CHINESE AT WORK:
EVALUATING ADVANCED LANGUAGE USE IN CHINA-RELATED CAREERS

DISSERTATION

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By

Patrick McAloon, M.A.

*****

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Dissertation Committee:

Approved by

Professor Galal Walker, advisor

Professors Mari Noda

Professor Venkat Bendapudi

Advisor

East Asian Languages & Literatures
Graduate Program
ABSTRACT

As American schools from grades K-16+ create Chinese language programs, American communication with Chinese people in Chinese and by Chinese cultural standards will take place with increasing frequency and in professional contexts once dominated by English and Western culture. As a result, a sizeable task lays ahead for Chinese language pedagogues: what do we expect learners with up to 18 years of formal Chinese instruction to be able to do, professionally, upon graduation? To borrow from the language of business, how can we define ‘quality product’ in the field of Chinese language pedagogy?

To answer this question, the author shadowed four Americans and one Englishman who speak Chinese at work, interviewed them and two Chinese colleagues each on the subject of professional Chinese use, and obtained quantitative evaluations of the foreigners’ Chinese skills from the subjects themselves, their colleagues, and three native Chinese language instructors at the Ohio State University.

The study found that Chinese people believe professional non-native speakers of
Chinese excel at casual conversation, engaging in question and answer with Chinese natives and are generally skilled at demonstrating expertise in their chosen profession. Naturally, the longer an individual had been working in a given domain, the more likely it was that Chinese natives perceived them as experts. Areas in which learners could professionally benefit from improved skills included cultural appropriateness, ability to make cultural references, and professional writing. The study also found that portfolio evaluation conducted by native speakers is an accurate reflection of what native speakers think of non-native speakers’ foreign language performances.

Based on the research results, it is recommended that Chinese language programs in the United States emphasize culturally-appropriate performance, incorporate domain-specific professional training at advanced levels, and evaluate their learners using a performance portfolio assessment system.
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VITA

December 21, 1976……………………….. Born, Fort Belvoir, Virginia

2003………………………………………… M.A. Chinese language pedagogy, The Ohio State University

1998………………………………………… B.A. East Asian Studies, College of William and Mary

2001-present……………………………… Lecturer, Graduate Teaching and Research Associate, The Ohio State University

2001-present……………………………… Cross-cultural business consultant and owner, SinoConnect, LLC

1999-2001……………………………… Director, Storefront operations, MeetChina.com

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major field: East Asian Languages & Literatures, Chinese language pedagogy track
Minor field: International business
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................................. iv
Vita ......................................................................................................................................................... vi
List of Tables ........................................................................................................................................... xiv
List of Figures .......................................................................................................................................... xvi

Chapters:

Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 1

1. The goal for Chinese language capacity in the United States: more & better .............................. 4
   1.1 Cross-border interaction between Chinese and Americans ................................................... 8
   1.2 The domestic need for effective Chinese-American communication .................................. 10
   1.3 National security considerations and understanding Chinese ............................................. 12
   1.4 Professions in which Americans are engaging China and Chinese people ............................... 15
   1.5 What defines professionally-useful foreign language skills? .................................................... 19
       1.5.1 Professional level language ............................................................................................ 19
       1.5.2 Professional-level performance ....................................................................................... 21
       1.5.3 Who should evaluate professional-level Chinese ability? ............................................... 26
   1.6 Current United States professional Chinese capacity ............................................................ 28
       1.6.1 US-educated Chinese nationals ....................................................................................... 29
       1.6.2 American-born Chinese .................................................................................................. 30
       1.6.3 Non-heritage learner Americans trained in Chinese ....................................................... 31
   1.7 How training more Americans to higher levels of Chinese skill serves US interests .............. 35
       1.7.1 Exploring opportunities hidden behind the language barrier ....................................... 36
       1.7.2 Competing with countries that have a greater cultural affinity with China ............... 41
           1.7.2.1 “People like me” ....................................................................................................... 43
           1.7.2.2 Proximity vs. affinity ................................................................................................. 44
       1.7.3 Chinese staff retention in American organizations ......................................................... 47
   1.8 Arguments against hiring Americans trained to advanced levels of Chinese ability ............ 54
       1.8.1 The Chinese all speak English ......................................................................................... 54
       1.8.2 US-educated Chinese nationals can fulfill all of America’s Chinese language needs . 55
1.9 Are American organizations actively recruiting Chinese-speaking Americans? .....................58
  1.9.1 The supply side.......................................................................................................... 59
  1.9.2 The demand side.......................................................................................................... 61
  1.10 How we can know if we have trained Americans to higher levels of Chinese..............67

2. Multi-disciplinary approaches to culture and effective communication ................................69
  2.1 Ways of Talking about Culture and Language ..............................................................71
    2.1.1 Culture in Business Research..................................................................................72
    2.1.1.1 The beginning: Parsons & Shils .....................................................................74
    2.1.1.2 Geert Hofstede................................................................................................77
    2.1.1.3 Trompenaars: Building on Parsons and Hofstede...........................................80
  2.1.2 名可名非常名，道可道非常道 Culture and communication in the humanities ....86
    2.1.2.1 Culture and meaning-making ............................................................................88
    2.1.2.2 Communication as performed culture ...............................................................98
  2.2 What Constitutes Successful Performance? ......................................................................102
    2.2.1 American concepts of success ..................................................................................103
    2.2.2 Chinese standards of effective interaction...............................................................114
      2.2.2.1 Chinese success literature..............................................................................115
      2.2.2.2 The successful person in traditional Chinese thought: A social being............120
      2.2.2.3 Modern Chinese professional communication and guanxi .........................122
      2.2.2.4 Locating oneself in adult society through guanxi .........................................127
    2.2.2.5 Etiquette ..........................................................................................................131
  2.3 Models for performing successfully in cross-cultural contexts...................................132
    2.3.1 Successfully crossing cultures in American business literature ............................133
    2.3.2 Successful cross-cultural communication and the “game” metaphor......................137
  2.4 What we know about non-Chinese working in Chinese professional environments...141
    2.4.1 In China: Why expatriates go and what they are doing......................................142
      2.4.1.1 The traditional corporate expatriate...............................................................143
      2.4.1.2 Entrepreneur expatriates................................................................................147
    2.4.2 In the U.S.: Where Chinese and English speakers interact at home......................149
  2.5 Describing how working Americans fare in Chinese language environments ..........154
  2.6 How culture and language ability affect expatriate performance ................................156
    2.6.1 Studies on language/culture knowledge and its effect on expatriate adjustment.158
    2.6.2 Studies relating language/culture knowledge to expatriate task completion ....164
  2.7 Relationship building and professional success ..........................................................168
  2.8 Foreigners manage differently from Chinese people...............................................173
  2.9 How do the Chinese feel about foreigners’ performance?...........................................179
  2.10 What do we know about Americans that interact effectively in Chinese environments? ....185
  2.11 What do we not know about what and how professional Americans are doing in Chinese
3. Experimental design........................................................................................................................189

3.1 Research Questions ........................................................................................................................189

3.1.1 What are Americans doing with advanced Chinese skill?..............................................................192

3.1.2 What creates an impression of successful communication in Chinese eyes?.................................193

3.1.3 How can advanced Chinese language performance be meaningfully assessed?.........................194

3.1.3.1 Performance evaluation methods for professionals working across cultures .............................195

3.1.3.2 Existing foreign language assessment tools .................................................................................201

3.1.3.3 Foreign language assessment methodology in international business research ......................213

3.2 Experimental Design.......................................................................................................................216

3.2.1 Participant recruitment ...............................................................................................................216

3.2.1.1 The research subjects: non-native speakers of Chinese..............................................................217

3.2.1.2 Native Chinese evaluators .........................................................................................................219

3.2.2 Ethnographic observation ...........................................................................................................221

3.2.3 Interviews ......................................................................................................................................223

3.2.4 Language use portfolios ..............................................................................................................225

3.2.4.1 Portfolio construction ................................................................................................................225

3.2.4.2 Portfolio evaluation ....................................................................................................................226

3.2.5 Lessons learned ............................................................................................................................232

3.2.5.1 Recruiting ................................................................................................................................232

3.2.5.2 Data collection ............................................................................................................................233

3.2.5.3 Portfolio evaluation ....................................................................................................................233

4. Profiles of five occupational users of Chinese ....................................................................................235

4.1 Eric Klein ...........................................................................................................................................235

4.1.1 Interview with Eric Klein .............................................................................................................236

4.1.1.1 Chinese learning background ....................................................................................................236

4.1.1.2 Relationships with Chinese people ............................................................................................237

4.1.1.3 Foreigners using Chinese for work that Eric knows ....................................................................237

4.1.1.4 Eric’s professional Chinese use ..................................................................................................239

4.1.1.5 Eric’s interview-based self-assessment .......................................................................................241

4.1.2 Interviews with Eric’s Chinese colleagues .....................................................................................245

4.1.2.1 Colleague backgrounds .............................................................................................................246

4.1.2.2 Klein’s Chinese colleagues assess foreigner behavior ...............................................................248

4.1.2.3 Klein’s Chinese colleagues assess his Chinese ............................................................................249

4.1.3 Observing Eric at work ..................................................................................................................251

4.1.4 Klein’s portfolio evaluations .........................................................................................................264
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4 Observing Ireland at work</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.5 Ireland’s portfolio evaluations</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.5.1 Performance sample highlights</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.5.2 Aggregate portfolio ratings by evaluator and criterion</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Ben Coltrane</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.1 Chinese learning background</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2 Interview with Ben Coltrane</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2.1 Relationships with Chinese people</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2.2 Foreigners Coltrane knows who use Chinese for work</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2.3 Coltrane on how he uses Chinese for work</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.2.4 Coltrane assesses his Chinese language ability</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.3 Interviews with Ben Coltrane’s colleagues</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.3.1 Colleague backgrounds</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.3.2 Coltrane’s colleagues on foreigners in Chinese language</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.3.3 Coltrane’s colleagues assess his Chinese use</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.4 Observing Coltrane at work</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.5 Coltrane’s portfolio evaluations</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.5.1 Performance sample highlights</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.5.2 Aggregate portfolio ratings by evaluator and criterion</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Aggregate portfolio evaluations</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.1 Aggregate data by evaluator</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.2 Aggregate data by criterion</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Comparison of interview-based evaluation &amp; ALPPS evaluations</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Western and Chinese definitions of “good communication”</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Data analysis and discussion</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 What are foreigners doing with advanced Chinese skill?</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 What advanced Chinese speakers currently do well</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2 What Chinese speaking foreigners can do better</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 What creates a good impression in Chinese eyes?</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Behaviors that produce positive impressions on Chinese evaluators</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3 Foreign behaviors that make Chinese uncomfortable</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Informed use of self-evaluated foreign language ability</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 How ALPPS can be improved to produce more useful results</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1 Changes to ALPPS design</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.2 Changes in the portfolio creation process</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.3 Changes to the portfolio evaluation process</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Implications for Chinese language pedagogy</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5.1 Test what the learners need to be able to do</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Top 10 US exports to China by product type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td><em>Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi</em> test sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td><em>Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi</em> proficiency descriptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>ALPPS scoring rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Aggregate portfolio scores, Eric Klein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Average portfolio scores by criterion, Eric Klein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Eric Klein criterion ratings by evaluator’s domain familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Blake MacDonald video sample 7 ALPPS scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Aggregate portfolio scores, Blake MacDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Average portfolio scores by criterion, Blake MacDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Aggregate portfolio scores, Isaac Chatham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Average portfolio scores by criterion, Isaac Chatham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Zachary Ireland performance video sample 3 evaluator comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Zachary Ireland performance video sample 9 evaluator comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Aggregate portfolio scores, Zachary Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.12 Average portfolio scores by criterion, Zachary Ireland..........................350
4.13 Aggregate portfolio scores, Ben Coltrane........................................371
4.14 Average portfolio scores by criterion, Ben Coltrane.................................372
4.15 Performance evaluations by rater type..................................................373
4.16 Multi-portfolio average evaluation differences between rater types, by criterion..........................376
4.17 Average self – Chinese native rating difference, by criterion......................378
4.18 Interview evaluations vs. ALPPS evaluations.........................................380
4.19 Comparison of Western and Chinese definitions of “good communication”..383
5.1 Comparison of portfolio self-ratings and portfolio average ratings............397
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Growth of Domestic Private Firms Registered with government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Cultures and normal distributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Culture and normal distributions example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Maslow’s hierarchy of needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Seating arrangements at Zachary Ireland banquet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Average criterion ratings given by all Chinese evaluators across all portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>ALPPS evaluation averages by day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

As American schools from grades K-16+ create Chinese language programs, American communication with Chinese people in Chinese and by Chinese cultural standards will take place with increasing frequency and in professional contexts once dominated by English and Western culture. As a result, a sizeable task lays ahead for Chinese language pedagogues: what do we expect learners with up to 18 years of formal Chinese instruction to be able to do, professionally, upon graduation? To borrow from the language of business, how can we define ‘quality product’ in the field of Chinese language pedagogy?

