majors had a high level of intercultural sensitivity. The mean scores for each factor of intercultural sensitivity were at the high level. However, there was no significant difference between the intercultural sensitivity levels of the fourth-year English majors with and without international travel experience.

ความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาไทย วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นปีที่ 4
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การศึกษาครั้งนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อประเมินระดับความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษา
ไทย วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นปีที่ 4 ของมหาวิทยาลัยรัฐบาลแห่งหนึ่ง และเพื่อหาความแตกต่างของ
ระดับความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมระหว่างนักศึกษาที่มีประสบการณ์การเดินทางไปต่างประเทศกับ
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ในความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรม 3) ความมั่นใจในการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกัน 4) ความสนุกสนานใน
การมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกัน และ 5) ความเอาใจใส่ในการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกัน การวิจัยครั้งนี้
ประมวลผลโดยใช้สถิติ ได้แก่ ความถี่ เปอร์เซ็นต์ ค่าเฉลี่ยของคะแนน ค่าความเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน
และใช้การทดสอบค่าที เพื่อศึกษาความแตกต่างระหว่างความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาที่
มีประสบการณ์การเดินทางไปต่างประเทศกับนักศึกษาที่ไม่มีประสบการณ์การเดินทางไป
ต่างประเทศ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมของกลุ่มตัวอย่างอยู่ในระดับสูง กล่าวคือ
ค่าเฉลี่ยของปัจจัยต่อความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมทั้ง 5 ด้าน อยู่ในระดับสูง อย่างไรก็ตาม
ผลการวิจัยไม่พบความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญของระดับความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมระหว่าง
นักศึกษาที่มีประสบการณ์การเดินทางไปต่างประเทศกับนักศึกษาที่ไม่มีประสบการณ์การเดินทางไป
ต่างประเทศ

The Master's Project titled
"Intercultural Sensitivity of Fourth-Year English Majors in a Thai Public University"

by

Sureeporn Mananuam

has been approved by the Graduate School as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Master of Arts degree in Business English for International Communication of
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..... Dean of Graduate School
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Somchai Santiwatanakul)

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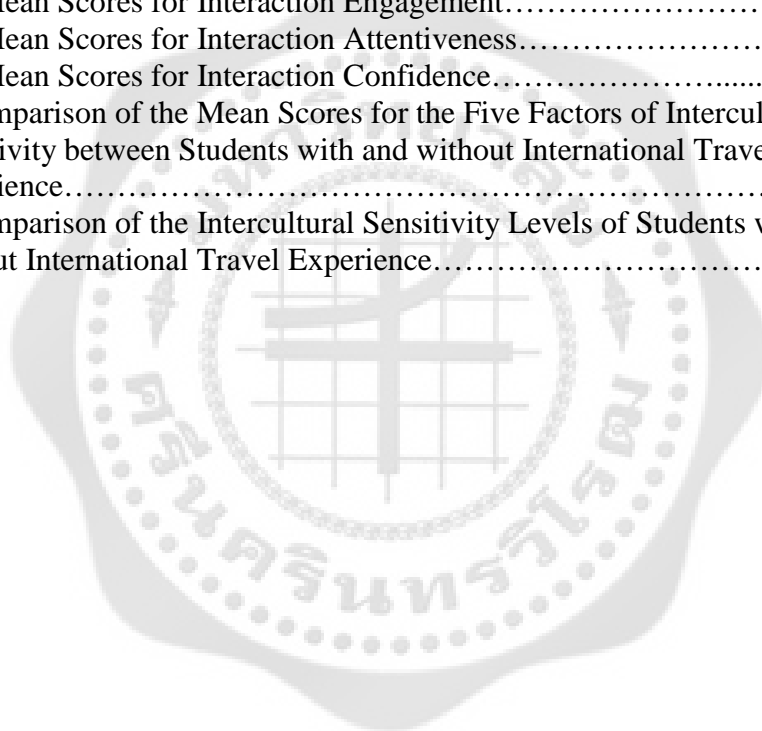
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the current era of globalization, people communicate instantaneously across national borders and cultures. Nearly seven billion culturally diverse citizens around the world have become increasingly interconnected due to changes in economic, governmental and political systems and educational institutions since the early 1990s, which have been combined with advances in communication and transportation technologies (Sorrells, 2013). Therefore, as a global citizen, the ability to effectively communicate with people from a variety of cultures has become vital.

Intercultural communication competence is one important skill for effective communication with culturally diverse people. This term is defined as the ability to communicate with people from different cultures in an effective and appropriate manner (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2007). A number of scholars have emphasized the significance of intercultural communication competence at both personal and professional levels. For example, Sinicrope, Norris and Watanabe (2007) noted that intercultural communication competence aids individuals in the promotion and enrichment of communicative proficiencies as well as in the promotion and attainment of successful cross-cultural collaborations. Additionally, Oetzel (2009) stated that intercultural communication competence creates stronger personal relationships and bonds. Furthermore, Washington, Okoro and Thomas (2012) posited that intercultural communication competence helps global businesses bridge the communication gap among countries that are involved in their international trade negotiations and enables multinational and multicultural managers to manage cultural differences more effectively

In addition, Chen and Starosta (1996) suggested that individuals develop their intercultural communication competence so that they can meaningfully and productively live in today's diverse cultural world.

As intercultural communication competence becomes more crucial in today's global world, a number of scholars have explored its concept. Among these scholars, Chen and Starosta (1996) developed a model of intercultural communication competence and proposed three conceptual dimensions of intercultural communication competence as follows: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness. First, intercultural sensitivity is the affective dimension that refers to the ability to develop an individual's positive emotional desire to acknowledge, appreciate, and accept cultural differences. Second, intercultural awareness is the cognitive dimension that refers to the ability to understand similarities and differences in others' cultures. Third, intercultural adroitness is the behavioral dimension that refers to the ability to achieve communication goals when intercultural communication is evident.

Among the three components of intercultural communication competence proposed by Chen and Starosta (1996), intercultural sensitivity has been extensively studied both in business and academic contexts. From a business perspective, many studies have explored the intercultural sensitivity of employees in multicultural companies. For example, Sizoo, Plank, Iskat and Serrie (2005) examined the intercultural sensitivity of hotel staff and found that service employees with high intercultural sensitivity scored higher than employees with low intercultural sensitivity with regard to their service attentiveness, revenue contribution, interpersonal skills, job satisfaction, and social satisfaction when they engaged in intercultural experiences. The authors suggested that human resources should test and train intercultural sensitivity in service employees to provide better services and increase revenues. Chen (2008) studied the relationship

between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles and found that employees with high intercultural sensitivity were more likely to use integrating and compromising strategies when managing conflicts and less likely to use avoiding and dominating styles than those with low intercultural sensitivity. Furthermore, Mao (2010) found that employees with higher levels of intercultural sensitivity showed greater levels of satisfaction with regard to their organizational communication. Thus, employees' intercultural sensitivity levels may positively influence multicultural workplaces by encouraging more effective communication and better work performances, which results in potentially higher profit margins and overall increased success in a global business.

In the academic context, the significance of intercultural sensitivity in global business coupled with increasingly diverse workplaces and societies have led a number of scholars to investigate students' intercultural sensitivity with regard to preparing them for global citizenship and future qualified workforce. For example, Peng, Rangsihaht and Thaipakdee (2005) assessed the intercultural sensitivity of Chinese and Thai university students and multinational employees and found that English proficiency and intercultural communications experience significantly affected participants' intercultural sensitivity. McMurray (2007) examined whether there were differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of international students, domestic students with international travel experience, and domestic students without international travel experience in the USA. The results suggested that domestic students who had travelled internationally had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than those who had not travelled internationally. In addition, Chen (2008) examined the intercultural sensitivity of Taiwanese senior international business undergraduates and found that gender, age, and foreign language capability did not strongly influence intercultural sensitivity, whereas international experience, campus activities and future plans to study abroad did. Furthermore, Cerit, Penbek, and Yurdakul

(2009) compared the intercultural sensitivity of university students in their second to fourth years based on their university education backgrounds and intercultural experience at two universities in Turkey. The findings revealed that intercultural sensitivity improved as students passed to upper classes and had more interactions with a variety of cultures.

In summary, the intercultural sensitivity of students from different nations has been investigated with regard to various aspects, and the results have yielded an increased understanding of intercultural sensitivity in the academic context.

Statement of the Problem

Thailand is progressing towards the launch of the ASEAN Community in 2015. This Community consists of the following ten ASEAN member states: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia. In response to globalization and regional economic and political developments, this Community has emphasized the regional cooperation of the following three pillars: the ASEAN Political Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2012).

From a business perspective, the ASEAN Economic Community will result in a single market and production base for the ten ASEAN nations that will support the free movement of capital, investments, products, services and skilled labor of eight professional services as follows: Engineering, Nursing, Architecture, Surveying Qualifications, Medical Practitioners, Dental Practitioners, Accountancy Services and Tourism Professionals. Therefore, Thai professionals from these eight services can be employed in the ASEAN nations while simultaneously allowing professionals from other

ASEAN countries to seek employment in Thailand (Yue, 2011; University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, 2012). Thus, the Thai government will be prepared for this free flow of labor.