To answer this question, the author shadowed four Americans and one Englishman who speak Chinese at work, interviewed them and two Chinese colleagues each on the subject of professional Chinese use, and obtained quantitative evaluations of the foreigners’ Chinese skills from the subjects themselves, their colleagues, and three native Chinese language instructors at the Ohio State University. The results of this study demonstrate that fluent Chinese speakers definitely have a role to play in the currently English-dominant world of cross-cultural communication, and that certain abilities must
be cultivated at educational institutions in order for Chinese language learners to be effective at work.

In Chapter 1, this dissertation begins by describing why effective communication with Chinese people is a necessity for an increasing number of American organizations and individuals. Because cross-cultural communication can take place in any language, the case is then made for training and hiring Americans with advanced levels of Chinese language ability in particular.

Literature describing the various approaches to defining and assessing effective professional Sino-foreign communication is reviewed in Chapter 2. This leads through discussions of what constitutes communication, how people achieve and evaluate professional effectiveness in American and Chinese culture alone and across cultures, and initial looks at how Americans are actually faring in Chinese language work environments.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used for the ethnographic and language assessment research carried out for this dissertation. Existing methods of assessing advanced foreign language ability are reviewed, including the digital portfolio evaluation system used in this research. Finally, the logistics of the fieldwork performed and online tools used are described to give context for the results, presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 is divided into one section which profiles each research subject using
ethnographic and quantitative data and another in which trends that appeared across all five subjects are discussed.

Chapter 5 Addresses two of the research questions and describes improvements in portfolio assessment and Chinese language pedagogy suggested by the research.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by looking at foreign language assessment with new eyes and suggesting that a new paradigm be applied to this field in order to produce the kind of foreign language professional that this country needs now and in the future.

Up until now, the language barrier between the US and China has most often been crossed by English-speaking Chinese. Next, we begin by addressing the question of why more Americans should be trained to professionally-useful levels of Chinese language ability, and what that actually means.
CHAPTER 1

THE GOAL FOR CHINESE LANGUAGE CAPACITY IN THE UNITED STATES:
MORE AND BETTER

In 1995, the US imported $45.6 billion worth of goods from China and exported $11.8 billion worth. By 2006, US imports from China had increased over six times to $287.8 billion and exports had grown nearly five-fold to $55.2 billion (US China Business Council 2008). Looking only at the volume of trade between the two countries, it is apparent how intertwined their economies are. The relationship between the US and China extends well beyond trade in goods, reaching into professional services, education, diplomacy and national security. Americans and Chinese are interacting on an ever-increasing scale, and with increasing stakes in the game.

Considering that about 20 million people in China speak English on a daily basis (Li 2006), many Americans wonder why they should study Chinese at all. On the other hand, some Chinese people believe that their language will become the *lingua franca* of business within a few decades, and that anyone who does not master Mandarin will be
excluded from economic opportunity. Though one observer said, “it's not the case that if you don't speak Mandarin in 20 years you'll be relegated to flipping hamburgers” (Ruiz 2008), it is not difficult to imagine how Mandarin-speaking Americans will have an advantage over monolingual compatriots. Former Ohio State business professor Mike Peng once said, “imagine that you work at an auto supplier that is off shoring its operations to China and firing all but 20% of its US workforce; if you speak Chinese, are you more likely to be among the 80% that is laid off or among the 20% who gets to keep their jobs?” This may be something of a worst-case scenario, but it illustrates an important point: if the 21st century is going to be the “Asian Century”, and China is going to be a leading power, it seems reasonable that there would be value in having a group of Americans trained to truly advanced levels of Chinese proficiency.

According to a 2006 report from the Modern Language Association (MLA), however, it seems that more work needs to be done before such a cadre will exist:

- For every 1 advanced learner of Chinese in US universities, there are 26 advanced learners of Spanish
- For every 9 beginning learners of Chinese in US universities, there are 2 advanced learners. (Furman, Goldberg and Lusin 2006)

We will have to wait until a second MLA report counting advanced learners is published before we can ascertain if the low numbers of advanced Chinese learners is a
result of attrition or just a trough before a new wave of Mandarin learners reaches advanced university classes.

Regardless of the numbers, we must be careful with how we treat the term “advanced” in the MLA report. The MLA’s definition of advanced skill is based on seat time: learners who have taken three or four years of any college-level foreign language class are labeled “advanced”. This dissertation asserts that advanced level ability may be better described in terms of what activities can be performed effectively in the target language/culture than by seat time. Because the ultimate goal of training Americans to advanced levels of Chinese is to utilize their skills in professional endeavors, this discussion leads to what constitutes professionally-useful levels of ability\(^1\), as well as why few employers in the private sector currently seek job candidates with such ability.

A significant amount of money and resources are poised to be spent on training more Americans to speak Chinese at higher levels… but who determines what constitutes “advanced”? When can we confidently say, “mission accomplished”? Pedagogical theories coming out of the Ohio State University indicate that the best judges of foreign language ability are the native speakers themselves, and that the best judge of professional foreign language ability is a native-speaking colleague in the same

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\(^1\) I prefer the term “professionally-useful levels of ability” to “advanced” because the latter term has been used to describe a wide range of actual ability and because it refers to a practical definition of skill rather than an abstract one, such as ACTFL’s Advanced rating. My preferred term is a mouthful, however, and so I used it and “advanced” synonymously. Unless otherwise noted, any use of the term “advanced” in this dissertation should not be interpreted to refer to existing formal scales or standards.
professional field. Traditionally, Chinese experts in linguistics and literature have been asked to assess advanced learner ability, regardless of what profession the learner is pursuing. This dissertation aims to provide data that proves – or disproves – the idea that advanced foreign language ability is most accurately assessed by native experts in the foreign language learner’s professional domain. For the remainder of this dissertation, “domain” is defined as a professional field of expertise. Frequently, ‘job’ and ‘domain’ can be used interchangeably, e.g., “police officer” or “forensic accountant”. A new hire at a law firm might be expected to behave differently from a partner of 30 years, but both lawyers should be able to recognize what language and behavior is expected from the other (e.g., grasp of legal terms and concepts, level of deference, etc).

It seems unlikely that any American in the foreseeable future will be forced to take a minimum wage job for lack of advanced Chinese language ability, but that is an awfully low standard by which to measure whether or not more Americans need to learn more Chinese. The endgame for training Americans to truly advanced levels of Chinese is not avoiding work at McDonald’s, but ensuring the country’s economic and political security. In the following sections, we will describe these practical reasons.
1.1 Cross-border interaction between Chinese and Americans

It has become cliché to point out how many items for sale at Wal-Mart or Target are made in China\(^2\), but it is still valuable to point how the width and depth of US-China commerce. With about 60\% of all Chinese exports coming from foreign-owned or foreign-invested operations (PRC Ministry of Commerce 2006), the Chinese need American consumers as much American consumers want low-priced goods. Some of the 5000 or so US firms in China\(^3\) are small shops owned by naturalized US citizens originally from China, while others are wholly foreign-owned enterprises (WOFE’s) like GE and Delphi that employ thousands of Chinese and have a sizeable host of expatriates in China as well.

In addition to exporting goods to the US, Chinese firms are themselves coming across the Pacific. According to Uniworld, there were 79 Chinese firms registered in the US in 2008, and another 119 American subsidiaries of Chinese firms. These firms range from auto parts suppliers to lighting fixture distributors. Despite – or perhaps because of – CNOOC’s failed bid to buy Unocal, Chinese firms have been begun buying significant shares of US companies without owning them outright. Recent examples include investments in financial firms Bear Stearns and Blackstone. A longer list of Chinese operations in the US can be found in chapter 2.


\(^3\) Uniworld database search 2/15/08.
Americans rely on China to manufacture many goods, but China has become an important market for US goods, as well. In 2007, US exports to China rose in 9 months out of 12 for a total of over $65 billion and the volume of exports has been consistently rising since 1993 (US Census Bureau 2008b). The types of goods American firms export to China are significant in that they represent both highly value-added goods and raw materials for which the US has a competitive advantage. For Chinese language educators, these represent the industries and fields in which their learners should be accruing domain-specific professional Chinese ability.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semiconductors</td>
<td>1,589,522</td>
<td>2,447,029</td>
<td>2,938,303</td>
<td>3,363,899</td>
<td>5,876,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian aircraft</td>
<td>3,146,162</td>
<td>2,148,172</td>
<td>1,617,532</td>
<td>3,796,234</td>
<td>5,301,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>995,837</td>
<td>2,888,802</td>
<td>2,328,833</td>
<td>2,249,009</td>
<td>2,529,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic materials</td>
<td>731,540</td>
<td>933,584</td>
<td>1,381,725</td>
<td>1,834,600</td>
<td>2,178,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton, raw</td>
<td>147,652</td>
<td>763,697</td>
<td>1,431,259</td>
<td>1,405,973</td>
<td>2,066,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial machines, other</td>
<td>1,106,265</td>
<td>1,167,534</td>
<td>1,911,342</td>
<td>1,532,734</td>
<td>1,976,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>305,480</td>
<td>626,464</td>
<td>622,432</td>
<td>932,360</td>
<td>1,862,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer accessories</td>
<td>884,009</td>
<td>1,006,233</td>
<td>1,070,259</td>
<td>1,427,037</td>
<td>1,819,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum and alumina</td>
<td>240,417</td>
<td>314,132</td>
<td>487,786</td>
<td>895,794</td>
<td>1,704,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steelmaking materials</td>
<td>463,341</td>
<td>710,924</td>
<td>984,441</td>
<td>1,511,639</td>
<td>1,692,182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 Top 10 US exports to China by product type (in $1,000) (US Census Bureau 2008c)
It is clear that Chinese and Americans are going to be working together more often and more closely than in the past. With more trade and investment come more opportunities for communication and miscommunication. For American as well as Chinese business, effective communication means money saved as well as money made.

1.2 The domestic need for effective Chinese-American communication

Based on the 2000 census, there were over 840,000 Chinese-born individuals working in the US (US Census Bureau 2008). These first-generation immigrants represent a demographic very likely to prefer communicating in their native language⁴, a point that is doubly important because the Chinese tend to work in areas that require frequent and accurate communication. Based on the same 2000 census data, 52.8% of Chinese-born workers in the US are in management or professional occupations, followed by 18.9% in sales and office jobs, and another 15% in service occupations. Only 13.3% are engaged in labor-intensive occupations such as construction and manufacturing.

In addition to the professional workforce, native speakers of Chinese comprise an important part of America’s research community, a fact that became painfully obvious when visa restrictions enacted in 2003 made it difficult for research universities to fill

⁴ According to the same report, 93.1% of Chinese-born individuals in the US over the age of 5 speak an “Asian language” at home, presumably some form of Chinese in most cases.
their ranks with Chinese and Indians, as they had been accustomed to. A 2005 article in *Inside Higher Ed* shows that Chinese graduate student applications dropped by 15% between 2004 and 2005, and that admissions fell 5%, as well (Jaschik 2005). NPR’s Morning Edition reports that State Department policies began to change in 2006, in part to encourage more Chinese students to come to the US. There are now over 62,000 Chinese students enrolled in US institutions of higher education in 2006, second only to India (Kuhn 2006).

In 2006, 11,784 Americans went to China on study abroad (Simons 2007); there are four times as many people in China as there are in the US, there were about 145 college students in China for every Chinese student in the US; in the other direction, there were about 1,527 college students in the US for every American student in China. The nearly one-way flow of people from China to the US points to a highly asymmetric flow of information between the two countries. This is not to say that the Chinese are stealing information, but that all the information in the public domain in the United States is accessible to a huge number of Chinese, and the same cannot be said for knowledge created and shared amongst Chinese people. Like the Qian Long emperor’s telling the British emissary Lord McCartney that the UK possessed nothing that China desires, Americans are in danger of missing a vast and growing amount of information generated

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by world Chinese communities. About one tenth of all web pages are in Chinese (Yi 2006) and there are now more internet users from China than from any other country (Barboza 2008). The Chinese are pouring huge amounts of money into advanced automobile and stem cell research, the results of which would be accessible earlier and more completely if Americans were able to read them in Chinese. Though many Chinese scholars publish in English, many others publish in Chinese and are frustrated by their inability to share their findings with non-Chinese readers (Donovan 2000). Outside of Greater China, Chinese citizens are able to visit and report on parts of the world where Americans are either unwelcome or not permitted to go. How much critically useful information about Cuba, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and North Korea have Americans missed for lack of trained eyes reading Chinese reports?

1.3 National security considerations and understanding Chinese

Federation of American Scientists\(^6\) analyst Steve Aftergood once remarked, “There are some basic incompatibilities between [the US and China], and these are a source of tension” (Davidson 2001). The results of these tensions have ranged from outright war in the 1950’s to the arrest of four Americans accused of spying for China in February 2008 (Markon 2008). If we can measure the importance of China to US national security by the number of military or diplomatic incidents that have taken place since the Opium Wars,

\(^6\) The FAS is an organization that analyses security and intelligence issues.
then being able to understand what the Chinese are thinking at any given time is clearly very important. Such a list would extend beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it would include events such as the Boxer Rebellion, Doolittle’s Raid on Tokyo, the US 7th Fleet preventing Mao’s invasion of Taiwan, Cold War U2 shoot-downs, the Chinese supplying the Viet Cong with arms, US arms sales to Taiwan, CIA support of Tibetan rebels, US support of Chinese crackdowns on Uighur separatists after 9/11, US requests for Chinese intervention in North Korea’s nuclear program and several cases of mutual spying (Diamond 1999).

The utility of mastering the Chinese language for national security purposes was made explicit by the “Letter of Two Sorries” in 2001. In that year, a US Navy EP-3 electronic surveillance plane collided with a shadowing Chinese fighter off the coast of southern China. The Chinese pilot was lost and the American crew made an unpermitted emergency landing on Hainan Island. The crew was detained for 10 days until US ambassador to China Joseph Prueher wrote a letter expressing regret over the affair and saying that the United States was “very sorry” for the death of the Chinese pilot. In English, the letter is vague on the point of accepting responsibility; recognizing that a Chinese translation would be forced to make this point explicit, the US government delivered the letter untranslated and allowed the Chinese to draw their own conclusions. A less precise understanding of the Chinese language could have led to a greater loss of

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face for both sides.

After Admiral William Fallon became commander of all US forces in the Pacific in 2006, he made the first military-to-military contacts with the PLA since the Hainan incident in 2001 (Cody 2006). Despite minor interruptions 8, US-China military cooperation continues today. There is a saying in Chinese that “one mountain cannot hold two tigers” (一山不容二虎). As long as China and the US have unresolved tensions between them, there will be a need for each side to understand the other’s intentions. Mutual understanding will play a key role in helping the two countries can see themselves as two elephants on a mountain instead of two tigers.

National security is a function of economic and military considerations, and as the preceding sections have demonstrated, understanding Chinese intentions is central to protecting and improving Americans’ lives in the 21st century. Understanding the Chinese market makes it easier for American firms to do business within China; understanding Chinese consumers leads to job-creating exports; understanding Chinese political intentions leads to mutually beneficial agreements and greater trust. Whether Americans pursue a strategy of partnership or competition with China, understanding Chinese intentions – a core component of advanced language ability – is a necessity.

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8 After Fallon’s departure from the post, the PRC abruptly cancelled a November 2007 Hong Kong stop for the US carrier Kitty Hawk. It is believed that the cancellation was a reaction to US weapons sales to Taiwan. After some diplomacy, however, a US warship was allowed to make a call in Hong Kong in January 2008 (Lague 2008). Incidentally, the 2008 warship, the USS Blue Ridge, was the same ship that I took Ohio State students to when it visited Qingdao in 2002.
1.4 Professions in which Americans are engaging China and Chinese people

We have already seen on a macro level why it is in America’s best interest to learn to interpret Chinese actions accurately. On an individual level, interpretation of intention is crucial to successful professional interaction, as well. When US-China relations are discussed, business is often the first area that comes to mind. Being able to speak Chinese and therefore understand Chinese intentions in the business environment is a useful skill. American managers can combat employee attrition by being able to satisfy unvoiced needs; US-based purchasers can interpret suppliers’ non-answers to quality questions as answers in and of themselves; managers in the States would know how to help skilled Chinese employees promote their accomplishments and break through the “bamboo ceiling” to become middle level managers and beyond instead of losing them to competitors. The bamboo ceiling is actually deaf and color-blind: it is permeable to Chinese and ethnically Chinese people who behave like Americans, even if they do not look or sound like them. The bamboo ceiling holds down individuals who are unable to adapt to American social expectations. For instance, many Chinese are accustomed to focusing their social energies on gaining superiors’ favor in order to earn promotions. In the more egalitarian American culture, it is necessary to cultivate the support of colleagues and subordinates as well as superiors in order to achieve upward mobility. Americans who have achieved advanced levels of Chinese language ability understand
this phenomenon and can help highly skilled but socially un-adapted Chinese employees to maximize their effectiveness in American organizations.

In government, Americans interact with Chinese people in as many ways as businesspeople do. At the Federal level, State department officials work with Chinese citizens as they negotiate the visa application process; Foreign Agricultural Service officers work with their counterparts in China; Trade Administration officials negotiate trade disputes; military intelligence people read and listen to Chinese reports of all kinds. At the state level, many state governments have representative offices in China (Ohio has three, in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai), and regularly host Chinese delegations as well as visit China on trade missions.

Academic interaction between Chinese and Americans goes back to the 19th century, when many Chinese universities were established by US missionaries. Since China reopened to the West, academic exchange has been increasingly bilateral. At first, many more Chinese came to the US for graduate school than Americans went to China. Recently, however, American students going to China for short- and long-term study have increased several-fold. In 2000, only 4,280 American students went to China; by 2006, that number had grown to 11,784 (Simons 2007). By comparison, 67,723 Chinese were studying in the US in 2006 (Zhang 2007).
Academic interaction between China and the US also takes place at the faculty level. American professors of Chinese language, art history, anthropology, business and law regularly work with their Chinese counterparts to establish new programs, host conferences, and publish research together. According to the Institute for Chinese Studies at the Ohio State University, this university alone has official relations with Beijing University, the Central University for Nationalities, China Agricultural University, China Europe International Business School, Fudan University, Harbin Institute of Technology, Hefei University of Technology, Jinan University (Guangzhou), Nanjing Agricultural University, Qinghua University, Shandong University, Southern Yangtze University, Tianjin University of Science and Technology, Wenzhou Medical College and Wuhan University. Without reaching the level of university-to-university agreements, Ohio State faculty have also worked with China Ocean University, Qingdao University, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science, Zhongshan University, and Zhejiang University to run or discuss establishing joint programs in Chinese language study, agricultural management, and business.

Today, the frontier of US-China academic cooperation is the establishment of branch campuses in China, but according to Insider Higher Education, it is a frontier fraught with difficulty. The Chinese are concerned that American universities see China simply as a cash cow, while Americans are worried that they would be subsidizing the education of
their future competitors (Redden 2008). One of the few American branch campuses in China – if not the only one – is the 20-year-old Johns Hopkins Nanjing Center, where Chinese and American learners study social sciences together in English. *Inside Higher Education* points out that cultural barriers are among the reasons American universities have not been as successful in China as British and Australian ones have. Any time cultural barriers are named as one of the culprits for failed cooperation, one of the solutions is to involve individuals with advanced or professionally-useful levels of language skill.

As a nation, we are doing passably well with the limited Chinese language ability found in the population – business is done, treaties are signed, and research is conducted. In the increasingly competitive global environment, however, the status quo is not sufficient to maintain economic viability. Boeing lost a huge Air Force tanker contract to European competitor EADS in 2008 because it believed its name and stature could offset its business-as-usual attitude. They learned the hard way that aggressive continuous self-improvement wins contracts. Rather than wait to find out what opportunities Americans will miss out on for lack of Chinese language capacity, it might be better to train Americans to advanced levels of Chinese skill who can identify those opportunities before they go to someone else.
1.5 What defines professionally-useful foreign language skills?

At lower levels of foreign language ability, it is sufficient to know general skills such as greeting casual friends, giving directions, describing people, and buying things from small shops. At advanced levels, however, a paradigm shift takes place. Advanced foreign language skills are used in professional settings, settings defined by a particular trade and the customs of those engaged in that trade. If foreign language learning is the process of being socialized into a foreign culture, then advanced foreign language ability means being socialized in a particular foreign professional culture. Using Chinese to give examples, we can discuss professional-level socialization as being composed of two observable, though operationally inseparable, pieces: language and performance.

1.5.1 Professional level language

Americans with professional-level Chinese ability are able to maintain professional discourse in a culturally-appropriate manner. For many office workers, this means being able to give convincing presentations and conduct negotiations, giving and taking interviews, reprimanding employees and promoting one person over another without enraging the passed-over employee. For an American interviewer unaccustomed to reading between the lines as the Chinese do, humility may be misinterpreted as a lack of

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9 By “negotiation”, I refer not only to traditional negotiations like establishing prices and terms, but also to the back-and-forth process involved in any situation where two parties have different starting points but need to reach a common end point, e.g., making an appointment with a busy person, convincing colleagues that your plan is the best, etc. There is an important difference between “getting your way” and achieving buy-in.
confident or skill. Interviewers trained in Chinese culture will know that Chinese people who are comfortable promoting themselves in public are outliers in the population and could be regarded as antisocial in Chinese culture. When faced with a Chinese interviewee who appears very capable at self-promotion, interviewers socialized in Chinese culture – foreign or Chinese – will attempt to ascertain if the interviewee can turn this ability off in the company of Chinese who do not appreciate it, or if the applicant is not sufficiently socialized in his/her own culture and may cause friction with other Chinese. The American trained in Chinese culture can then communicate this to other Americans in HR, whereas a Chinese person in the same position might reject a self-promoting applicant and be unable to communicate why.

Professional-level Chinese language ability also means being able to understand and participate in industry-specific dialogue. On a basic level, understanding industry topics and terms in Chinese and English is necessary for discussing work-related issues. On another level, this command is important for establishing an expert persona in the field. It is normal to believe that people who are experts in one specific area are generally knowledgeable; alternatively, it is common for lack of knowledge in one area to be assumed to represent ignorance in all others. For example, many people believe that a doctoral degree is an indicator of general intelligence while illiteracy indicates a general lack of intelligence. Of course, neither is necessarily true. In the Chinese context, a
monolingual American mechanical engineer well-versed in engine design but unable to communicate this knowledge may fail to impress a Chinese auto engineer (and vice-versa), and therefore seem less professionally reliable. In most cultures – if you sound like an expert, you will be perceived as an expert. It takes years of training for an American to sound like an expert of anything in Chinese, but once s/he creates that persona, it creates long-term benefit.

1.5.2 Professional-level performance

Culturally-appropriate performances are ones that produce an intended effect in the target culture and that will have a positive long-term impact. A necessary prerequisite for effective cross-cultural performance is procedural knowledge of the target culture. Unfortunately, many foreign language learners are taught declarative knowledge and expected to gain procedural knowledge on their own. Declarative knowledge is to procedural knowledge what playbooks are to football practice. Declarative knowledge is knowledge about people, events, and concepts. This type of knowledge is often gained from presentations and texts, and then proved through re-presentation or re-writing (e.g., written tests). Procedural knowledge is “doing” knowledge. Procedural knowledge is gained from hands-on, physical engagement in practice with a coach, and then proved by successful recreation of the action.
There are many books on how to interact professionally with Chinese people, but relying on these alone would be like handing a football playbook to someone and then after a week of class time, putting him/her in a football game. Americans are quite comfortable with the idea of training athletes on fields with coaches, but many cross-cultural communication experts still operate on the assumption that you can learn to work internationally by reading about it. Chinese culture is different from American culture in so many respects that training for procedural knowledge is necessary to achieve effective cross-cultural interaction. Unless you are going to stand on the sidelines with the referee, playing the game is more important for mastery than reading about it.

The following example illustrates the importance of culturally-appropriate behavior. A Chinese woman was hired by an American Tier 1 auto supplier to handle their China purchasing. Of course, her Chinese was excellent, and her English was fluent; she even had an MBA from a top-20 business school. With all that linguistic and technical knowledge, she could not understand why her coworkers rarely included her in social activities or sought her out for conversation. Part of the reason may have been the fact that she had explained to her coworkers that freedom of speech is not good for social stability, and that the US could learn from the Chinese practice of having a central authority that uses censorship to make sure that local unrest does not become a national issue. Though this woman was able to convey what she wanted to say very clearly, she
missed the fact that many Americans are uncomfortable with others – especially foreigners – criticizing what Americans believe to be one of the cornerstones of the national identity. Americans are not immune to doing the same thing in Chinese culture. Former Colorado Representative Pat Schroeder proudly wrote in one of her books that her daughter learned Chinese at an Ivy League school and was able to go to China and chastise the natives (Schroeder 1998). One wonders what kinds of friends Schroeder’s daughter made in China.

Based on communicative foreign language teaching methodology, the women in the previous examples would be considered successful: they were able to communicate the information that formed the basis of their political convictions. Communicating information is not successfully communicating intentionality, however. From a behavioral or performance perspective, the women almost certainly failed in their presumed intentions to change the minds of their listeners. A truly successful communicator would have been able to anticipate the perspective of his/her listeners and adapt the delivery of the message to achieve the intended result.

Another Chinese woman known by the author believes that strict government control is necessary for public safety, but uses culturally appropriate rhetorical devices to make her point to Americans. When American coworkers ask her what she thinks of Chinese government controls, she recognizes that her intentions consist of a) opening
Americans’ minds to alternative perspectives and b) strengthening her relationships in the workplace. In order to achieve these objectives, she first reassures her American listeners that she is not going to lecture them and says that her perspective is the result of decades of socialization in China. By turning the discussion into a dialogue, Americans are more likely to listen. She then describes the social and economic situation in China that makes domestic unrest so common and so counter-productive. She uses the American (and classical Chinese) rhetorical method of providing facts and trying to get the listener to reach the speaker’s own conclusion “on their own.”

American professionals can also fail to appropriately communicate their intention to Chinese listeners. A large American organization once met with representatives from a Chinese government office to discuss renting real estate for a project. The Chinese side had about five men at the table and the Americans had another five. Among the Chinese, one man was clearly in charge and spoke for everyone. On the American side, there was one individual who was nominally in charge, but who asked other Americans to contribute their opinions to the discussion. To an American, if you are at the negotiating table, it is because the leader believes you have knowledge to contribute to the discussion; for the Chinese, however, subordinates’ contributions are made before and after the meeting so as to reinforce the leader’s superior role. At this particular meeting, the democratic way of negotiation that the Americans used may have confused the Chinese
participants, leaving the impression that the Americans were themselves unsure of what they wanted from the potential partnership.