As the foundation of Thailand's human resources development, the Ministry of Education has established many policies and projects with regard to education. The main purpose of these policies was to prepare Thai students to become good ASEAN citizens who can live and work harmoniously with citizens from all of the other ASEAN countries in multinational societies (Yamwagee, 2010). For instance, the ministry established policies to spread knowledge and information regarding ASEAN among teachers and students and encouraged the teaching of English and other neighboring languages. The ministry also recruited English native speakers to work in 500 Thai schools and launched the English Speaking Year 2012 campaign to encourage Thai students to speak English ("Stepping up Campaign," 2010; "Thailand 2012: The Year of English Speaking," 2011). Although English proficiency is highly encouraged due to its status as an official ASEAN Community language, it may not be sufficient for preparing Thai students to become good ASEAN citizens and enter the potential workforce to effectively communicate in English with other ASEAN members. According to Boonnuch (2012), regardless of how many years of foreign language learning people have when trying to communicate with people from different cultures, there are still issues as language is not the only roadblock to communication. Oetzel (2009) also remarked that understanding a language may reduce communication difficulties but it does not mean that a person understands a culture and can effectively communicate with members of other cultures. Thus, Thai students, as ASEAN citizens and potential members of the ASEAN workforce, should learn to be proficient in English and to handle cultural diversity to achieve successful intercultural communication with their culturally diverse ASEAN members.

As a key component of intercultural communication competence, intercultural sensitivity should be considered in the Thai educational context as it can help motivate students to positively recognize, understand and appreciate cultural differences when they communicate with people from different cultures (Chen, 1997). Although several studies examining students' intercultural sensitivity have been conducted, there is limited research investigating intercultural aspects at the high school and university education levels in Thailand (Damnet, 2008). As English majors are potential ASEAN candidates due to their English proficiency, they may be more likely to work with people from various cultural backgrounds in the ASEAN Community; therefore, the current study aims to explore the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok.

Objectives of the Study

1. To measure the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok.
2. To explore whether there are differences between the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok have intercultural sensitivity?
2. Are there differences between the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the academy by providing an overview of the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok. These students are likely to enter multicultural workplaces in the ASEAN Community by 2015. Educators may adapt the findings of this study to promote the intercultural sensitivity of their students through lesson plans, class activities, assignments, training and related tasks that may enhance students' communication competence with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, the results may be useful for universities when designing their curricular policies and related frameworks to better prepare Thai students to match human resources requirements. Finally, the results of this study may be useful for future studies regarding intercultural sensitivity.

Scope of the Study

This study aimed to measure the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors in the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, at Srinakharinwirot University and to explore whether there are differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire examining participants' demographic information and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), which was adapted from Chen and Starosta's intercultural sensitivity assessment tool (2000). For this study, the dependent variable was students' intercultural sensitivity levels and the independent variable was their international travel experience.

Definitions of Terms

The definitions of the terms used throughout this study are presented below.

Intercultural sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity refers to a person's ability to develop positive emotions and behaviors towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behaviors during intercultural communication (Chen, 1997).

Intercultural sensitivity scale

Intercultural sensitivity scale refers to a 24-item rating scale assessing intercultural sensitivity levels developed by Chen and Starosta (2000). This scale consists of the following five factors: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.

Fourth-year English majors

Fourth-year English majors refer to students who are in their fourth year of studying with an English major in the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, at Srinakharinwirot University.

International travel experience

International travel experience refers to spending time in overseas countries for different purposes, including study, leisure, visiting family and others.

Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I outlines the background of the study, the statement of the problems, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and the definitions of terms. Chapter II reviews related literature and previous research. Chapter III presents the methodology employed in the current study. Chapter IV presents the findings of the current study.

Finally, Chapter V includes the conclusions and discussion, as well as the limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a related literature review that is divided into six main sections. The first section presents an overview of intercultural communication competence. The second section addresses the concept of intercultural sensitivity. The third section discusses the national cultural dimensions of Thailand. The fourth section mentions intercultural exposure. The fifth section provides a background of English major curriculums at Thai universities. Finally, related research regarding the intercultural sensitivity of students is reviewed.

Intercultural Communication Competence

This section provides an overview of intercultural communication competence in terms of its definitions and dimensions in the context of intercultural communication.

Definitions of intercultural communication competence

Intercultural communication competence has been defined by a number of scholars. According to Jandt (1995), intercultural communication competence refers to the skills necessary for effective communication with people from different cultures and groups across different situations. These intercultural communication skills include message skills that are required to understand and use a language to respond, behavioral flexibility to appropriately select manners, interaction management to handle conversational procedures and social skills to understand counterparts' identities. Chen and Starosta (1996) argued that intercultural communication competence refers to the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to effectively communicate with culturally diverse partners in an appropriate manner. In their view, intercultural communication

competence includes intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness and intercultural adroitness. Martin and Nakayama (2007) defined intercultural communication competence as individuals' ability to use their knowledge and understanding of their own cultures and their foreign counterparts' cultures to achieve positive interactions. Similarly, Oetzel (2009) viewed intercultural communication competence as the ability to communicate in an appropriate and effective manner. Cerit, Penbek, and Yurdakul (2009) noted that intercultural communication competence required the ability to speak the native language of culturally diverse people and knowledge of their background to increase the effectiveness of the intercultural communication. In summary, intercultural communication competence refers to communication skills that are necessary to effectively and appropriately communicate with people from different cultures.

Dimensions of intercultural communication competence

To better understand the concept of intercultural communication competence, three intercultural researchers' proposals regarding its dimensions are summarized next.

First, Ruben (as cited in Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe, 2007) proposed seven dimensions of intercultural competence as follows:

1. Display of Respect—the ability to express respect and positive regard.
2. Interaction Posture—the ability to respond to others in a descriptive, nonevaluative, and non-judgmental manner.
3. Orientation to Knowledge—the ability to recognize and acknowledge others' views.
4. Empathy—the ability to place oneself in others' situations.
5. Self-Oriented Role Behavior—the ability to be flexible and to function in roles.
6. Interaction Management—the ability to reasonably initiate interactions, take turns and end interactions.

7. Tolerance for Ambiguity—the ability to effectively react to new and ambiguous situations.

In summary, intercultural communication competence requires the following seven individual characteristics: display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, self-oriented rule behavior, interaction management, and tolerance for ambiguity.

Second, Chen and Starosta (1996) proposed the following three perspectives to account for intercultural communication competence: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness.

1. Intercultural sensitivity refers to a person's emotional desire to acknowledge, appreciate, and accept cultural differences. It relies on the following four personal attributes: self-concept, which is the way a person sees him- or herself; open-mindedness, which is a willingness to openly and appropriately express oneself and to accept others' explanations; being nonjudgmental, which means one has no prejudices when listening to others; and social relaxation, which involves showing low levels of anxiety during intercultural communication.

2. Intercultural awareness refers to a person's ability to understand the conventions of one's own and others' cultures, which influence people's thoughts and behaviors. This intercultural awareness requires having self-awareness, which is knowledge of one's own personal identity, and cultural awareness, which is an understanding of cultural differences.

3. Intercultural adroitness refers to a person's ability to achieve communication goals when intercultural communication occurs. This dimension corresponds to communication skills, including both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, that promote effective interactions. This behavioral perspective involves having messages skills,

which include the ability to use the language of the other culture; appropriate self-disclosure, which is the willingness to reveal information about oneself in an open and appropriate manner; behavioral flexibility, which is the ability to select appropriate behavior; and interaction management, which is the ability to initiate, respond during, and finish conversations.

In summary, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural adroitness are three requisite dimensions of intercultural communication competence.

Third, Deardorff (as cited in Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe, 2007) proposed five dimensions of intercultural communication competence, as follows: attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes and external outcomes. Each dimension is explained next.

1. Attitudes serve as the foundation for the further development of the knowledge and skills required to be interculturally competent. The attitudes consist of respect, openness, and curiosity and discover.

2. Knowledge refers to cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge with regard to other worldviews, and sociolinguistic awareness.

3. Skills refer to the acquisition and processing of knowledge through observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting and relating.

4. Internal outcomes consist of flexibility, adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective and empathy.

5. External outcomes refer to the outcomes of intercultural competences that are visible to others, including the summation of an individual's attitudes, knowledge, skills, and internal outcomes.

Table 1 presents a summary of the three proposed dimensions of intercultural communication competence.

Table 1

Dimensions of Intercultural Communication Competence

Authors	Dimensions of Intercultural Competence
Ruben, 1976	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display of Respect 2. Interaction Posture 3. Orientation to Knowledge 4. Empathy 5. Self-Oriented Role Behavior 6. Interaction Management 7. Tolerance for Ambiguity
Chen & Starosta, 1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intercultural Sensitivity (i.e., self-concept, open-mindedness, being nonjudgmental, social relaxation) 2. Intercultural Awareness (i.e., self- and cultural awareness) 3. Intercultural Adroitness (i.e., messages skills, self-disclosure, behavioral flexibility, and interaction management)
Deardorff, 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attitudes (i.e., respect, openness, and curiosity and discover) 2. Knowledge (i.e., cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge of other worldviews, and sociolinguistic awareness) 3. Skills (i.e., observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting and relating) 4. Internal Outcomes (i.e., flexibility, adaptability, an ethnorelative perspective and empathy) 5. External Outcomes

Thus, the three scholarly proposals regarding the intercultural communication competence dimensions may differ; however, they share a number of similar components, such as empathy, open-mindedness, cultural awareness, flexibility, respect, knowledge and skills.

Intercultural Sensitivity

This section addressed three main topics related to intercultural sensitivity, including the definition of intercultural sensitivity, international travel as a factor of intercultural sensitivity and assessments of intercultural sensitivity.

Definitions of intercultural sensitivity

Several scholars have attempted to define intercultural sensitivity. For example, Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) referred to intercultural sensitivity as sensitivity regarding the importance of cultural differences and the attitudes of people from different cultures. In Chen and Starosta's (1996) study, intercultural sensitivity referred to an individual's ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences, which promoted appropriate and effective intercultural interactions. Furthermore, Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) defined intercultural sensitivity as the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences, which was associated with greater potential for exercising intercultural communication competence. In addition, Cerit et al. (2009) stated that intercultural sensitivity was an understanding of cultural differences that were related to intercultural communication competence. Moreover, Paramipuspa (2011) referred to intercultural sensitivity as an individual's ability to effectively function and manage in culturally diverse settings. In conclusion, intercultural sensitivity refers to individuals' ability to sense, understand, accept and appreciate cultural differences when people from different cultures interact with each other. Furthermore, intercultural sensitivity may promote intercultural communication competence.