Americans with professional-level Chinese ability are able to put into action knowledge of Chinese cultural concepts such as face, hierarchy, harmony, and *guanxi*\(^{10}\). In addition to being able to talk about these concepts as they relate to American culture, they are able to consciously give face, get face, and even take it away from others. There is a scene in a movie about Sino-American cultural differences called “A Great Wall” that presents a Chinese-American whose American upbringing included preserving the Chinese language, but not the ritualized demonstration of hierarchy that exists in China. The man, a computer engineer from San Francisco, visits a research facility in Beijing. At the front door, he is greeted by the director and three subordinates. One of the subordinates makes a hand gesture to the American to indicate who the director is, but the American misinterprets the hand movement as the beginning of a handshake and proceeds to shake the subordinate’s hand. The Chinese subordinate deftly corrects the gaff by swinging the American’s still-shaking hand to the director’s hand, and there is but momentary discomfort on the part of the Chinese. For someone trained to have procedural knowledge of Chinese professional culture, there would have been no conceivable option but to shake the director’s hand first.\(^{11}\)

\(^{10}\) *Guanxi* means “relationship” and here refers to interpersonal relationships.

\(^{11}\) Some Americans like to think they are ‘scoring points’ for the cause of equality when they ignore Asian rituals of hierarchy, but the *organization loses points* when hierarchy is demeaned or ignored.
These key cultural concepts are enacted in many professional situations, ones in which the trained American can operate successfully and interpret for fellow Americans. At a Chinese banquet, everything from the seating arrangement, to how diners refer to one another, to the order and content of the toasts have social meaning. Banqueters who understand the rules of the game will be able to score points, while those who do not may feel the way most Americans do when they watch a game of cricket – it looks familiar, but they’re not quite sure how to win.

1.5.3 Who should evaluate professional-level Chinese ability?

In most – if not all – professional endeavors, skills are assessed by individuals familiar with the expectations of the job. Basketball players are assessed by coaches, referees and sports writers; public accountants are assessed by state accountancy boards; firefighters are assessed by other firefighters. When a non-native speaker of a foreign language achieves professional-level ability in that foreign language, it seems reasonable that the best judges of skill are native speakers in that field. Ultimately, if one’s peers believe you to be a professional, then you are a professional.

Peer judgment is based on success in sounding and looking the part of what those peers define a professional to be. Lest anyone confuse this definition with con artistry, it

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is important to remember that appearing professional generally requires a foundation of professional knowledge. In a cross-cultural setting, the indicators for what a professional in any given field looks and sounds like can be different. In the US, professors are expected to provide students with a contract-like syllabus at or before the first day of class. In China, syllabi have traditionally been considered optional. In order to accurately assess a professor’s professional ability, the evaluator would have to know what the professional standards are for the culture in which the person being assessed is working. An American that hands out a syllabus in the US in which most items are TBA would probably lose ‘points’, while an American teaching in China without a clear syllabus may not lose any esteem at all. In fact, a detailed syllabus may even be considered by Chinese colleagues in China as unrealistically optimistic for not anticipating unforeseen circumstances.

The key point is that assessment of truly advanced Chinese language skills should be conducted by native Chinese peers in the learner’s field. At lower levels of ability, where skills are general in nature, any mainstream native speaker should be able to assess foreign language skills. At domain-specific advanced levels, however, a Chinese linguist may be unqualified to accurately assess the performance of an American working in Chinese investment banking, for example. In this case, the native speaker him/herself probably would not understand the expectations that Chinese investment bankers hold for
one another, and the linguist would only be able to evaluate the American’s general skills. The most qualified evaluator of a Chinese-speaking American’s professional Chinese skills would be domain peers. Peer evaluation is already accepted in much of the American business world, where 360-degree feedback systems are a popular method of assessment.

1.6 Current United States professional Chinese capacity

Andrew Grant, head of McKinsey & Company’s Greater China practice, believes that firms in China will need 75,000 executive-level managers with both China and global skills within 15 years (Lee 2006). Though the article goes on to describe how foreign firms in China are now hiring Indians and Filipinos to fill the gap, someday, most of those positions in American firms will probably be held by a combination of local Chinese staff and American expatriates. Continuing localization of foreign enterprise staff in China (Cui 2006) does not mean a reduction in the need for Chinese-trained Americans – many of those localized management positions in China report to or work with people in the US responsible for China or Asia-Pacific, Americans who need to understand how work is done in China in order to be effective.

With increased cooperation with China creating greater need for Chinese language capacity in the US, there are currently few options available to American organizations
seeking a reliable pool of Chinese-speakers. The three main sources currently available to firms already seeking China-savvy employees are: American-educated Chinese, American-born Chinese, and Americans who have learned Chinese.\textsuperscript{13}

1.6.1 US-educated Chinese nationals

Chinese nationals who earn degrees in the United States have acquired technical skills that are essential for the organizations that hire them. They also have 30 years or so of socialization in their native culture, making them an excellent interface between the company and Chinese firms and individuals outside the company. Those 30+ years of socialization in Chinese culture, however, means that there remains a culture gap between US-educated Chinese and the Americans with whom they deal.

US-educated Chinese working in American Fortune 500 companies routinely describe situations in which the Americans do or say things that are incomprehensible to the Chinese. Sometimes Americans ask them to meet deadlines that Americans understand to be flexible, but that non-natives believe are written in stone; sometimes the Chinese read a ‘news-of-the-weird’-type item and incorrectly assume that some bizarre practice discovered somewhere in the US is actually mainstream American culture.

Though they have US educations, many of these individuals have done as

\textsuperscript{13} Americans with expertise gained from experience doing business in China are not counted here because there are not enough of them to count as a reliable renewable source of talent.
immigrants around the world have done for centuries and maintain a Chinese environment abroad, watching Chinese TV and socializing primarily with other overseas Chinese. Like many American expatriates, they are good at their jobs, but they feel more comfortable in the native environment, interacting with other Chinese. In the absence of widely-available US-culture training for US-educated Chinese, finding a US-educated Chinese person who thrives in American society is still a hit-or-miss affair.

1.6.2 American-born Chinese

Like American-educated Chinese nationals, American-born Chinese (ABCs) occupy a position between cultures. Psychological studies described by Richard Nisbett of the University of Michigan show that ABCs’ worldviews are somewhere between those of native-born Chinese and what might be called mainstream Americans (Nisbett and Miyamoto 2005). Given proper training on how to conduct themselves professionally in Chinese culture, ABCs have the potential to be the perfect cross-cultural interface for American organizations.

There are a couple of challenges to overcome before we can reach this point. One is that many Americans assume that ABCs, because they look Chinese and often speak some amount of Chinese, are born able to act in a way that Chinese natives would find professional. As a result, ABCs are sometimes hired to be an organization’s Chinese
face without any consideration for their professional Chinese persona. Second, ABCs, because they often grow up being labeled “the town Chinese kid”, can very easily believe that whatever they do or say is automatically more Chinese than the average American. However, ABCs have 20+ years of being socialized to behave in ways that can appear shockingly American to a native-born Chinese person. For example, one ABC student at Ohio State was unable to treat her instructors with respect, failing to submit assignments on time as well as failing to apologize for it. Her non-ethnic Chinese classmates were more liked by the Chinese teachers because they had mastered the ability to defer to their instructors as social superiors.

Finally, an ABC college graduate is no more trained to act professionally in Chinese than any other American. Though many ABCs grow up speaking Chinese at home, the result is often what some Chinese language educators call “dumpling party Chinese” – comfort speaking with family and friends in limited casual contexts. Without sufficient modeling and training, an ABC employee is only marginally more Chinese than an untrained American. With training, however, they are a tremendous resource.

1.6.3 Non-heritage learner Americans trained in Chinese

Academic and popular media now frequently report on how many Americans are trying to learn Chinese – some parents of means are even hiring Chinese au pairs so that
their Children can get a head start on the language (Irvine 2006). It is difficult to quantify how many Americans are currently achieving advanced levels of Chinese because so few do so before graduating from an institutional setting. The Federal government’s Foreign Service Institute calculates that it takes about 4.5 years of college-level Chinese study for a learner to achieve level 2 proficiency on their scale of 0-5 (Omaggio 1993). To put this in perspective, the government considers level 2+ to be the minimum level of proficiency required for work. Based on these numbers, it would be impossible for most colleges to produce undergraduates in Chinese who are qualified to work for the US government.

The latest MLA report on foreign language enrollment in the US indicates that there were 50,455 undergraduate learners of Chinese in 4-year institutions in 2006 (Furman, Goldberg and Lusin 2007). This report divides enrollments into “lower undergraduate,” “upper undergraduate,” and “graduate”, but it is unclear if the undergraduate divisions represent level of study or simply grade level of the student. Based on the Ohio State’s reported enrollment of 150 students in “upper undergraduate” Chinese courses, it is probable that the upper undergraduate tally includes senior classmen struggling with tones in first-level classes as well as those giving oral presentations in advanced Chinese class. In any case, the number of Americans taking Chinese in higher education increased 51% between 2002 and 2006, meaning that more learners are entering the

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14 Ohio State’s advanced undergraduate Chinese language classes usually have 15 or fewer students each, and there are only a handful of these courses.
Chinese learning pipeline.

Perhaps the number of graduate students Chinese is a better indicator of the number of Americans achieving advanced skills in educational institutions. The MLA study reports that 1127 students were enrolled in American graduate Chinese programs in the fall of 2006, a slight increase over the 934 students counted in the MLA’s previous report from 2002. It should be kept in mind, however, that this figure does not tell us how many Americans are reaching professional levels of non-academic Chinese ability because many graduate students of Chinese in the US are Chinese citizens and most Chinese graduate programs are in literature and linguistics. This last point means that most American educational institutions are currently organized to produce Americans with professional-level Chinese skill in one of two academic fields.

Undergraduate business schools often have only one major with a foreign language requirement: “international business”. In some schools, the international business major is considered the major of last resort for international students and for American students whose technical/math skills are not up to standard. Even within the international business major, the foreign language requirement for business degrees may be seen as eating into valuable course time for technical skills and is generally limited to about two years. The top international business program as rated by US News & World

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15 In common parlance, a “linguist” is someone who is good with foreign languages, but in academic terms, linguists are experts who can talk about languages, and are not necessarily expert in using them.
Report belongs to the University of South Carolina, where majors must take 4 semesters at/beyond 3\textsuperscript{rd}-year level in a foreign language. South Carolina is an exception, however. Undergraduate business majors at number three University of Michigan all have a choice of fulfilling requirements in 3 out of 4 areas of non-business learning; one of the four is two years of foreign language study followed by successful completion of a proficiency exam. The Ohio State University’s international business program requires four quarters of foreign language study (one calendar year) and no proficiency exam.

Though there is much to improve, there is hope for advanced Chinese training in the US. A number of recent events point toward the creation of a cadre of Americans trained to professionally-useful levels of Chinese ability:

- The creation of a Chinese AP exam
- The creation of a new SAT II test for high school students of Chinese
- The establishment of federally-funded “Flagship” programs tasked with producing truly advanced American speakers of Chinese at the Ohio State University, Brigham Young University and the University of Oregon
- In May 2005, Senators Joe Lieberman (D) and Lamar Alexander (R) proposed Senate bill S.1117, legislation that asks for over $60 million in appropriations for programs increasing American knowledge of Chinese culture and language.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} United States-People's Republic of China Cultural Engagement Act
www.thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:S.1117.IS:
With more and more Americans learning Chinese, there is a push for hiring advanced American speakers of Chinese; what follows is what should be pulling American firms to hire these Americans trained to professionally-useful levels of Chinese skill.

1.7 How training more Americans to higher levels of Chinese skill serves US interests

When asked if his company had a policy of seeking Chinese-speaking Americans for expatriate positions in China, an executive at a major Midwest engine maker proudly described two American Chinese-speakers that had been hired to work there. In response to a follow up question regarding whether the firm just happened to hire two men who spoke Chinese or if the firm had a policy of recruiting people like them, the executive only stammered and chuckled. In many American organizations that deal with Chinese people, Chinese language or cultural skill is considered non-essential or ‘icing on the cake’. Paraphrasing what one businessman told me, “technical skills take years to learn, but language and cultural skill can be learned on the job.”

Research and experience suggests that learning to produce professional Chinese performances takes just as long – if not longer – than acquiring professional-level skill in a technical field. The time and resources that are involved in achieving truly advanced
Chinese ability are significant, but the rewards are significant, as well. First, the organization would be able to engage directly Chinese populations not currently interacting with Americans, whether as consumers, members of a body politic, or as creators of knowledge. Second, hiring Americans trained in Chinese helps US firms compete with companies whose national cultures share a greater affinity with China’s. Third, American organizations in the US and abroad frequently lose valuable Chinese talent to foreign and Chinese competitors that are better able to provide what these Chinese truly desire from their jobs.