International travel as a factor of intercultural sensitivity

Studies show that independent variables related to international travel, such as study abroad, length of living abroad, number of countries visited and international travel experience, influence students' intercultural sensitivity.

For example, Straffon (2003) assessed the intercultural sensitivity levels of 336 high school students from over 40 different countries who were attending an international school in the United States. The results revealed that students' intercultural sensitivity levels were positively correlated with the length of time that they had studied at the international school. In addition, McMurray (2007) used the intercultural sensitivity scales (ISS) to measure the intercultural sensitivity of 180 undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Journalism and Communication at the University of Florida, USA. The findings suggested that domestic students who had international travel experience had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than those who did not have international travel experience. Similarly, Chen (2008) examined the intercultural sensitivity of 195 Taiwanese senior international business and management majors with a specific focus on how they learned about different cultures during their daily lives and formal education based on selected demographic features of the students. The results indicated that students' international experiences, intercultural activities on campus, and future plans to study abroad significantly affected their intercultural sensitivity. Villar (2010) examined the intercultural sensitivity of 941 Filipino students and found that the more countries the Filipino students had visited, the higher their intercultural sensitivity scores were.

In summary, these aforementioned studies indicate that independent variables related to international travel experience, such as study abroad, length of time in

international schools, number of countries visited and international experience, influence students' intercultural sensitivity.

Intercultural sensitivity assessments

In this section, three well-known intercultural sensitivity assessments for intercultural communication contexts are presented as follows: the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI), the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).

The intercultural sensitivity inventory (ICSI)

The intercultural sensitivity inventory (ICSI) was developed by Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) to measure intercultural sensitivity. These scholars viewed intercultural sensitivity as “a sensitivity to the importance of cultural differences and to the point of view of people in other cultures” (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992, p.414). Therefore, intercultural sensitivity refers to the ability to recognize the importance of differences in other cultures and culturally diverse people's perspectives. Interculturally sensitive people can change their behaviors to be respectful of other cultures, which supports their success during international assignments (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992).

The ICSI is a 46-item self-report instrument with a seven-point Likert scale ranging from very strongly agree, strongly agree, agree, not decided, disagree, strongly disagree, to very strongly disagree. Based on the concepts of individualism, collectivism, open-mindedness, flexibility, time, and living arrangements, the ICSI examines the following three factors: (a) individuals' understanding of the different ways that they can behave depending upon whether they are interacting in an individualistic or collectivist culture; (b) individuals' open-mindedness towards the differences that they encounter in other cultures; and (c) individuals' flexibility with regard to unfamiliar behaviors that are the norm in other cultures. Higher scores on the ICSI indicate higher levels of

intercultural sensitivity, reflecting the ability to interact effectively in different cultures, to enjoy engaging in extensive intercultural interactions, to enjoy participating in intercultural activities and to have overseas experience for long durations of time.

Intercultural sensitivity scale (ISS)

Chen and Starosta (2000) created the intercultural sensitivity scale (ISS) as an intercultural sensitivity assessment tool. In their view, intercultural sensitivity is “an individual’s ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences, which promotes appropriate and effective behaviors during intercultural interactions” (1997, p.5). Thus, people with intercultural sensitivity are motivated to understand and appreciate differences in other cultures, which leads to appropriate and effective intercultural interactions. Chen and Starosta (1996) posited that intercultural communication competence consists of the following three dimensions: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness and intercultural adroitness. First, intercultural sensitivity is the affective dimension that refers to a person’s ability to develop the positive emotional desire to acknowledge, appreciate, and accept cultural differences. Second, intercultural awareness is the cognitive dimension that refers to a person’s ability to understand similarities and differences in others’ cultures. Lastly, intercultural adroitness is the behavioral dimension that refers to a person’s ability to achieve communication goals when intercultural communication occurs.

Chen and Starosta (2000) developed the intercultural sensitivity scale (ISS) to assess the intercultural sensitivity dimension. The ISS is a 24-item instrument with five-point Likert scales ranging from strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, to strongly disagree. Higher scores on the ISS indicate higher levels of sensitivity during intercultural interactions. This scale consists of the following five elements of

intercultural sensitivity: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness.

First, interaction engagement refers to individuals' feelings regarding participation during intercultural interactions, meaning how individuals feel when they engage in intercultural interactions. Second, respect for cultural differences refers to individuals' orientations towards or tolerance of their counterparts' cultures and opinions, meaning the manner in which individuals react or tolerate the cultures and opinions of the culturally diverse people with whom they interact. Third, interaction confidence refers to individuals' confidence in intercultural contexts, meaning their level of confidence when interacting with culturally diverse counterparts. Fourth, interaction enjoyment refers to individuals' reactions, either positive or negative, towards intercultural communication, meaning how individuals feel when they communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. Fifth, interaction attentiveness refers to individuals' efforts to understand the ongoing process of intercultural communication, meaning their willingness to understand intercultural communication (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

Intercultural development inventory (IDI)

The intercultural development inventory (IDI) was created by Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman (2003) to measure individuals' orientations towards cultural differences based on the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS). The DMIS is a theoretical framework that classifies the development of intercultural sensitivity into the following six stages: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. In their work, intercultural sensitivity is conceptualized as "the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences" (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003, p.422). The authors believe that higher levels of intercultural sensitivity

indicate greater potential for intercultural competence, which is the ability to appropriately think and behave in intercultural settings.

The IDI is a 50-item self-assessment with five-point Likert scales that range from disagree, disagree somewhat more than agree, disagree some and agree some, agree somewhat more than disagree, to agree (Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe, 2007). Higher scores on the DMIS indicate higher levels of intercultural sensitivity development.

Table 2 presents a summary of the three aforementioned intercultural sensitivity assessments.



Table 2

Intercultural Sensitivity Assessment Tools

Assessment Tools	Format	Concepts
Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) by Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992	46 questions, seven-point scale	To examine individuals' understanding, open-mindedness, and flexibility towards different cultures.
Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) by Chen & Starosta, 2000	24 questions, five-point scale	To assess the following five elements of intercultural sensitivity: interaction engagement; respect for cultural differences; interaction confidence; interaction enjoyment and interaction-attentiveness.
Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) by Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman 2003	50 questions, five-point scale	To classify the stages of intercultural sensitivity development, as follows: Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration stage.

In the current study, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) was used to assess the intercultural sensitivity of the target participants for two reasons. First, the scale has previously been used to assess the intercultural sensitivity of Thai students (Peng, Rangisipaht & Thaipakdee, 2005). Second, the reliability and validity of the scale were tested and the results indicated the applicability and usefulness of this measure for

examining intercultural sensitivity in intercultural communication contexts (Chen, Fritz & Mollenberg, 2000).

National Cultural Dimensions: Thailand

This section provides an overview of Thailand's national culture based on Hofstede's national cultural framework, which clustered cultural differences into the following five dimensions: power distance (PDI); individualism versus collectivism (IDV); masculinity versus femininity (MAS); uncertainty avoidance (UAI); and long-term orientation (LTO). Each dimension is described next.

Power distance (PDI)

Power distance (PDI) is the degree to which members of societies accept and expect unequal power among them. Thailand's national culture is a hierarchical society in which people accept inequalities and treat one another based on social ranking (Hofstede, 2001). In Thailand, seniority is associated with age, merit, power, wealth, and professional status. The seniors are expected to provide direction, control, protection, emotional support and care for their subordinates or people in lower ranks (Holmes & Tangtongtavy, 1995). Seniority is respected in Thai culture, for example, the Thai language has more than 17 different forms for first person pronouns and more than 19 forms for second person pronouns that are appropriate for addressing people of differing status to ensure politeness and appropriateness in their communications (Chantornvong, 1992 as cited in Knutson et al., 2003).

Individualism versus collectivism (IDV)

Individualism versus collectivism (IDV) refers to the tendency for people to care for themselves and their immediate family only (i.e., individualism) versus the tendency for people to belong to groups that care for each other in exchange for loyalty (i.e.,

collectivism) (Hofstede, 2001). Thailand is a highly collectivist culture; hence, people tend to take responsibility for their group members and have strong relationships. They avoid confrontation and conflict, and prefer to lose face to maintain good relationships with their social network. With regard to handling conflict, people in collectivist cultures show concern for the interests of the other party and may ignore unpleasant outcomes to maintain group harmony (Holmes & Tangtongtavy, 1995)

Masculinity versus femininity (MAS)

Masculinity versus femininity (MAS) refers to the degree to which success, money, and possessions are the dominant values of a society (i.e., masculinity) versus caring for others and the quality of life (i.e., femininity). Thailand is a feminine society in which there is less competition as people value quality of life and care for others. Furthermore, traditional male and female roles are evident within the Thai population (Hofstede, 2001).

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) refers to the extent to which people feel threatened by ambiguous situations and therefore have created institutions and beliefs to reduce or avoid these uncertainties. Thai society has a preference for avoiding uncertainty; therefore, it has adopted and implemented strict rules, laws, policies and regulations to control everything to avoid unexpected situations, given that Thai society is unlikely to accept change (Hofstede, 2001).

Long-term orientation (LTO)

Long-term orientation refers to the degree to which the society embraces or does not embrace long-term devotion to traditional, forward-thinking values. Thailand is a long-term oriented society; therefore, Thai people tend to show respect for tradition and approve of inequality between people. Working hard and having a sense of moderation

are highly praised. Investment in personal relationships and networks is important, but deadlines and timescales are adaptable (Hofstede, 2001).