1.7.1 Exploring opportunities hidden behind the language barrier

In the five years between 2000 and 2005, China experienced just under 12% average annual growth in private spending (People’s Daily 2005, Li 2005). By comparison, the US experienced an average of about 4% annual growth in consumer spending 2000-2006 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2007). Though China’s per capita net income is not expected to reach Western standards (about $30,000) until 2050, money goes further in labor-rich China than it does in developed Western countries (Chao 2008). Services for which Chinese consumers pay $1-2 can cost Americans $10, meaning the growing Chinese middle class can enjoy a quality of life similar to Westerners’ at a fraction of the cost. McKinsey and Company estimates that about 70% of the Chinese
population will be upper middle class by the year 2025, making ¥40,000 or more per year (about $5,500 2008 US dollars) (Farrell, Gersch and Stephenson 2006). Currently, only 10% of Chinese households fall into this category and foreign organizations are already scrambling for access to this market. Such a growing domestic market presents great opportunities to American organizations. As the US economy marches toward recession in 2008, China is a bright spot, both for American business and education; the question is how to tap into this market.

As in many countries, most Chinese businesses are domestically oriented. In 1998, 50% of the Chinese business and agricultural GDP was produced by private, domestic Chinese firms (Figure 1). By 2003, nearly 60% of the GDP was produced by private Chinese firms, and the trend shows no sign of abatement. Chinese relatives of the authors who own factories indicate that the rising value of the RMB is making exporting less and less profitable and making domestic trade increasingly safe and lucrative. Furthermore, the labor law that went into effect in February 2008 has pushed many foreign companies to reduce their footprint in China because they are now required to pay overtime and contribute to social security benefits. With the increased cost of buying from China, more business will be taking place within China, where Chinese is the lingua franca.
As more American companies move to manufacture and/or sell their products in China, they will begin dealing with the overwhelming majority of Chinese businesses that are not set up for international business and are not strong in cross-cultural communication. In two of China’s centers for heavy industry, Xi’an and Shenyang, only 15% of private businesses hold licenses to engage in international trade. In Wenzhou, a center for light industry in China, only one in three private firms hold import/export licenses (Asian Development Bank 2003). In order to manufacture or sell goods and
services in China, American organizations will need to deal directly with this majority of Chinese firms that have little or no experience in cross-cultural communication.

According to a 2005 report, only 52% of the heads of China’s 3,340,000 private enterprises hold an associate degree or higher (Wang and Zhang 2005). Though English is now a mandatory subject in Chinese public schools, few, if any, Chinese students achieve professionally-useful English skills by the time they graduate from high school. This means that 48% of the leaders of private firms cannot conduct extended business dealings in English, and of the remaining 52%, only a fraction possess professional-level English skills.

One could ask why American firms need to establish direct relationships with these non-English-speaking business owners in order to do business in China. The answer is guanxi, or ‘networks’. In the world of reciprocal relationships that underlie all guanxi, Chinese firms that deal with American firms through Chinese intermediaries have the strongest guanxi with the intermediary. The Chinese firms look out for one another because the individuals within them have established friendships that are both professional and personal. American firms that are unable to establish personal relationships with their Chinese partners will find themselves losing out to Chinese-Chinese guanxi almost every time.
As many who follow US-China business are aware, a contract is only as reliable as the guanxi of the parties who sign it; when a contract seems in danger of falling apart, it can be the strength of the personal relationship between the decision makers on both sides that will decide whether or not the partnership continues. In order to take ownership of their relationship networks, American organizations must employ individuals who can make and maintain relationships with potential Chinese business partners who are monolingual and/or domestically oriented.

Another reason that American organizations will be forced to interact with Chinese who possess relatively little English and international business skill is that labor costs have risen considerably in the now-affluent coastal regions that produce Chinese with professional-level English ability and international savvy. In Zhejiang Province, a major location for light industry and foreign investment just south of Shanghai, the average annual wage was Y25,896 ($3,229)\textsuperscript{17} in 2005 (China Statistical Yearbook 2005 on ChinaDetail.com). In Jiangxi Province, about a 1 hour flight west from Shanghai, the average annual salary that year was Y13,699 ($1,708). In manufacturing, the average annual pay for Zhejiang factory workers in 2003 was Y14,267 ($1,655), while in Jiangxi, it was Y9,626 ($1,117), or 32% lower. The Chinese government is aware of the attractiveness of places like Jiangxi for investors looking beyond the built-up coast – in

\textsuperscript{17} All currency conversions based on the 2003 and 2005 exchange rate of RMB8.62 = USD1 found on www.oanda.com.
addition to an arterial railway line connecting Beijing to Hong Kong that runs through Jiangxi built in the 1980’s, a modern highway connecting the manufacturing centers of the Pearl River delta (e.g., Guangzhou, Dongguan, Shenzhen, Zhongshan) to Jiangxi has just been completed. New airport construction in Jiangxi matches similar infrastructure improvements across China’s developing inland areas. With lower labor costs and improving infrastructure (and enticements such as tax abatements), regions like Jiangxi are welcoming international investment but the first-movers in this growth period will need to have Chinese language capacity within their organizations in order to capitalize on the opportunity. American firms that wait until these regions have a critical mass of English-speaking and international business-savvy Chinese workers will find themselves fighting each other for the less lucrative opportunities left behind by firms that developed a cadre of managers trained to achieve success in a culturally Chinese environment. In 2002, the Japanese electronics firm Uniden set up a factory in Ji’an, Jiangxi that produces color televisions, telephones and telephone parts (Liu 2004). Why is it that the Japanese are repeatedly the first-movers in taking advantage of opportunities in China?

1.7.2 Competing with countries that have a greater cultural affinity with China

The enmity that many Chinese people have for Japan makes the news on a regular basis, not to mention the “Japanese devils” comment that seems to appear every time
Chinese people hear something about Japan. The most recent incidents center on former Prime Minister Koizumi’s repeated visits to a shrine memorializing Japanese war dead (including convicted war criminals) (Inagaki 2006), the possible whitewashing of Japan’s role in World War II in one of the Japanese government-approved high school textbooks from which Japanese schools may choose, the location of an oil pipeline from Russia (Helmer 2005), and whether or not a possibly oil-bearing piece of underwater real estate in the East China Sea belongs to China or Japan (BBC Online 2005). These troubles led to marches in cities across China in which people displayed signs calling for Japan to apologize for their war crimes and even to get out of China altogether (Duffy 2005). In 2003, there was an uproar over a few Japanese exchange students wearing lingerie over their clothing during a year-end variety show in Xi’an (Sina.com 2003). In the same year, another uproar arose over the fact that a group of Japanese businessmen had hired all the prostitutes in the southern city of Zhuhai (Pomfret 2003), an act that, for many Chinese, was a reminder of the “comfort women” of World War II.

With so much animosity between the Chinese and Japanese, why is it that China bought $73 billion of Japanese goods in 2004 (JETRO 2005), compared to only $34.7 billion from the US?\textsuperscript{18} Not only do the Chinese and their government consume huge amounts of Japanese goods, but the Chinese government even protects Japanese business

\textsuperscript{18} “Trade (Imports, Exports and Trade Balance) with China”, US Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics,\newline http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5700.html#2005
interests in China. In April 2005, a strike by Chinese workers at a Uniden facility in Shenzhen was broken up by Chinese officials, and the organizers were sent to jail (Cody 2005). How is it that Japan, a country disliked by so many in China, has been allowed to pour a tremendous amount of investment into China, and even enjoys the support of the government in disagreements with labor? There are three reasons: China is willing to learn from cooperation with Japan in order to improve their technology and eventually use what they learn to beat Japan as the supreme economic power in Asia (if not beyond), Japan’s geographic proximity to China, and the cultural affinity that exists between individuals from the two countries. The first reason, that China is using Japan for its own ends (while Japan does the same), is valid but not directly relevant to why American firms must hire Americans trained to professional-level Chinese ability. The second two reasons, however, provide compelling reasons for why American organizations can benefit by having professional Chinese speakers on their own team.

1.7.2.1 “People like me”

Nearly everyone prefers to work with “people like me”, and this applies to people of one nationality as much as it does across borders. Whether you think of cross-cultural difference as unilateral and fixed (“cultural distance” in Trompenaars 1998) or bilaterally variable (“cultural friction” in Shenkar 2001), there are very practical reasons that people
tend to associate with familiars: members of a cultural group share expectations about the proper way to interpret what other group members mean when they speak or act.

Shared norms have a serious impact on the creation and maintenance of relationships. Some Americans feel uncomfortable conducting business during dinner. This discomfort can be a real inhibitor to continued participation in Chinese banqueting, even though it is at the banquet that real deals are often made. Given the choice of working with people who share similar standards and life-ways, or of working with people who make us feel uncomfortable, people will almost always choose to work with “people like me.”

1.7.2.2 Proximity vs. affinity

Proximity certainly plays a role in the amount of trade that a country does with China. In 2002, the People’s Republic of China surpassed the United States as the number one destination for South Korean goods (Lee 2005). Japan, just the other side of Korea from China, is a short trip from ports such as Dalian, Qingdao and Shanghai. There is more at work here than proximity alone, however. A Korean government worker who recently retired to China’s Shandong peninsula was quoted as saying, "[The Chinese] wear Korean-made clothes. They watch Korean drama. They understand us” (Lee 2005).

The Korean, Japanese and Chinese cultures, though each are unique, share many
traditions and attributes. As the premiere culture in East Asia for thousands of years, many aspects of Chinese culture were borrowed by the Koreans and Japanese, including Confucianism, Chinese writing, Buddhism, wet rice cultivation, using chopsticks, and cultivating relationships through eating and drinking.

With thousands of years of cultural borrowing that goes on to this day, the Chinese, Koreans and Japanese understand what makes each other tick. Despite historical animosities, people from these countries generally work well together because they are accustomed to many of the same standards of social interaction – preferring third party introductions for new acquaintances, regarding contracts as merely indications of an intent to cooperate rather than limits to the nature of the cooperation, maintaining an outward show of harmony through the proper practice of ritual, regardless of the true feelings involved… the list goes on and on. It is this cultural affinity, this mutual understanding that drives people from proximal nations to trade with one another, perhaps more than their proximity alone.

Guiso, et al (2004), Noland (2005) and Rauch and Trindade (2002) have established this link between cultural affinity and the volume of international trade. Even when the Chinese do business with the United States, it is most often with overseas Chinese who emigrated to the States precisely in order to take advantage of their positions as middlemen, facilitating trade between American consumers and Chinese producers.
Former director of business development for Sina.com, Mark Hsu says,

“You have a lot of U.S. businesses that have a lot of money that are going to invest in China. At the end of the day, though, if you really talk to a lot of the [business owners in China], I think ... they still feel more comfortable in dealing with people of Chinese descent.” (Kim 2000)

Literally being on opposite sides of the globe, geographic proximity is not a factor in this case – only cultural affinity.

Still, there is hope of competing with Asians who share so much culture. Culture is learned, not inherited – Koreans and Japanese work hard to maintain affinity with the Chinese. According to the Chinese embassy in Seoul, 40% of all foreign students in China are Korean, and 50% of foreign students in Korea are Chinese (Embassy of the PRC 2004). According to the Beijing Culture and Language University, 100,000 Japanese were studying Chinese in 2002 (Zhang 2002), a number that doubled to 200,000 by 2005 (He 2005). There would be little reason for so many Koreans and Japanese to study China and Chinese if their cultural affinity were transmitted genetically. Using the game metaphor of cross-cultural interaction19, it may be easier for softball players to learn to play baseball, but there is no reason a football player (Americans) cannot learn to play, as well.

What value does a Bo Jackson20 of the cross-cultural business world bring to competing with the Koreans and Japanese? Because s/he knows the rules of the culture

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19 Described in detail in chapter 2.
20 Bo Jackson excelled at both professional baseball and football.
game that the Chinese play, s/he knows how to score points with them, and recognizes it when they are trying to score points. To the uninitiated American, the Chinese host that orders a dinner full of insects and sea creatures may seem like a sadist, but to the trained eye, it is a demonstration of generosity – insects and many types of seafood are delicacies in Chinese cuisine. Koreans, Japanese and overseas Chinese attract and succeed at Chinese business because they all know how to play the Chinese communication game. Trained to recognize the game and to excel at it, Americans with professional-level Chinese ability level the competitive playing field for their firms.

1.7.3 Chinese staff retention in American organizations

According to a Hewitt Associates survey reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, the employee turnover rate in China reached 14% in 2005 (Lee 2006). Including firings, the United States annual average is 3% (ibid). Retention of skilled Chinese staff is a serious problem for firms operating in China, and without the stigma attached to job-hopping, well-trained and desperately-needed Chinese nationals hired in the US could easily move in the same direction. Developing an internal team of Chinese-skilled Americans benefits firms when they seek to create or improve relationships with outside partners, but there are benefits to be reaped within the firm, as well. American staff that are able to establish rapport – *guanxi*, again – with Chinese staff on their terms, reduce the possibility of
losing valued and knowledgeable staff to other enterprises, or even more likely, to Chinese firms that directly compete with the American firm.