Based on Hofstede's five national cultural dimensions, which are power distance (PDI), individualism versus collectivism (IDV), masculinity versus femininity (MAS), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and long-term orientation (LTO), Thailand is a high power distance country or a hierarchical society. Thai culture reflects a highly collectivist society in which people have long-term commitments and loyalty towards their member group. Furthermore, Thailand is a feminine society that values quality of life and care for others. Thai society also has a preference for avoiding uncertainty; therefore, changes or disagreements are not preferred. Finally, Thailand is a long-term oriented society, so Thai people tend to show respect for tradition and approve of inequality between people.

Intercultural Exposure

Given the current trend towards globalization, people can experience foreign cultures in many ways. Some of these experiences are presented next.

Foreign language study

Learning a foreign language is one way to experience a different culture. Interactions with native speakers of a target language in a classroom help learners gain knowledge regarding a particular culture ("How can I learn about different cultures", 2014). Therefore, when individuals study a foreign language, they are exposed to foreign cultures, particularly the culture of the target language.

Books

Reading books written by foreign authors is another way to gain intercultural exposure. Books provide readers with the opportunity to explore different parts of the world, such as traditions, food, music, languages, religions, and customs ("How can I

learn about different cultures”, 2014). Thus, reading foreign books is one easy fun way to experience different cultures. Furthermore, textbooks for learning a foreign language help learners experience other cultures. Yuen (2010) found that cultural topics, such as customs and beliefs of the target language, are evident in English textbooks. This study revealed that the cultural aspects of English-speaking countries were most prevalent, followed by those of Asian and African cultures. In addition, Siddigie (2011) investigated the contribution of English language textbooks towards students' intercultural abilities and found that intercultural exposure through English language teaching could be promoted through reading about other cultures.

Study abroad and international educational programs

Study abroad and international programs may be effective for experiencing different cultures and acquiring knowledge about a particular field. In study abroad and international programs, students have the opportunity to engage with diverse knowledge, ideas, cultures and places that support their understanding of cultural differences, including the cultures and traditions of diverse people (Gomes, 2011). Thus, study abroad increases foreign language skills, knowledge of a new culture, and knowledge of a specific topic that should be studied within the target country (Williams, 1999).

International travelling

International travelling is another way to engage with other cultures, as it encourages social interactions with culturally diverse people and new experiences in foreign countries, such as manners, customs, traditions, architecture, festivals, and authentic food, which are all part of a culture (“How can I learn about different cultures”, 2014). International travelling also changes individuals' worldviews and helps them become familiar with, understand, tolerate, and respect other cultures (Gomes, 2011).

Foreign movies

Individuals can expose themselves to foreign cultures by watching foreign movies. In foreign movies, customs, values, humor and other cultural aspects are presented through imagery and sound (Daine, 2006). Foreign movies foster the imagination and reflect the perspectives, history, and culture of a nation, which allow the audience to experience the similarities and differences with their own cultures and to develop critical thinking through the dialogues and contents of the movies (Roden, 2005 as cited in Daine, 2006). In addition to entertainment purposes, educators are encouraged to use foreign movies as teaching materials in their classrooms. Foreign movies broaden students' worldviews and enrich their understanding, acceptance and tolerance of other cultures. In addition to foreign language classrooms, foreign movies should be shown in other classrooms, namely history, humanities, and political classrooms (Daine (2006). In sum, foreign movies are one manner of intercultural exposure that should be used for entertainment and educational purposes to explore other cultures.

Mass media

In today's global world, young generations have more opportunities to expose themselves to different cultures via various media channel options, such as satellite and cable television, radio stations, and the Internet. The positive influence of media helps to expand worldviews, reduce stereotypes, increase communication and provide access to knowledge that encourages critical thinking (Gigli, 2004). Several dominant media options are presented next.

Radio and television

Radio is one important media option for individuals who want to experience foreign cultures. Radio stations provide diverse information and entertainment through music, news, and social activities (Gigli, 2004). Television is another dominant media

option for intercultural exposure. Satellite and cable television allow people to view various international television programs. For young people, television is a major information source regarding the world around them. A number of developing countries also import television programs due to their limited resources (Gigli, 2004). Thus, listening to radio stations and watching television are convenient and inexpensive ways for people to experience foreign cultures.

The Internet

The Internet is a new and powerful media option for knowledge, communication, socialization, and entertainment. It is very popular among young people as they can expose themselves to the foreign cultures and freely access information online. The Internet connects people around the globe and allows them to interact with one another beyond national borders and cultures, supporting people's familiarity with cultural differences. Interactions via the Internet can include electronic mail, social networks, pen pal services, instant messages and social blogs (Gigli, 2004). For example, students can easily experience and learn about other cultures through video conferences and social networks, such as Twitter and Skype, which facilitate instant interactions with people from different countries ("Why students need a global awareness", 2014). Thus, the Internet is a very useful media option for intercultural exposure in today's global villages, where people interact with each other despite national borders and differing cultures.

In sum, currently, people can experience other cultures through various methods. They can study foreign languages, travel to other countries, read international books, watch foreign television programs and use the Internet at home. Therefore, people can expose themselves to intercultural experiences more easily now than was previously possible.

English Major Curriculums at Thai Universities

This section provides an overview of English major curriculums at Thai universities. In addition, the English major curriculum at Srinakarinwirot University is summarized to provide information regarding the participants in the current study.

English is one of the foreign languages that have been taught in Thailand. The curriculum for English language teaching has continually been revised to make Thailand's economy more competitive in the global market and to meet the international community's expectations and demands (Khamkhien, 2010). Based on recent webpages from a number of public universities in Bangkok, English major curriculums for undergraduates are designed to prepare students to effectively utilize their English skills for careers, further studies, critical thinking and understanding of other cultures. The curriculum structures generally include two main courses, which are language skills and literature. However, some universities include English for Specific Purposes, linguistics, independent study and internships in their curriculums ("Chula English Course Outline", 2014; "SWU English Course Outline", 2014; "TU English Course Outline", 2014).

Traditionally, language skills are taught separately from the study of literature. In language classrooms, students are taught the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing to prepare them for more advanced courses and for future careers (Aimchoo, 2012). Some examples of language skill courses are English Reading Skills, English Composition, Academic English Oral Skills, English Critical Reading Skills, Phonetics for English Pronunciation, Discussion and Presentation, and Research Writing ("Chula English Course Outline", 2014; "SWU English Course Outline", 2014; "TU English Course Outline", 2014). In literature classrooms, students are taught to recognize how authors express their messages using professional writing styles in their literary works. In addition, students learn about Western cultures, politics and economics through the

characters and stories (Aimchoo, 2012). Therefore, students are exposed to Western cultures while they study the target language. For example, American literary works written by immigrants in the USA may reflect the existence of various minority groups in American society. As a result, students learn about different cultures and beliefs, how to recognize such differences and how to learn to live with and respect culturally diverse people (Aimchoo, 2012). Some examples of literature courses are Introduction to Western Culture, the Study of Literature, Introduction to Literary Criticism, Contemporary Literature, American Poetry, Mythological and Biblical Backgrounds to English Literature, Feminist Literature, Literature and Films and Nineteenth-Century American Literature (“Chula English Course Outline”, 2014; “SWU English Course Outline”, 2014; “TU English Course Outline”, 2014).

One English major curriculum that has been taught in Thailand is from the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, at Srinakarinwirot University. Founded in 1975, the Bachelor of Arts in English program was designed to provide students with communicative, thinking, and language skills for careers and future education. The structure of the English major curriculum includes the following five key components: Major Fundamental, Major Requirement, Major Elective, Internship and Minor. The Major Fundamental and Major Requirement components include language skills and Western literature. For the Major Elective components, students choose their preferred courses from the following five main areas: four English skills, which are listening, speaking, reading and writing; English for Specific Purposes; Translation; Applied Linguistics; and Literature. During the summer vacation of their third year in school, the students are required to complete one of the following three courses: independent study, cross cultural experience or internship. In addition, the students have to select their Minor based on their interests. Given that the courses primarily focus on

English language skills, literature, and English for Specific Purposes, the lecturers for this program are Thai and Westerners who are experts in the English language, English teaching, English Literature, applied linguistics, business English and related studies. The teaching materials used in this program are only provided in the English language. In addition, there are self-access language learning centers located at the faculty, library, and computer center at the university (SWU English Course Outline, 2014).

In sum, although the English major curriculums at Thai universities are likely to have identical emphases on language skills and literature, the nature of each program may differ depending on the program's objectives.

Related Research

Several studies have investigated students' intercultural sensitivity, including whether specific demographic features of the students influenced intercultural sensitivity, such as their educational experience, English proficiency and intercultural experience. A number of these studies are discussed next.

Peng, Rangsihaht and Thaipakdee (2005) compared the intercultural sensitivity of Chinese and Thai university students with that of multinational employees. The research objective was to investigate differences in the intercultural sensitivity of the Chinese and Thais who had different levels of English proficiency and their intercultural communication experiences. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) were used to assess the intercultural sensitivity of the 832 participants. The overall results revealed that (a) the Chinese had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than the Thais; (b) English major students had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than non-English major students; (c) multinational employees had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than non-English major students; and (d) English major students and multinational employees had similar

levels of intercultural sensitivity. This study indicated that the Chinese had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than the Thais and that English proficiency and intercultural communication experiences significantly affected intercultural sensitivity.

McMurray (2007) used the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) to measure the intercultural sensitivity of 180 undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Journalism and Communication at the University of Florida, USA. The findings suggested that domestic students who had international travel experience had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than those who did not have international travel experience.

Chen (2008) examined the intercultural sensitivity of 195 Taiwanese senior international business and management majors with a specific focus on how they learned about different cultures during their daily lives and formal education, based on selected demographic features of the students. The intercultural development inventory (IDI) was administered to determine the students' average level of intercultural sensitivity. The findings revealed that the average level of intercultural sensitivity of the Taiwanese students was equivalent to the denial dimension of the DMIS, meaning that they did not exhibit strong intercultural sensitivity. In addition, the results indicated that the students' intercultural sensitivity was not significantly influenced by their gender, age, or foreign-language ability; however, the students' international experiences, intercultural activities on campus, and future plans to study abroad significantly affected their intercultural sensitivity. The results also suggested that the targeted students often gained intercultural knowledge to improve their intercultural sensitivity via mass media, family members, relatives, friends, teachers, self-observation, and personal experiences.

Collaco, Day and Dong (2009) measured the intercultural sensitivity, multiculturalism, and ethnocentrism of undergraduate college students in the USA. The

participants were 419 undergraduates attending a small private university and a large state university. Participants were Caucasian, Asian, American, African American, Hispanic and other ethnicity with an average age of 20.6 years old. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), the Multiculturalism Scale and revised Generalized Ethnocentrism Scales (GENE) were utilized as instruments in this study. The results revealed significant negative correlations between ethnocentrism and both intercultural communication sensitivity and multiculturalism. High levels of intercultural sensitivity and multiculturalism significantly reduced students' ethnocentrism, which refers to their judging another culture solely based on the values and standards of their own culture.

Cerit, Penbek, and Yurdakul (2009) examined the intercultural sensitivity levels of university students in Turkey based on their education and intercultural experiences and how this influenced the formation of intercultural communication competence. The participants were 200 students from two leading universities in Turkey: one state university and one private university. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was used to measure intercultural sensitivity and the personal perception scales were used to explore the self-perception of the participants. The findings revealed that students' respect for differences increased as they passed to upper classes and experienced international interactions with different cultures. However, their self-perception was negatively correlated with their international experience.

Villar (2010) measured the intercultural sensitivity of 941 Filipinos students from 24 colleges, institutes, and schools at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Using the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, the findings revealed that the students had high levels of intercultural sensitivity, indicating that they were able to successfully communicate with various cultures. In addition, their sensitivity was predicted by their communication

competence, intercultural apprehension, length of stay in another country, number of foreign friends, gender and college courses.

Fabregas-Janeiro, Kelsey and Robinson (2011) explored the influence of intercultural experiences on the intercultural sensitivity of 162 agricultural college students in the United States. The objective was to assess changes in intercultural sensitivity among the Agricultural college students who participated in a short study abroad program provided by the faculty. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the degree of change in intercultural sensitivity among the students exposed to an intercultural experience.

In conclusion, students' intercultural sensitivity has been the focus of a number of studies; however, there is a lack of research examining the intercultural sensitivity of Thai students. Therefore, the current study aims to measure the intercultural sensitivity of fourth year English major students at a Thai public university in Bangkok.

Summary

This chapter reviews the previous literature related to intercultural sensitivity in the intercultural communication context. The first section provides information regarding intercultural communication. The second section describes intercultural sensitivity with regard to the definition of intercultural sensitivity, international travel as a factor of intercultural sensitivity and the types of intercultural sensitivity assessments. The third section describes Thailand national cultural dimensions based on Hofstede. The fourth section mentions about intercultural exposure. The fifth section gives a background of English major curriculums at Thai universities. Finally, research related to intercultural sensitivity from an academic perspective is summarized. The next chapter will present the research methodology.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology that was employed in the current study. Three main topics will be discussed as follows: participants, research instrument, and procedures for the current the study.

Participants in the Study

The target participants for this study were fourth-year English majors in the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, at Srinakharinwirot University. They were selected based on three reasons. First, the participants were studying at Srinakharinwirot University, which is a public university located in Bangkok. Second, the English major program at this university encourages the students' to engage in intercultural exposure. The curriculum includes both English skill development and literature or culture-related courses, as well as requires that the students seek cross-cultural experiences during their third-year vacation. Third, the location of the university on Asoke Road was convenient for the researcher to collect data.

At the time of the study, there were 82 fourth-year students who were English majors. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) recommended sample size, an appropriate sample of this population of 82 was 68. Therefore, the participants in this study were 68 fourth-year English majors at Srinakharinwirot University (N=68).

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used to investigate the intercultural sensitivity of the fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok. The questionnaire was divided into the following two sections:

Section I: Demographic information

This section collected data relating to participants' general information, including their gender and international travel experience.

Section II: Intercultural sensitivity assessment

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) was used to assess the intercultural sensitivity of the participants. This assessment tool was developed by Chen and Starosta (2000). The researcher emailed Professor Guo-Ming Chen and received his permission to use this scale for the current study. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) is a 24-item ratings scale that examines the following five factors: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, intercultural confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness. First, interaction engagement refers to individuals' feeling of participation during intercultural interactions. Second, respect for cultural differences refers to individuals' orientation towards or tolerance of their counterparts' cultures and opinions. Third, interaction confidence refers to individuals' confidence in intercultural contexts. Fourth, interaction enjoyment refers to individuals' reactions, either positive or negative, towards intercultural communication. Fifth, interaction attentiveness refers to individuals' efforts to understand the on-going process of intercultural communication

(Chen & Starosta, 2000). Table 3 present the items grouped according to these five factors.

A five-point Likert scale was used, as follows: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Reverse coding was applied for item numbers 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20 and 22 during data analysis. The scores ranged from 24–120. Higher scores reflect higher levels of intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 2000). The questionnaire was translated into Thai and validated by three experts, who were professors in the department of Western language, Faculty of Humanities, at a Thai public university. The English and Thai versions of the questionnaire are available in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Table 3

Description of the Questionnaire

Factors of Intercultural Sensitivity	Item Number
Interaction Engagement	1, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, 24
Respect for Cultural Differences	2, 7, 8, 16, 18, 20
Interaction Confidence	3, 4, 5, 6, 10
Interaction Enjoyment	9, 12, 15
Interaction Attentiveness	14, 17, 19

Procedures for the Study

The procedures for the study include a pilot study and data collection.

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in January of 2014 to ensure that the participants fully understood the questions from the questionnaire. Twenty third-year English major students at Srinakarinwirot University were asked to complete the questionnaire. The

Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was 0.981, which was higher than the minimum standard of 0.70 (Canava, Delahaye & Sekeran, 2001). Therefore, the questionnaire is considered reliable and appropriate to administer to the participants.

Data collection

The researcher asked for permission from the Faculty of Humanities to administer the questionnaire to the fourth-year English majors in February of 2014. The researcher randomly distributed 68 questionnaires to the fourth-year English majors who participated in a post-orientation project that was organized by the Department of Western Languages at the Faculty of Humanities, at Srinakarinwirot University. The students were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their identity was anonymous. The questionnaire was collected upon completion and checked for errors in completeness.

Data analysis

Following data collection, the participants' demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages. The intercultural sensitivity of the participants was analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows using mean scores and standard deviations. The interpretations of the mean scores were based on standards described by Paige et al. (2003) as follows: 1.00–1.50 = very low, 1.51–2.50 = low, 2.51–3.50 = moderate, 3.51–4.50 = high and 4.51–5.00 = very high. In addition, *t*-tests were employed to determine whether there were any significant differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels between participants with and without international travel experience.

Summary

This chapter presents the research methodology for the current study, including descriptions of the participants, research instruments, procedures and data analysis. The findings from this study will be presented in Chapter IV.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The current study's objectives were to assess the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok and to explore whether there were differences of the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience. The participants were 68 fourth-year English majors in the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, at Srinakharinwirot University. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, which was adapted from Chen and Starosta (2000), was administered to assess the students' intercultural sensitivity levels. To describe the intercultural sensitivity levels of the fourth-year English majors, the data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. To compare the intercultural sensitivity levels of the students with and without international travel experience, *t*-tests were utilized. The results are presented in the following two main sections: demographic information and the intercultural sensitivity of the participants.

Demographic Information for the Participants

Tables 4 and 5 present the gender and international travel experience of the 68 participants. The data are presented in frequencies and percentages that are accompanied with descriptive explanations.

Table 4

Gender and International Travel Experience of the Fourth-Year English Majors (N = 68)

Category	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Gender:		
Female	47	69.12
Male	21	30.88
Total	68	100
Have International Travel Experience		
Yes	45	66.18
No	23	33.82
Total	68	100

As shown in Table 4, 47 participants were female (69.12%) and 21 were male (30.88%). Regarding international travel experience, 45 participants (66.18%) had international travel experience and 23 (33.82%) did not have international travel experience. Table 5 presents the reasons provided by the 45 participants with international travel experience for their international travel.

Table 5

Purposes for the International Travel Experience of the Fourth-Year English Majors

Category	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Leisure	36	50.70
Study	17	23.94
Work	11	15.49
Family Visit	7	9.86
Total	71	100

As shown in Table 5, approximately half of the fourth-year English majors listed Leisure (50.70%) as their primary purpose for international travel. Other purposes were for Study (23.94%), Work (15.49%) or Family Visit (9.86%).

Intercultural Sensitivity of the Participants

This section presents three major results regarding the overall intercultural sensitivity of the participants, the five factors of intercultural sensitivity, and a comparison of the intercultural sensitivity of students with and without international travel experience. The data are presented in means, standard deviations, and *t*-tests that are accompanied with descriptive explanations.

Intercultural sensitivity of the fourth-year English majors

Table 6 presents the overall intercultural sensitivity of the 68 participants.

Table 6

Intercultural Sensitivity of the Fourth-Year English Majors

Factors	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
1. Interaction Enjoyment	4.00	.97	High
2. Respect for Cultural Differences	3.92	.89	High
3. Interaction Engagement	3.76	.82	High
4. Interaction Attentiveness	3.68	.91	High
5. Interaction Confidence	3.59	.83	High
Overall	3.79	.88	High

As shown in Table 6, the overall mean scores indicated high levels of intercultural sensitivity for the fourth-year English majors ($\bar{x} = 3.79$, $SD = .88$). The highest mean score was for Interaction Enjoyment ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, $SD = .97$), which was followed by Respect for Cultural Differences ($\bar{x} = 3.92$, $SD = .89$), Interaction Engagement ($\bar{x} = 3.76$, $SD = .82$), Interaction Attentiveness ($\bar{x} = 3.68$, $SD = .91$) and Interaction Confidence ($\bar{x} = 3.59$, $SD = .83$).