Many of us can recall those people with whom we went to school who were great at math and science but not as good in the humanities, or vice-versa. This phenomenon is not limited to the United States, by any means. Furthermore, upon entering high school, Chinese students must choose whether the remainder of their academic careers will be spent focusing on math and science or in the humanities (including foreign language study). The Chinese engineers and technical staff that American firms hire will have taken compulsory English courses, but their primary focus of study will not have been language and intercultural communication. Likewise, Chinese people with excellent English are usually not engineers, having chosen (or been placed into) language study early in their school lives.

That said, the Chinese education system is quite thorough, and the compulsory English classes that technically-trained Chinese have taken enable them to read and sometimes write English well. Their area of difficulty is speaking and listening ability. Zheng Shuang, a human resources manager at enterprise infrastructure software firm BEA (China), notes that many tech workers in China rarely use their English, and that they can read, but cannot speak (Xiong 2005).

Spoken English ability is crucial in the business environment because every job
has human interface aspects, from customer support to interoffice conference meetings. IBM trains their Chinese technical staff in spoken English because without it, they cannot participate in teleconferences or converse with English speakers when they are sent abroad for technical training (ibid). When workers cannot participate in the face-to-face interactions required by work, they are left out of the loop and can miss out on everything from technical instructions to the readings of office politics crucial to maintaining a good position. In financial terms, Taiwan’s Minsheng Post reports that one tech firm there had lost NT$30 million in lost orders because of the company engineers’ poor English skills (Mingsheng Bao 2005). American firms that choose to wait until the Chinese education system catches up with the need to produce Chinese technical staff with professional-level spoken English skills may have to wait some time. Simon Bell of the Chicago-based consulting firm A.T. Kearney believes that it will take China 5-10 years to catch up to India in providing information technology and outsourcing services in English (Li 2005).

Having Americans with Chinese skill in-house is important not only be make sure that messages are clearly communicated between staff and management, but also in order to create an environment in which Chinese employees feel appreciated and have real opportunity for advancement. This issue exists in any organization with employees from the two cultures, but it is immediately apparent in American firms in China.
At American businesses in China, monolingual Chinese socialize with other Chinese while functionally monolingual\textsuperscript{21} American expatriates socialize only with other expatriates and English-speaking Chinese. If the English-speaking Chinese were the only truly skilled and trustworthy Chinese employees in the firm, this might not be a problem, but this is not the case. As noted above, sometimes a firm’s best technical employees are the best because they concentrated on their technical training rather than their foreign language skills.

These highly trained technical staff with lower-level English skills often find themselves excluded from the day-to-day conversations that contribute to the building of trusting relationships with American managers and coworkers. Unable to communicate smoothly with one another, functionally monolingual Americans and Chinese reduce their interactions to those necessitated by professional needs. Daniels (1974) has observed a link between social relations and professional advancement, saying, “US managers tend to promote from within their own groups, people with whom they have face-to-face contact.” Vasquez (2004) adds, “The inability to communicate properly… affects advancement opportunities. If an employer does not know an employee’s capabilities, and the employee cannot communicate them, s/he will likely be overlooked for advanced or given assignments below his/her level of ability.”

\textsuperscript{21} Americans who are described as “practically” or “functionally” monolingual may be able to speak and read/write some Chinese, but their Chinese ability is insufficient to be used professionally or to engage in anything but limited requests for information.
A leading scholar of cross-cultural communication, Harry Triandis, has documented how communication between disparate groups creates a cycle in which communication leads to increased understanding, which leads to positive emotions, and which then increases the probability of further interaction which then leads back to increased understanding and discovery of perceived similarity – “people like me” (Triandis 2003). A key element of Triandis’ loop of communication and greater understanding is that it allows members of each group to make socially valid generalizations about the Chinese world they inhabit. Americans with professional-level Chinese skill can interpret and engage in situations ranging from banquet conversation to resolving office disharmony from a Chinese perspective, and thereby be able to participate in Chinese society as a respected peer. Monolingual Americans who cannot engage in this cycle of communication with Chinese people will, at best, have very few opinions about the Chinese people with whom they deal. At worst, these Americans will only be able to use stereotypes to describe behavior they observe and thus develop a negative impression of Chinese people. For instance, if an American expatriate is faced with Chinese employees that rarely put forth recommendations, s/he may assume that, like taciturn Americans, they have no recommendations to give. Even when expatriates receive some training prior to departure and hear that some groups of Chinese do not feel comfortable giving suggestions to people with higher rank (who, in traditional Chinese
hierarchies, are supposed to already have the answers), the expatriate has had several
decades of training growing up and living in the United States telling him/her that silence
is not normal and probably means a lack of interest or lack of thought. This socially
invalid stereotype would be broken if the expatriate were able to converse professionally
with the Chinese employees and find out – whether in social situations such as banquets,
or in the privacy of the office – that the real reason for the silence may have been an
aversion to being perceived as telling the boss what to do, or even something as simple as
feeling unable to communicate a recommendation or idea clearly in English.

From a human resource management perspective, American organizations should
employ Americans with professional level Chinese skills because these individuals will
be able to interact directly with Chinese staff, recognize and appreciate their skills, and
accurately recognize problems for resolution and resolve them in culturally-appropriate
ways. Firms without this capacity face the possibility of alienating their workforce.
Valuable Chinese employees made distant from American supervisors by a
language/culture barrier and who perceive a lack of appreciation and opportunities for
advancement will move to a firm where they feel appreciated. Because people look for
new jobs in areas in which they have developed experience and expertise, these workers
often look for jobs with firms that compete directly with the American from which they
came. These firms may be other international firms who have already developed
professional-level Chinese language capacity in their expatriate workforce, or they may be competing Chinese firms in which the Chinese employee feels comfortable that s/he can demonstrate his or her value, can expect to have an opportunity to interact with decision makers within the firm and thereby secure advancement opportunities.

The discussion above focuses on Chinese employees of American firms in China, but Chinese employees in the United States experience a similar glass ceiling. The owner of Cleveland-based China Source Link, Kimberly Kirkendall, says that American companies do not recognize Chinese peoples’ skills because our communication styles are different. “Chinese people sound tentative, unconfident, so we don’t give them management positions,” says Kirkendall. Chinese in the States that work for American firms sometimes complain of the advantage that their Indian and American coworkers have in socializing with the American managers, speaking fluent English and discussing topics of interest to the managers. As any politician knows, creating a good impression is often more a matter of communication than of actual accomplishment. American and Indian employees with excellent communication skills and without an aversion to self-promotion are often better at leaving a good impression with an American manager than Chinese employees. In China, good work is supposed to speak for itself, but in the US, employees are expected to speak for their good work. The Chinese-trained American recognizes this difference and can ameliorate it, making all employees feel valued and

22 Personal communication, December 2, 2005.
part of the team.

American companies hire thousands of Chinese employees every year in the US because they bring value to the firm that other individuals would not. American staff trained to professional-levels of Chinese ability are in a position to make sure that these valued employees remain with the firm by making sure the Chinese feel part of the team, helping the Chinese communicate their value to managers by translating cues that monocultural Chinese and Americans alike may miss, and by mentoring Chinese employees in acculturating to the American-culture-based company culture. It is well known that when employees feel that they are learning at the same time as they contribute to a firm, they are more likely to remain with that firm. The Chinese-trained American can in turn train Chinese staff how to succeed in American culture. Chinese employees who are empowered to break the glass ceiling are much more likely to keep their skills within the firm.

1.8 Arguments against hiring Americans trained to advanced levels of Chinese ability

1.8.1 The Chinese all speak English

As noted earlier in this chapter, all Chinese study English, but not all speak it. If only 20 million Chinese currently speak English well, that means that only 1 out of 65 Chinese

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23 Based on BCIS statistics for first-time issues of H-1b visas to Chinese nationals: over 16,000 in 2001 and almost 12,000 in 2002. From “Characteristics of Specialty Occupation Workers (H-1b): Fiscal Year 2002”.
people in China speak English well. Americans hoping to get a total picture of the situation in China based on interactions with 1/65th of the population may be in a blind-men-touching-the-elephant (盲人摸象) situation. Even if 65 Chinese were in room with an American and one Chinese person could interpret English, it would be impossible to convey the thoughts of all 64 non-English speakers to the American. In reality, most of those 64 non-English speaking Chinese probably would not even know the English-speaking one: the English speaker will have gone to more and/or different schools, and will be found in professional/social circles largely populated by others who speak English with some degree of skill. Though it helps greatly, simply hiring an English-speaking Chinese person into an American organization does not automatically make the entire Chinese population accessible to that organization, and the sole or few English-speaking Chinese could easily become an information bottleneck.

1.8.2 US-educated Chinese nationals can fulfill all of America’s Chinese language needs

Some jobs are too sensitive to be performed by non-natives, but still require native-like understanding of the target culture. Some jobs in military intelligence, for example, cannot be safely awarded to non-natives. Even when a non-native’s loyalty is unquestionable, his or her friends and family still in the native country could be used to put pressure on the non-native and force him/her to provide sensitive information to the
country of his/her birth. No matter how many Chinese come to the US and learn American culture and become loyal citizens of the US, there will always be certain jobs that are too sensitive to award to anyone other than Americans born and raised in the United States. Because these jobs often involve collecting and interpreting data from China, it is vital that these positions are filled by Americans who are qualified to understand the context and therefore the meaning of the data they collect. Misinterpreting good data can be as bad as or worse than not obtaining the data to begin with; for one thing, fewer people question decisions made using “data” than decisions made on the basis of gut feeling. The American invasion of Iraq may be a good example.

Most jobs in which Chinese skill adds value are not so sensitive to national security, however, and many Americans wonder why, given that so many Chinese come to the US and earn American degrees, we need Chinese-speaking Americans at all. Why not simply rely on these international students that stay in the US to communicate Chinese and American interests?

Not all Chinese who earn degrees in the US want to be cultural ambassadors. Many Chinese that come to the US come to earn an advanced degree and then find a job that will allow them to enjoy the material benefits of living in the US. For many of these individuals, they studied a technical field and would prefer to work in their numbers-driven specialty than have to work within the ambiguity that resides in
cross-cultural relations.

Second, in any culture, not everyone is suited to filling a liaison or management role in their organization. Likewise, not all Chinese that come to the US are good communicators. Indeed, it is possible that the single most important qualification for studying in the US – being able to take written standardized tests such as the TOEFL and GRE – may actually favor those who are ‘book smart’ rather than socially skilled. Simply being Chinese does not necessarily make someone the best choice to be an American organization’s connection to the Chinese community and vice-versa.

Third, hiring US-educated Chinese for jobs that interface with the Chinese community does not eliminate the culture/language gap. American-educated Chinese certainly mitigate the communication problems created by cultural differences, but only exceptional individuals [in any culture] can completely eliminate miscommunication. If English-speaking Chinese and US-educated Chinese were to have Chinese-speaking American colleagues, each side’s intentionality will be accurately interpreted more often. Having Chinese who are good intercultural communicators on the payroll may make it possible to avoid 7 out of 10 potential instances of miscommunication between Americans and Chinese, but in today’s hyper-competitive environment, hiring a Chinese-speaking American and being able to avoid 9 out of 10 instances of communication can make the difference between success and failure. The author recently
participated in a cultural training program for an American engineer sent to Dongguan, Guangdong to help a Chinese supplier manufacture to specification. The supplier provides an interpreter, but the American was still frustrated by the difficulty of communicating his intentions to the supplier. If both the engineer and his Chinese counterpart could speak the other’s language, the expatriate’s assignment could be successfully completed in a shorter period of time. If the expatriate were able to align buyer and supplier expectations more quickly, the buyer would have usable product sooner, the supplier would waste less money on unwanted product, and the expatriate would get back to the US faster, thus eliminating the expense of an extended stay abroad.

1.9 Are American organizations actively recruiting Chinese-speaking Americans?

The short answer is “no”. There is no statistical evidence that Chinese majors have difficulty finding work in American firms, but there is a fair amount of circumstantial and anecdotal evidence to support this impression. Beginning salary may be an indication of how valuable the job market sees Chinese skill. According to Ohio State University materials, Chinese majors can expect to make between $32,000 and $37,500/year after graduation (Ohio State University 2007). By comparison, the lowest average starting salary for undergraduate business majors graduating from Ohio State in 2007 was $38,667 (Ohio State University 2007b). Ironically, this figure is the average starting salary for OSU international business majors. The average starting salary for all
undergraduate business majors from Ohio State in 2007 was $44,324.

Why are Chinese majors paid so little when China is so ‘hot’? Some reasons are a matter of supply and others are a matter of demand. On the supply side, there are few qualified applicants and an abundance of perceived substitutes; on the demand side, there remain some perception issues related to the value of hiring Chinese-speaking Americans. After reviewing the root causes, we will find that some of them can be solved by educational institutions while others will require reaching out to employers and demonstrating the potential value-add.

1.9.1 The supply side

One possible explanation for a lack of interest in Chinese speakers is that there are so few Chinese speakers that are qualified for professional positions that employers do not bother to look for them and so are satisfying these needs elsewhere. The average undergraduate Chinese major will graduate with an ability to perform in general environments such as youthful socializing and ‘getting around town’. Frequently, these students’ advanced Chinese courses consist of analyzing Chinese literary texts and preparing them to compete for slots in Chinese language graduate programs like their professors, but not for employment off-campus. As one Ohio State Chinese program graduate found, her professional skills were too thin for entry-level positions in corporate
America, and an ability to speak Chinese would only be valuable in positions for experienced buyers and engineers.

If advanced foreign language skill consists of being able to perform in domain-specific foreign language environments, it could be argued that American educational institutions are currently designed to produce Chinese speakers prepared to pursue employment in the domains of Chinese literature and linguistics studies. When China reopened to the West, Chinese skill in any domain was sufficient for many American organizations beginning to work with China. Over 25 years later, however, professional domain knowledge has become an important job requirement. Given America’s current education structure, employers can find native-born Americans with either non-academic domain skill or Chinese language skill, but rarely both.

In the absence of a critical mass of foreign language speaking Americans with professional-level Chinese skill, organizations have two choices: hire monolingual Americans with domain skill or bilingual Chinese nationals with domain expertise. In 2006, US colleges graduated nearly 1.5 million bachelor’s degree holders (National Center for Education Statistics 2007) and almost 600,000 master’s degree holders (NCES 2007b) ostensibly prepared for domain-specific employment. That same year, there were 90,500 Chinese/Taiwanese students in US universities (Institute of International Education 2007). According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, roughly 30% of American
jobs do and will require postsecondary degrees (Barton 2008), or about 1.5 million openings/year through 2016\textsuperscript{24}. Based on the numbers, there seems to be an ample supply of both domain-skilled Americans and bilingual Chinese nationals with domain expertise. With so many substitutes available, employers may wait until the gains achieved by hiring advanced American speakers of Chinese really do make the difference between success and failure rather than anticipating that eventuality and hiring Chinese-speaking Americans right now. Because it takes 10-20 years to train this kind of talent, American firms could experience two decades of difficulty before they can hire the talent they need to remain competitive.

1.9.2 The demand side

If there were a strong enough push to find Chinese-speaking Americans with domain expertise, American organizations would expend the resources to find them, as the US government is doing for Arabic, Farsi and Pashto speakers. Why do they not seem to feel the need? There are three main reasons:

1) Technical expertise is valued over communication skills for most jobs

2) Many American professionals assume that ‘good’ social skills are universal and so do not require special training

\textsuperscript{24} Based on BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook 2008-2009 data indicating that there will be about 50 million job openings between 2006 and 2016, which averages 5 million/year, 30\% of which would be 1.5 million.
3) Decision makers in organizations that can afford to hire Chinese-speaking
Americans with domain expertise\textsuperscript{25} do not do so because they themselves deal
with either too few or too many nationalities to value learning the ways of one
particular culture

As the global market forces firms to explore new forms of differentiation in order to
remain competitive, employers may come to see foreign language/culture ability as a
value-adding skill for employees to have. To prepare for this eventuality, educators can
learn why employers seem not to be interested in language skill and respond to those
perceptions constructively.

First and foremost, American employers traditionally value technical skills over
interpersonal skills. That many people in corporate America describe their current or
former office environments as adversarial is testimony to the fact that, as long as
someone can complete their assigned tasks efficiently and accurately, shortcomings in
interpersonal skills can be overlooked. According to the chart below, some of the
highest-paying and most respected jobs in American business are also those functions that
give most weight to task completion and pay the least attention to personal relationships.

\textsuperscript{25} Whose salaries may be higher than bilingual Chinese domain experts if the Chinese nationals – and their employers
– consider the opportunity to remain in the US temporarily or permanently to be part of the compensation package.
The second issue is that many Americans assume that effective interpersonal skills are universal – that once you learn to hand your business card to an Asian with two hands, everything will go smoothly because “we’re all human”. In a survey of international business graduates in which 407 out of 496 respondents evaluated their own foreign language competence as either “[can] use for communication” or “near native”, a full 25.7% found foreign language ability to be “irrelevant” to social interaction (Lambert 1990: 55). Another 24.5% found that it only “helps some”. Either these respondents

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27 Of whom only 43 had studied either Chinese or Japanese
worked with foreigners who went out of their way to accommodate the respondents’ American-ness, or they simply did not notice when culture was creating differences in social expectations. One example of how interpersonal skills are not universal might be the level of concern managers are expected to show for subordinates’ personal issues. In China, the manager is traditionally a father figure who, in return for loyalty, is expected to become familiar with his/her subordinates’ personal lives and offer help as needed. In the US, however, it could be an invasion of privacy for a manager to learn about subordinates’ private lives; in some companies, it may even be considered unprofessional. Interpersonal behaviors that mark a thoughtful manager in one culture may indicate a rude one in another.

In some American firms, time spent abroad is believed to result in cultural competence. This belief is similar to a seat-time or Chinese character-counting approach to measuring language fluency, and is equally invalid. Because assumptions about what constitutes ‘good’ social skills are learned from an early age and reinforced for as long as an individual lives in a single cultural environment, formal training is generally required to first perceive and then adapt to cultural differences.

The third factor contributing to a lack of demand for foreign language/culture-trained employees in the American workforce may be that decision makers responsible for setting hiring standards often have no personal need to understand or adapt to a single
foreign culture. Adler and Bartholomew (1992) found that organizational behavior and HR academics and practitioners who write journal articles have all come to realize that culture has an impact on management. However, acknowledging the importance of culture is quite different from recognizing and requiring actual cultural competence. Regarding the proportion of HR professionals that understand international issues, one survey found that 59% of multinational firms had no human resource professionals with international experience (Gregerson, Black and Hite in Selmer, ed., 1995: 186). This situation may be changing, as HR Magazine reports that international HR professionals are seeing some of the greatest growth in annual compensation in the HR field (Dooney and Esen 2007). The fact that companies are paying considerably more for international HR experience may also point to how little of this experience is currently found among HR professionals.

In some organizations, human resources professionals drive employment policies, while in others, HR staff primarily perform process work (i.e., paperwork) for managers and executives who establish personnel policies. The degree of internationalization among multinational officers is greater than among HR professionals, but according to the survey cited above, about 1/5 of multinationals’ officers surveyed in 1995 had no international experience (Gregerson, Black and Hite in Selmer, ed., 1995: 186).

Executives in US organizations are often insulated from the gritty cross-cultural
communication that takes place at the grass roots. They may have people who work for them working across cultures every day, but the individuals with whom American upper managers work regularly are often culturally and/or demographically similar to themselves (Westphal and Zajac 1995; Reagans, Zuckerman and McEvily 2004; Westphal and Milton 2000; Mayo, Rohria and Singleton 2007; “No Corporate Chiefs…” 1997). Based on current demographic realities, American executives generally do not need cross-cultural competence in order to be successful.

Executives that do work with members of other cultures sometimes comment that they interact with people of so many nationalities that it would be impractical to achieve cultural competence in all of them. Faced with the perceived impossibility of learning to accommodate other cultures, these Americans generally fall back on American culture as the ‘lingua franca’ of professional interaction. What these leaders miss, however, is that fluency in one foreign language/culture tends to bring with it sensitivity to the categories of words and behaviors that can be interpreted differently among cultures. Individuals who have mastered one foreign language tend to have more contextual awareness in any given foreign environment than those who have not.28

Whether employers already recognize the value of hiring Americans with advanced Chinese skill or not, in about ten years they will be faced with a good number of them.  

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28 This hypothesis does not seem to have been tested empirically, but is implied by (Ward and Ward 2003).
Because government officials, academics, and certain opinion leaders in business believe Chinese language ability will be valuable in the future, more and more Americans are learning Chinese. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, there were over 550 pre-college Chinese programs in the US in 2007, a 100% increase over 2005 figures (Weise 2007). The Council believes there may be 30-50,000 students in these programs. Even if only 2-5% of these learners are able to reach advanced levels of skill before graduation, that number would be equal to the current number of graduate students in Chinese. With sufficient supply of advanced Chinese speakers, American organizations may begin finding uses for this talent pool. Before that time, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed if these learners are going to be used effectively in the labor market.

1.10 How we can know if we have trained Americans to higher levels of Chinese

Within a decade, the first large group of American Chinese learners who began studying at a relatively young age will enter the job market. We have perhaps five years before the earliest members of this demographic begins looking for work; five years in which the supply side (educators) and the demand side (employers) need to reach some agreement on how Chinese speaking will be handled. The goal of this dissertation is to help frame the conversation, “what should these learners be able to do when they start
working and how will we know?"

In this dissertation, the discussion is divided into three segments:

1. What can foreigners do in Chinese-language professional environments?
2. What language skills and behaviors produce positive impressions among the native speakers with whom these foreigners work?
3. How can successful professional Chinese performance be meaningfully assessed?

Taken together, the answers to the questions should tell educators and employers alike what Americans with professionally-useful Chinese language ability should be able to do. We will see what kinds of professions are currently or theoretically possible for Chinese-speaking Americans; we will see if a general Chinese education is sufficient to fill these positions, or if domain expertise is necessary in order to be professionally effective; finally, we will see if the new Advanced Language Performance Portfolio System (ALPPS) developed at the Ohio State University is an effective method of assessing this expertise. These answers will inform the creation of local – if not national – Chinese language education policy.
CHAPTER 2

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO
CULTURE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

This dissertation seeks to discover what foreign language learners need to know in order to work effectively in China. To reach this goal, it is useful to first survey work in relevant fields of knowledge. This journey will take us from anthropology to sociology, from psychology to foreign language pedagogy, from the front lines of international business to the mass-mailed questionnaires of international business research. Along the way, there will even be input from self-help gurus and a counselor of autistic children.

In this chapter, we will see how academics in business and the humanities approach the topics of culture and communication. Then, we will look at how people of greatly different backgrounds have approached the idea of effective professional communication. After establishing a foundation in the theories of working effectively with other people, we will review research on how Westerners actually are working in Chinese environments. Most literature on the subject describes the expatriate experience – and
from the expatriates’ point of view – but the occasional researcher wonders what the
locals think of these foreigners. What else would these Chinese have to say if given the
medium to do so? Finally, we will take a look at published descriptions of what
Americans are actually doing in Chinese with Chinese people. Americans who use
Chinese professionally know that others like them exist, and sometimes even meet some,
but they remain few in number. Why are they so obscure? Perhaps learning the reason
will help guide training the next generation of Chinese-speaking Americans for the kinds
of jobs they can expect to do, as well as to prepare them for jobs currently reserved for
native speakers.

In the following sections, we will see that much has been learned about effective
cross-cultural communication, but it will also become apparent that there is much left to
learn. Much of the following research guides this dissertation, while other works reflect
ideas of social interaction that this study seeks to refute. In either case, Confucius put it
best when he said, “When three of us are walking, the two others will be my teachers; he
whose qualities are good, I will imitate; he whose are not, I will strive to change them in
myself.”
2.1 Ways of Talking about Culture and Language

To begin talking about Americans interacting effectively in Chinese culture, it is important to reach an understanding of what culture is, and eventually work toward an understanding of how the Chinese create meaning in their own culture. The following approaches to culture are largely Western in origin. Though the ultimate goal of this dissertation is to articulate Chinese standards of effective professional performance, the popular Chinese idea of “culture” has a very different tradition from our own,\(^29\) and will not be informing the theoretical aspects of this study. The Western concept of “culture” as a set of shared meanings that defines as well as perpetuates group identity, on the other hand, runs throughout this dissertation.

Language and culture may both be systems of creating meaning, but it may be more useful to think of language as being situated in culture. If language is one tool in the toolbox available to create meaning, the toolbox is “culture”, and it includes a variety of shared norms and understandings. Ideas of culture have varied across academic fields: in Actual Minds, Possible Worlds, Jerome Bruner describes two modes of thinking: logico-scientific and narrative (Bruner 1986: 12). Perhaps it is because business scholars

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\(^{29}\) When originally combined after the Western Han, the bisyllabic word for culture, 文化 wenhua, originally meant something like ‘to patterned and flourishing’, and the idea of culture grew as an antithesis to entropy (Hejiang Government 2008). In Chinese, then, “culture” is more like Hector Hammerly’s “achievement culture” (Hammerly 1982: 512) – the things of which a people are proud, like music, literature, and constitutions. Hammerly’s ‘behavioral culture’ may be analogous to 行为举止 xingwei juzhi and ‘information culture’ to 常识 changshi, or common knowledge.
tend to adhere to the former while humanities scholars use the latter that the ‘big names’ in each field’s subfield of culture research are mutually ignored. In turn, we will look at them both.

2.1.1 Culture in Business Research

Perhaps it is the mark of a social science that hopes to be more science than social, but business scholarship in the United States approaches culture with Linnean tenacity. Even scholars that hoped to avoid black and white distinctions between cultures have contributed to a tendency in business scholarship to place nations in cultural typologies that can literally be plotted on graphs. These typologies have defined approaches to culture in the academic business world for decades, and they continue to inform the categories that many Westerners use to describe the Chinese.