The five factors of intercultural sensitivity

This section presents the mean scores for the five factors of intercultural sensitivity ranging from the highest to the lowest, as follows: Interaction Enjoyment, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Engagement, Interaction Attentiveness, and Interaction Confidence. Tables 7 through 11 present the findings with regard to each factor.

Table 7

The Mean Scores for Interaction Enjoyment

Statements	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.	4.28	.99	High
I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.97	.96	High
I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.	3.75	.95	High
Overall	4.00	.97	High

As shown in Table 7, the overall mean score for Interaction Enjoyment was high ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, $SD = .97$). The mean score for the statement, “I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures” was 4.28 ($SD = .99$), followed by “I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} = 3.97$, $SD = .96$) and “I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} = 3.75$, $SD = .95$). These statements were reverse-coded, indicating that most participants disagreed with these statements.

Table 8

The Mean Scores for Respect for Cultural Differences

Statements	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.	4.22	.97	High
I do not like to be with people from different cultures.	4.10	.73	High
I respect the values of people from different cultures.	4.01	.90	High
I respect the ways that people from different cultures behave.	3.95	.81	High
I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.	3.68	.87	High
I think my culture is better than other cultures.	3.57	1.01	High
Overall	3.92	.89	High

As shown in Table 8, the overall mean score for Respect for Cultural Differences was high ($\bar{x} = 3.92$, $SD = .89$). Most participants disagreed with the following statements: “I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures”; “I do not like to be with people from different cultures”; “I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded”; and “I think my culture is better than other cultures”. These statements were reverse-coded on the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale; therefore, the participants had high mean scores for this factor.

Table 9

The Mean Scores for Interaction Engagement

Statements	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	4.23	.77	High
I am open-minded with people from different cultures.	4.19	.78	High
I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally distinct counterparts and myself.	3.95	.90	High
I often provide positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions.	3.82	.79	High
I often show my culturally distinct counterparts my understanding through verbal and nonverbal cues.	3.70	.77	High
I avoid situations in which I have to address culturally distinct individuals.	3.60	.91	High
I tend to wait before forming impressions of culturally distinct counterparts.	2.82	.77	Medium
Overall	3.76	.82	High

As shown in Table 9, the overall mean score for Interaction Engagement was high ($\bar{x} = 3.76$, $SD = .82$). Most participants highly agreed with the following statements: “I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} = 4.23$, $SD = .77$); “I am open-minded with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} = 4.19$, $SD = .78$); and “I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally distinct counterparts and me” ($\bar{x} = 3.95$, $SD = .90$). The statement, “I avoid situations in which I have to address culturally distinct individuals” was reverse-coded. The participants disagreed with this statement, as indicated by a high mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.60$, $SD = .91$).

Table 10

The Mean Scores for Interaction Attentiveness

Statements	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
I attempt to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.87	.96	High
I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.69	.93	High
I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterparts' subtle meanings during our interactions.	3.48	.83	High
Overall	3.68	.91	High

As shown in Table 10, the overall mean score for Interaction Attentiveness was high ($\bar{x} = 3.69$, $SD = .91$). The participants highly agreed with the following statements: “I attempt to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} = 3.87$, $SD = .96$); “I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} = 3.69$, $SD = .93$); and “I am sensitive to my culturally distinct counterparts' subtle meanings during our interactions” ($\bar{x} = 3.48$, $SD = .83$).

Table 11

The Mean Scores for Interaction Confidence

Statements	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.	3.73	.90	High
I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures	3.70	.82	High
I am pretty sure of myself when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.60	.79	High
I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.54	.79	High
I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.35	.80	High
Overall	3.59	.83	High

As shown in Table 11, the overall mean score for Interaction Confidence was high ($\bar{x}=3.59$, $SD = .83$). The statement, “I find it hard to talk in front of people from different cultures” was reverse-coded: most participants disagreed with this statement, as indicated by a high mean score ($\bar{x} 3.73$, $SD = .90$). Most of the participants agreed with the following statements: “I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} =3.70$, $SD = .82$); and “I am pretty sure of myself when interacting with people from different cultures” ($\bar{x} =3.60$, $SD = .79$).

In summary, the overall mean scores for the five factors of intercultural sensitivity were high. The highest mean score was for Interaction Enjoyment, followed by Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Engagement, Interaction Attentiveness, and Interaction Confidence.

A comparison of the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience

This section presents a comparison of the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience. Table 12 presents the mean scores for the five factors of intercultural sensitivity for the two groups of students and Tables 13 presents the *t*-test values.

Table 12

A Comparison of the Mean Scores for the Five Factors of Intercultural Sensitivity between Students with and without International Travel Experience

Factor of Intercultural Sensitivity	International Travel Experience			
	Yes		No	
	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>
1. Interaction Enjoyment	3.86	.28	4.28	.25
2. Respect for Cultural Differences	3.86	.24	4.04	.31
3. Interaction Engagement	3.75	.43	3.78	.58
4. Interaction Attentiveness	3.67	.19	3.70	.20
5. Interaction Confidence	3.60	.20	3.57	.25
Overall	3.75	.13	3.85	.11

As shown in Table 12, the overall mean score across the five factors of intercultural sensitivity for the students with international travel experience was 3.75 (*SD* = .13), whereas this overall mean score for the students without international travel experience was 3.85 (*SD* = .11). For Interaction Enjoyment, the mean score for the students with international travel experience was 3.86 (*SD* = .28), whereas this mean

score for the students without international travel experience was 4.28 ($SD = .25$). For Respect for Cultural Differences, the mean score for the students with international travel experience was 3.86 ($SD = .24$), whereas this mean score for the students without international travel experience was 4.04 ($SD = .31$). For Interaction Engagement, the mean score for the students with international travel experience was 3.75 ($SD = .43$), whereas this mean score for the students without international travel experience was 3.78 ($SD = .58$). For Interaction Attentiveness, the mean score for the students with international travel experience was 3.67 ($SD = .19$), whereas this mean score for the students without international travel experience was 3.70 ($SD = .20$). For Interaction Confidence, the mean score for the students with international travel experience was 3.60 ($SD = .20$), whereas this mean score for the students without international travel experience was 3.57 ($SD = .25$).

T-tests were conducted to examine whether there were differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of the fourth-year English majors with and without international travel experience. Table 13 presents the results.

Table 13

A comparison of the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience

International Travel	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
1 No	.429	.515	-1.987	66	.051	-3.374	1.698	-6.764	.016
2 Yes			-2.145	54.575	.036	-3.374	1.573	-6.527	-.221

* $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 13, *t*-tests revealed no statistically significant differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of the fourth-year English majors with and without international travel experience. Therefore, the two groups of students did not differ in their levels of intercultural sensitivity.

Summary

This study aimed to measure the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university and to explore whether there were differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience. The demographic data indicated that most of the participants were female (69.12%). Moreover, most of the participants had international travel experience (66.18%) and listed leisure as the primary purpose of their international travel (50.70%). The current study's findings suggest that the fourth-year English majors had high levels of intercultural sensitivity, as the mean scores for the five factors of intercultural sensitivity, which are Interaction Enjoyment, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction

Engagement, Interaction Attentiveness and Interaction Confidence, were all at high levels. In addition, no statistically significant difference was evident between the levels of intercultural sensitivity for the fourth-year English majors with and without international travel experience. Chapter V includes a conclusion, discussion, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the conclusion, discussion, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Conclusion

The objectives of the current study were to assess the intercultural sensitivity of fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok and to explore whether there were differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience. Sixty-eight target participants completed a questionnaire that was adapted from the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000). The scale consisted of the following five factors of intercultural sensitivity: Interaction Engagement, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Confidence, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Attentiveness. The data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations. *T*-tests were conducted to examine whether there were significant differences between the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience.

The results of the current study indicate that the fourth-year English majors had high levels of intercultural sensitivity. The mean scores for the five factors of intercultural sensitivity were all at high levels. However, the results revealed no significant differences between the intercultural sensitivity levels of the fourth-year English majors with and without international travel experience.

Discussion

The findings of the current study will be discussed with regard to the following research questions:

Research Question 1:

To what extent do fourth-year English majors at a Thai public university in Bangkok have intercultural sensitivity?

The results of the current study indicate that the fourth-year English majors had high levels of intercultural sensitivity. Therefore, these students were likely to sense, accept, and understand cultural differences when they interacted with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. They were likely to have positive feelings and to show tolerance, acceptance and respect for differing opinions when interacting with people from different cultures. Additionally, they tended to be confident and attempted to understand the on-going process when interacting with people from other cultures. These findings may be explained by the students' experiences with intercultural exposure.

First, the fourth-year English majors in this study were highly interculturally sensitive, which may have been due to their exposure to other cultures via the program they were enrolled in. The participants had a shared educational background as English majors in the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, at Srinakharinwirot University. Learning a foreign language is one way to experience different cultures. Interactions with native speakers of the target language in the classroom may help learners gain knowledge regarding a particular culture ("How can I learn about different cultures", 2014). Therefore, studying English as a foreign language may have helped the students broaden their cultural horizons. When they were familiar with the target language and did not have language barrier, they were able to explore the world and increase their intercultural experiences. The findings of this study may be

consistent with those of Banos (2006) and Peng et al. (2005). Banos (2006) reported that Spanish students who had learned foreign languages, such as English and French, had higher scores on intercultural sensitivity than students who had not learned a foreign language. Peng et al. (2005) found that Thai and Chinese students who were English majors had higher scores on intercultural sensitivity than non-English majors. In conclusion, based on the results of these previous studies and the present study, the participants' educational background as English majors may explain why the students in the current study had high levels of intercultural sensitivity.

Second, the intercultural aspects of the English major curriculum at Srinakharinwirot University may have encouraged the fourth-year English majors to have high levels of intercultural sensitivity. In addition to the four English skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, participants enrolled in culturally relevant courses, such as Introduction to Western Culture, the Study of Literature, and Introduction to Literary Criticism (SWU English outline, 2014). These interculturally relevant courses may have supported participants' learning about other cultures and their sensitivity towards cultural differences. This explanation is well-supported by Margarethe, Hannes and Wiesinger's (2012) study comparing the intercultural sensitivity of students at the University of Applied Science in Upper Austria. The students were enrolled in one of two programs, either Global Sales and Marketing or Production and Management. The findings revealed that students who studied in the program that had an intercultural aspect tended to be more interculturally sensitive than those who studied in the program that did not include intercultural aspects. Furthermore, Villar (2010) measured the intercultural sensitivity of 941 Filipinos students from 24 colleges at the University of the Philippines. The findings revealed that the students had generally high levels of intercultural sensitivity; however,

the five highest mean scores of intercultural sensitivity were found in the colleges that provided students with opportunities to learn about other cultures.

Another possible explanation is related to the textbooks that were used in the courses for the program. Reading about other cultures in the textbooks may have increased the students' sensitivity towards different cultures. This explanation is consistent with findings from Yuen (2010) and Siddigie (2011). Yuen (2010) found that cultural topics, such as customs and beliefs related to the target language, are evident in English textbooks. This was most prevalent for the cultural aspects of English-speaking countries, followed by those of Asian and African cultures. Siddigie (2011) examined the contribution of English textbooks towards students' intercultural ability and found that intercultural exposure through English language teaching increased due to reading about other cultures. Therefore, enrolling in culturally related courses and reading language textbooks encourages intercultural sensitivity.

Third, one plausible explanation for why the fourth-year English majors in this study had high levels of intercultural sensitivity is related to their personal intercultural exposure through internships. As part of the Bachelor of Arts in English program, students were required to participate in one of the following courses: independent study, cross-cultural experience, or internship. According to an interview with Ms. Wiriya Dankamphaengkaew, the secretary of the program, most fourth-year English majors chose an internship during their third-year vacation that requires at least 180 hours. The students had to work as interns at local or international organizations, which allowed them to use English and experience intercultural communication at work. After their internships, the lecturers who taught them in their fourth year remarked that these students tended to have different perspectives towards various cultures, reflecting that they were more culturally sensitive (W. Dankamphangkaew, personal communication,

April 2, 2014). Therefore, working as an intern in an intercultural context may encourage high levels of intercultural sensitivity.

Finally, an explanation for the high levels of intercultural sensitivity of the fourth-year English majors in this study may be due to their intercultural exposure through the media. Gigli (2004) noted that, in today's global world, people have more opportunities to experience different cultures via various media choices, such as satellite and cable television, radio stations, and the Internet, which have expanded worldviews, reduced stereotypes, increased communication, and provided access to knowledge that encourages critical thinking. The fourth-year English majors may have had the opportunity to explore different cultures through the media used in the courses for the program and through their own experiences. For their program, the syllabi for many of their courses, for example, EN221 Language and Critical Thinking Skills, EN251 Introduction to Western Culture, and EN455 Literature and Films, state that the course materials were selected from the media, including from the Internet, newspapers, television programs, and movies (SWU Course Syllabus, 2014).

The students may have also engaged with other cultures through the media in their own experiences. One obvious source of support is the increasing use of the Internet among teenagers. Among the Internet users in Thailand in 2012, the majority of online users were between 15-24 years of age, and they accounted for 45.2% of users (“Trends in the use of social media by youth in Thailand”, 2014). As the fourth-year English majors became familiar with the language and did not have a language barrier, they were able to explore the world and increase their intercultural experiences through the Internet. For example, they could surf the Internet to view international websites to read news, watch English movies and international television programs that are available online, as well as communicate with foreigners via emails and social networks, such as Facebook,

and Twitter. Thus, their intercultural exposure through the media may explain why the fourth-year English majors in this study were highly sensitive to other cultures.

In conclusion, plausible explanations for the high levels of intercultural sensitivity of the fourth-year English majors in this study are their English study as a foreign language, the intercultural aspects of the English major curriculum, their personal intercultural exposure through internships, and their intercultural exposure via the media.

With regard to the five factors of intercultural sensitivity, high mean scores were evident for each factor, namely, Interaction Enjoyment, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Engagement, Interaction Attentiveness, and Interaction Confidence. Plausible explanations for this finding will be discussed according to each factor of intercultural sensitivity next.

Interaction enjoyment

The findings for this study revealed a high mean score for Interaction Enjoyment ($\bar{x} = 4.00$), which suggests that the fourth-year English majors had positive feelings when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. In other words, they tended to feel happy when they communicated with people from different cultures. It could be that their educational background as fourth-year English majors reduced their communication difficulties during their interactions with others. The students did not feel discouraged when communicating in English; therefore, they enjoyed their interactions with culturally diverse people. This explanation is consistent with findings from Peng (2006), who reported that English major students had higher interaction enjoyment levels than non-English major students. Thus, an educational background in English may have affected the interaction enjoyment of the fourth-year English majors in this study.

Respect for cultural differences

The results for this study revealed a high mean score for Respect for Cultural Differences ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), suggesting that the fourth-year English majors were likely to express acceptance, tolerance, and respect for differing opinions and cultures with people from different cultural backgrounds. Based on the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, the fourth-year English majors in this study respected the values of people from different cultures (statement 8) and respected the ways that people from different cultures behave (statement 16). These findings may be due to the background of the students as English language learners. Learning a foreign language is a process of building up respect and tolerance for cultural differences (Ortuno as cited in Peng et al., 2005). Apart from language skills, students in English program are provided with knowledge of cultural aspects. For instance, Yuen (2010) found that cultural topics, such as customs and beliefs related to the target language, are evident in English textbooks. This is most prevalent regarding the cultural aspects of English-speaking countries, followed by those of Asian and African cultures. Furthermore, Siddigie (2011) studied the contribution of English language textbooks towards students' intercultural ability and found that intercultural exposure through English language teaching increased due to reading about other cultures. Therefore, it may say that the fourth-year English majors in this study had high levels of respect for cultural differences due to their background in English study as a foreign language. This seems relevant with a study of Peng et al. (2005) reporting that English majors had higher mean scores for Respect for Cultural Differences than non-English majors and multinational employees.

Interaction engagement

The findings for this study revealed a high mean score for Interaction Engagement ($\bar{x} = 3.76$), suggesting that the fourth-year English majors were open-minded with and

responded positively to culturally diverse people. Based on the intercultural sensitivity scale, the interaction engagement of the fourth-year English majors was reflected in statement 1, “I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures”, statement 13, “I am open-minded with people from different cultures”, and statement 21, “I often provide positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions”. The results of this study may be due to the cultural characteristics of the Thai people.

According to Hofstede (2001), Thailand is a highly collectivist culture, which means that people value close long-term commitments to their groups. They prefer belonging to a group and tend to be concerned with the interests of others to avoid conflicts and maintain good relationships. In addition, Thai people are known for their friendliness, warm hearts, hospitality, and welcoming of foreigners (“An Introduction to Thai Culture”, 2014). Therefore, the national characteristic of being highly collectivist may have affected the intercultural engagement of the fourth-year English majors in this study.

Interaction attentiveness

The results of this study revealed a high mean score for Interaction Attentiveness ($\bar{x} = 3.69$), suggesting that the fourth-year English majors were willing to understand their intercultural communication. Based on the intercultural sensitivity scale, the fourth-year English majors in this study attempted to understand their intercultural communication by seeking more information and being sensitive to any hidden meanings when they interacted with culturally diverse people. The results are evident in statement 17, “I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures”, statement 14, “I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures” and statement 19, “I am sensitive to my culturally distinct counterparts’ subtle meanings during our interactions”. These findings may be due to the cultural characteristics of the Thai people. As a high context and collectivist culture, Thai

people strongly value social harmony and pleasant relationships. As a result, they place great emphasis on appropriate communication and pay close attention to understanding the meaning of messages, as well as are highly sensitive to non-verbal clues (Knutson, Komolsevin, Chatiket, and Smith, 2003). Therefore, the high context and collectivist Thai culture may explain the high levels of interaction attentiveness of the fourth-year English majors in this study.

Interaction confidence

The findings for this study revealed a high mean score for Interaction Confidence ($\bar{x} = 3.59$), suggesting that the fourth-year English majors in this study were confident when interacting with people from different cultures. Based on the intercultural sensitivity scale, the fourth-year English majors expressed their confidence during intercultural communication, as shown in statement 6, “I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures”, statement 3, “I am pretty sure of myself when interacting with people from different cultures”, and statement 10, “I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures”. The interaction confidence of the fourth-year English majors in this study may be explained by their educational background as English majors. The English program that the students in this study were enrolled in was designed to provide them with communicative and language skills, so that they can use the English language with confidence during their careers and further education (SWU English Course Outline, 2014). This explanation may be consistent with Peng et al.’s (2005) findings that English major students had higher interaction confidence levels than non-English major students and that English proficiency supported interaction confidence during intercultural communication. Therefore, the educational background in English communicative proficiency may have promoted the interaction confidence of the fourth-year English majors in this study.

In summary, this section presented plausible explanations based on the findings for the five factors of intercultural sensitivity, namely, Interaction Enjoyment, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Engagement, Interaction Attentiveness, and Interaction Confidence. For Interaction Enjoyment, an educational background in English may have reduced communication barriers, resulting in high levels of interaction enjoyment for the fourth-year English majors in this study. For Respect for Cultural Differences, the cultural knowledge that the fourth-year English majors gained through the English program may have contributed to this finding. For Interaction Engagement, Thailand's national characteristic as a highly collectivist society may have promoted the interaction engagement of the students in this study. For Interaction Attentiveness, the high context and collectivist Thai culture may explain the high levels of interaction attentiveness shown by the fourth-year English majors in this study. Finally, interaction confidence may be explained by the educational background in English communicative proficiency that the fourth-year English majors in this study had attained.

Research Question 2:

Were there any significant differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of students with and without international travel experience?

The findings of the current study revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the intercultural sensitivity levels of the fourth-year English majors with and without international travel experience. This result may be due to the demographic information of the participants. The results revealed that the purposes for international travel experience for the fourth-year English majors were for leisure, study, work and family visits. These purposes would result in short-term intercultural experiences, which may not have been long enough to significantly affect the intercultural sensitivity levels of these students. This assumption is consistent with findings from

Fabregas-Janeiro, Kelsey and Robinson (2011), who reported that short-term intercultural experiences did not result in statistically significant differences in the degree of change in intercultural sensitivity among the agricultural college students exposed to short study abroad programs. Therefore, this short-term experience when travelling internationally may explain why this study found no statistically significant differences between the intercultural sensitivity levels of the fourth-year English majors with and without international travel experience.

Another possible explanation for this finding is that these fourth-year English majors experienced different cultures in numerous ways. Although many students did not have overseas travel experience, they could have experience with other cultures due to the intercultural aspects of the English major curriculum and their own personal intercultural exposure through internships and via the media. Through these channels, they could have strengthened their intercultural experience, which resulted in equivalent levels of intercultural sensitivity with those had travelled overseas.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has the following limitations:

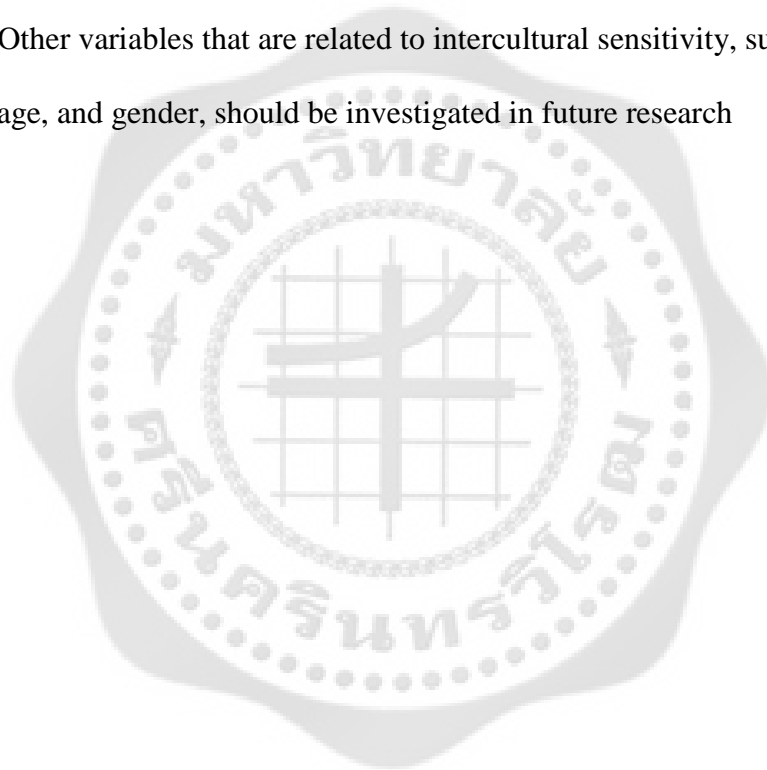
1. The participants in this study were a small group of 68 English majors at a Thai public university. The results cannot be generalized to English majors as a whole. Future research should examine larger groups of English majors from different universities.

2. The participants in this study were all English majors; therefore, the findings do not reflect Thai university students in general. Future studies should examine students from other majors, particularly those who are potential candidates for the ASEAN Community.

3. The instrument used was a questionnaire that did not provide detailed data for the participants. Future research should include an interview or observation to obtain more detailed data.

4. The assessment tool was limited to the conceptualization of intercultural sensitivity by Chen and Starosta (2000). The results may vary if other conceptualizations are examined in future studies.

5. This study was limited to one variable, which was international travel experience. Other variables that are related to intercultural sensitivity, such as English proficiency, age, and gender, should be investigated in future research





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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.					
2.	I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.					
3.	I am pretty sure of myself when interacting with people from different cultures.					
4.	I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.					
5.	I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.					
6.	I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.					
7.	I do not like to be with people from different cultures.					
8.	I respect the values of people from different cultures.					
9.	I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.					
10.	I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.					

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
11.	I tend to wait before forming impressions of culturally distinct counterparts.					
12.	I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.					
13.	I am open-minded with people from different cultures.					
14.	I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.					
15.	I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.					
16.	I respect the ways that people from different cultures behave.					
17.	I attempt to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.					
18.	I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.					
19.	I am sensitive to my culturally distinct counterparts' subtle meanings during our interactions.					

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
20.	I think my culture is better than other cultures.					
21.	I often provide positive responses to my culturally different counterparts during our interactions.					
22.	I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.					
23.	I often show my culturally distinct counterparts my understanding through verbal and nonverbal cues.					
24.	I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally distinct counterparts and myself.					

Thank you very much for your cooperation



APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE (THAI VERSION)

แบบสอบถาม

ความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นปีที่ 4

ในมหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐบาลแห่งหนึ่ง ในกรุงเทพมหานคร

แบบสอบถามนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานสารนิพนธ์ วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ โดยออกแบบมาเพื่อใช้วัดระดับความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรมของนักศึกษาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ ชั้นปีที่ 4 ในมหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐบาลแห่งหนึ่งในกรุงเทพมหานคร

แบบสอบถามนี้แบ่งออกเป็นสองส่วน คือ ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม และการวัดระดับความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรม

ส่วนที่ 1 ข้อมูลทั่วไปของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

คำชี้แจง กรุณาทำเครื่องหมาย X ใน () หรือเติมคำตอบลงในช่องว่างที่กำหนดให้--

1. เพศ
 ชาย หญิง
2. คุณมีประสบการณ์ในการเดินทางไปต่างประเทศหรือไม่?
 เคย ไม่เคย
3. สำหรับนิสัยที่มีประสบการณ์ในการเดินทางไปต่างประเทศ เหตุผลหลักในการเดินทางคือข้อใดบ้าง?
 การศึกษา การพักผ่อน
 การทำงาน การเยี่ยมเยียนครอบครัว
 อื่นๆ กรุณาระบุ

ส่วนที่ 2 ระดับความอ่อนไหวทางวัฒนธรรม

คำชี้แจง กรุณาทำเครื่องหมาย X ลงในช่องที่ตรงกับระดับความคิดเห็นของท่าน ไม่มีคำตอบใดถูกหรือผิด

1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง 2 = ไม่เห็นด้วย 3 = ไม่แน่ใจ 4 = เห็นด้วย 5 = เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

ลำดับที่	ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็นด้วย	ไม่แน่ใจ	เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	ฉันชอบติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
2.	ฉันคิดว่าคนที่มาจากวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆไม่เปิดใจกว้าง					
3.	ฉันค่อนข้างมั่นใจในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
4.	ฉันไม่กล้าที่จะพูดต่อหน้าคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
5.	ฉันรู้เสมอว่าต้องพูดอะไรในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
6.	ฉันสามารถเข้าสังคมได้ตามที่ฉันต้องการ เมื่อติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
7.	ฉันไม่ชอบพบปะกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
8.	ฉันเคารพค่านิยมของคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
9.	ฉันหงุดหงิดง่ายเมื่อติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
10.	ฉันรู้สึกมั่นใจในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
11.	ฉันมักจะใช้เวลาก่อนตัดสินใจว่าคิดกับคนต่างวัฒนธรรมอย่างไร					
12.	ฉันมักจะรู้สึกท้อแท้เมื่อต้องติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
13.	ฉันเปิดใจกว้างให้กับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
14.	ฉันระมัดระวังอย่างมากในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
15.	ฉันรู้สึกไร้ค่า เมื่อฉันติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
16.	ฉันเคารพพฤติกรรมต่างๆของคนมาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
17.	ฉันพยายามเก็บข้อมูลต่างๆเท่าที่จะทำได้ในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
18.	ฉันจะไม่ยอมรับความคิดเห็นของคนมาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
19.	ในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มีความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมเป็นอย่างมาก ฉันเข้าใจความหมายที่ซ่อนไว้เป็นอย่างดี					
20.	ฉันคิดว่าวัฒนธรรมของฉันดีกว่าวัฒนธรรมอื่นๆ					

ลำดับที่	ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็นด้วย	ไม่แน่ใจ	เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง
		1	2	3	4	5
21.	ฉันมักจะพูดโต้ตอบในทางที่ดีในระหว่างการติดต่อสื่อสารกับคู่สนทนาที่มาจากต่างวัฒนธรรม					
22.	ฉันหลีกเลี่ยงสถานการณ์ต่างๆที่ต้องติดต่อสื่อสารกับคนที่มีความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมเป็นอย่างมาก					
23.	ฉันมักจะแสดงความเข้าใจด้วยคำพูดและท่าทางในสื่อสารกับคนที่มีความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมเป็นอย่างมาก					
24.	ฉันเฟลิตเฟลีนกับความแตกต่างระหว่างฉันและคนที่มีความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมเป็นอย่างมาก					

ผู้วิจัยขอขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถาม



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