Culture is treated in international business textbooks with a healthy degree of complexity, often beginning with a nod to the myriad definitions of culture. Charles Hill’s International Business (2003) ascribes to two definitions, one from business psychologist Geert Hofstede and one from sociologists Namenwirth and Weber. Hofstede defines culture as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another”, while Namenwirth and Weber call it “a system of ideas that constitute a design for living” (in Hill 2003: 89). International Business (2004)
describes culture as being shared, intangible and confirmed by others.” (Shenkar and Luo 2004: 149) International Marketing even refers to anthropologist Edward T. Hall in saying that “culture is communication” (Cateora and Graham 2005: 106). Perhaps it is a reflection of the practical nature of their field that the editors of Negotiation advocate Hall’s definition. In this reader used by the MBA programs at MIT, Dartmouth, Tufts, UC Davis, and Ohio State, Jeswald Salacuse writes “persons from [a] community use the elements of their culture to interpret their surroundings and guide their interactions with other persons” (Lewicki, et al 2003: 356). As Salacuse points out, an American saying something would be “difficult” to do would be interpreted by another American to mean “maybe”, while a Japanese person saying the same thing is more likely to be interpreted to mean “impossible” (359).

Each of the international business textbooks the author read in MBA classes at the Ohio State Fisher School of Business devotes a chapter to the topic of culture, and they alternatively cover social structures, religions, language, education, and demographics. Every international business textbook refers to the work of Geert Hofstede in explaining culture, but only Shenkar and Luo’s text offer alternative approaches to cultural analysis, much of which is described below.
2.1.1.1 The beginning: Parsons & Shils

Before Geert Hofstede’s landmark study of national cultures and before Fons Trompenaars’ response to it, the cultural typology upon which much research and many consulting fees rest today belongs to Talcott Parsons & Edward Shils. Their 1951 work, *Toward a General Theory of Action*, lay down five spectra on which every culture could be placed (Parsons & Shils 1951: 77):

- **Affective vs. affective neutral**

  People in affective cultures easily show emotion, and actively seek gratification of their needs. Individuals in affective-neutral cultures, on the other hand, are reluctant to display emotion and restrain their impulses. Americans are generally located on the affective side of the spectrum, while the Chinese are usually thought of as being affective neutral.

  It is useful to bear in mind that national cultures are composed of myriad subcultures that may or may not reflect ‘average’ national norms. Chinese youth, for instance, are much more inclined to show emotion and pursue self-gratification than are older Chinese people.

- **Individualism vs. collectivism**

  Perhaps the most misunderstood of Parsons and Shils’ typologies, individualists
are not characterized by a desire to act alone, nor are collectivists characterized by an automaton-like lack of identity or an ability to work well with others. This scale describes how individuals perceive their relationships to others. Individualists believe society is composed of independent beings that cooperate when they choose to; collectivists see the world as being composed of networks of people bonded by naturally-occurring obligations of reciprocity. Americans are generally placed on the individualist side of the scale, while the Chinese are put on the collectivist side (Hofstede 1980: 215, for example).

Ascription vs. achievement

Ascriptive cultures accord individuals respect based on their role in the society/organization, while achievement cultures show respect for individual accomplishment. There is a saying in the Army, “respect the rank, not the man,” which may indicate that the military has an ascriptive culture. There, discipline is maintained as long as everyone agrees to follow orders, even from unpopular people. In an achievement culture like mainstream American culture, an adulterous President keeps his job not because it is a President’s prerogative to have a mistress (as some cultures might believe), but because he has accomplished enough in his political role that it makes up for his adultery. Again, American and Chinese cultures are commonly located on opposite sides of this
spectrum, with Mencius’ teaching of the Five Roles putting China on the ascription side.

- **Specific vs. diffuse**

  Individuals’ identities in specific cultures are specific to the contexts in which they find themselves. Joe Shmoe may be a manager at work, but at the sports bar, he’s just another fan who can fetch his *own* beer. In a diffuse culture, a manager is a manager everywhere; during happy hour, subordinates might get the manager’s drinks even though they are not at work. Specific cultures see each social environment as an independent context, while diffuse cultures see context changes as merely changes in venue for existing relationships to play out their interactions.

- **Universal vs. particular**

  Universal cultures believe that there are abstract rules that govern the world and to which members of the culture should strive to adhere. Members of particular cultures believe that every situation is special and that value judgments are all relative. The classic illustration of this dichotomy involves a hypothetical traffic accident in which two friends are in a car, one of whom is driving. The driver is speeding in a neighborhood and hits a pedestrian crossing the street. Is the passenger obligated to tell the truth in court as to what speed the driver was going?
Extreme universalists would say of course, while the average member of a universalist culture might consider how much over the speed limit the driver was going, or how injured the pedestrian was. Either way, the assumption is that there may be mitigating factors to the application of a universal law. Particularists might also say their honesty on the stand depends on the situation, but that it depends more on their relationship to the driver than the severity of the offense.

2.1.1.2 Geert Hofstede

Geert Hofstede’s 1980 work *Culture’s Consequences* has been referred to by literally thousands of articles and books, and while his name rarely comes up in humanities research, describing his cultural classifications are *de rigueur* for international business textbooks and articles on culture and business. Between 1968 and 1973, Hofstede administered a questionnaire to almost 100,000 IBM employees around the world designed to reveal respondents’ values and beliefs. In analyzing the results, he kept Parsons and Shils’ individualism/collectivism typology and added three more: a power distance index (PDI), masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1980). In a subsequent study prompted by the rise of the Asian Tigers, Hofstede worked with Michael Bond (1987) to add a fourth dimension called “Confucian dynamism”. Each is described briefly below:
The Power Distance Index (PDI) describes how members of a culture approach social equality. Cultures with a low PDI believe that humans are created as equals and should treat each other as such. Cultures with a high PDI believe that people of different levels of status should be treated with varying levels of respect.

Hofstede proposed a masculinity/femininity spectrum in which members of “masculine” cultures have strong achievement motivation, are less benevolent toward the weak, and appreciate things that are big and fast. “Feminine” cultures are typified by relationship-focused actions rather than task-focused ones, and their members do not expect men to be more assertive than women. Some may take exception to the use of gender to describe these traits, but it seems to coincide fairly well with the Daoist idea of yin and yang. In Daoism, yin is dark, earthy, passive and feminine while yang is light, lofty, active and masculine.

Hofstede cautions against generalizing cultures as coinciding with national boundaries or even being static over time, but he does write that Asian cultures are relatively more feminine (Hofstede 1980: 285).

Hofstede’s third contribution to cultural analysis is the proposition of an Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI). Members of cultures with a high UAI tend to seek structure in their lives, through rules and schedules that are strictly
adhered to. Members of low UAI cultures are comfortable with change and uncertainty. The Chinese tend to be placed at the lower end of the UAI, with their ease of changing plans at the last minute in order to accommodate the needs of individuals in their in-group.

As Hofstede himself pointed out, social research is culture-bound. Researchers that seek to apply Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to Asian cultures are bound to be frustrated by the fact that self-actualization may not be the Asian individual’s raison d’être (Hofstede 1980: 376). Fearing that Hofstede’s research was itself bound by culture, Michael Harris Bond administered his Chinese Value Survey to individuals around the world and established a dimension that he believes cannot be correlated to Hofstede’s existing dimensions. This “Confucian dynamism” is composed of ordering of relationships, persistence, thrift and having a sense of shame (Bond 1987: 150).

One of Hofstede’s contributions to the analysis of culture and business is his assertion that there are deep-rooted differences in the ways that people see the world, and even when people appear to be engaged in business for the same reason – to make money – the values that drive their behavior and expectations can vary. Hofstede (1980: 387) points out that effective international managers must recognize their workers’ different value systems. For example, managers from masculine cultures who are happy to work

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30 Note how Hofstede’s homeland, the Netherlands, is located at the 0 point on a graph of countries’ PDI to UAI relationships (Hofstede 1980: 316).
all the time to get a task done may need to accommodate workers in feminine cultures who value their social relationships as much as the company’s work. Another difference is that individualists work out of “enlightened self interest”, while collectivists work because of a moral responsibility to their in-groups. Sadly, Hofstede admits that most US multinationals place the burden of biculturality on foreign nationals (1980: 392). Even with the help of bicultural foreign nationals, Hofstede accedes that culturally similar people prefer to do business with each other rather than try to overcome the challenges posed by working with people with different values.

2.1.1.3 Trompenaars: Building on Parsons and Hofstede

Hofstede’s Culture’s Consequences is one of the most cited works on culture in business research: on April 3, 2007, Culture’s Consequences was cited by 4723 books and articles on Google Scholar. By comparison, Fons Trompenaars’ and Charles Hampden-Turner’s Riding the Waves of Culture was cited by only 593 works, but their nuanced models of cultural variation may explain why they have many followers in the practitioner community (Shenkar and Luo 2004: 161). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner borrowed from Parsons & Shils and Hofstede, but they go further than their predecessors in describing the role of culture in business, and also describe the role of culture in communication.
Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner agreed with the dimensions of universalism/particularism, individualism/collectivism\textsuperscript{31}, affective/affective-neutral\textsuperscript{32}, specific/diffuse and achievement/ascription, but added “attitudes to time” and “attitudes to the environment.” What is now commonly referred to as monochronic and polychronic beliefs of time, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner call “sequential” and “synchronic” attitudes. Monochronic cultures prefer to deal with tasks and people one at a time, while polychronic cultures are comfortable dealing with things “out of order”. Their example of a polychronic person is a butcher who, when asked by the first person in line for salami, calls out “who else wants salami?” in order to avoid having to wrap and unwrap the salami every time a salami customer reaches the front of the line (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1989: 127).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s most important contributions to business and culture research lie not in adding more dimensions to an already crowded field of cultural comparisons, but in recognizing the dimensions’ importance relative to effective communication. Stating a sentiment held by many other researchers in communication studies, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner say “effective social interaction depends on attributed meaning and intended meaning coinciding” (1989: 24). They go on to point out that there is more room for coincidence than their predecessors’ dimensions imply. For

\textsuperscript{31} Though they call collectivism “communitarianism”.
\textsuperscript{32} Here, called neutral/emotional
every cultural characteristic, a given population will show a normal distribution of people who reflect that characteristic. The graphic below\textsuperscript{33} compares two cultures in terms of their need for social acceptance. The two cultures may be national, regional, corporate or any other grouping.

In the preceding chart, Individual A represents an average individual in Culture A, needing a fair amount of social approval. Most members of Culture B, however, need less social approval of their beliefs and actions, as illustrated by their curve being to the right.

\textsuperscript{33} Adapted from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1989: 25).
Individual B, an outlier in Culture B, actually has the same need for social approval that most members of Culture A have. For this dimension, Individual B would feel quite at home in Culture A, while Individual A might feel lonely or even ignored in Culture B.

By recognizing that all cultures are composed of populations with varying degrees of adherence to the cultural norms, Trompenaars and Hampden opened up the possibility that there are culturally appropriate means to express ideas that are not necessarily the norm in that culture. For instance, if the graph above represented “belief that Tibet should be independent”, there would still be outliers in Chinese culture who believe that Tibet should be independent… and many of them will have developed ways to express that belief in such a way that it makes sense to Chinese listeners. An American that wishes to say that Tibet should be independent is now theoretically able to search for a Chinese way of expressing this belief. This model of cultural analysis is operationalized by the idea that cross-cultural interaction is like playing a game, a concept that will be treated in section 2.3.2.

The normal distribution model for cultural difference also helps to explain variation within cultures. Using the chart above, one can compare firms, provinces, professionals in different business functions, and so on. This model allows us to consider the role of culture in groups commonly lumped together under one nationality. When Harvard business professors Steven Spear and H. Kent Bowen assert that the Toyota Production
System (TPS) is culture-free because other Japanese firms have not been able to imitate it (Spear and Bowen 1999: 97), they imply that culture is either monolithic or a non-factor. Using Trompenaars’ normal distribution model of cultural variation, we can see how TPS may, in fact, be a cultural product.

The Toyota Production System encourages workers to seek managers for solutions to problems, encourages group members to take responsibility for the health and success of the entire group, and requires exacting tolerances in production and service. That Toyota is better at implementing these standards than other Japanese firms does not make them any less Japanese, it just puts them further away from the mean on a Japanese distribution curve, and probably in the opposite direction from a curve representing American firms:
The area shaded by green lines above connects Japanese and American firms that are using similar/identical management processes to maximize efficiency. If this graph accurately reflects reality, the average Japanese firm may be more efficient than the average American one, but that does not preclude the existence of highly efficient American firms, either. Furthermore, this graph represents current proclivities, and does not account for learning that can take place. Just as human children learn culture from their parents, adults can learn from adults in other cultures, as well. The fact that Toyota is an outlier on its own cultural curve makes it that much more difficult to imitate, but its
being a product of Japanese culture does not make it impossible for Americans to learn.

On the contrary, recognizing that TPS may be a product of culture could help American managers understand that implementing TPS at home requires changing *assumptions* about how people *should* go about their work, and not just changing *how* they work.

Parsons, Shils, Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner all proposed and promoted spectra of cultural norms on which every culture could be placed. Even Michael Harris Bond, in creating the Confucian Work Dynamism category, affirmed the central belief that all cultures can be measured against one another on single spectra – e.g., some countries are significantly influenced by the Confucian tradition, while others are not. These typologies have helped to conceptualize cultural difference and have helped people begin to realize that many of their beliefs about the world around them are products of nurture rather than nature. In the next section, however, we will see that the humanities have taken a slightly different approach to looking at culture and how people from different cultures communicate.

2.1.2 名可名非常名，道可道非常道34 Culture and communication in the humanities

Jerome Bruner identified two basic modes of thinking: logico-scientific, and narrative (1986: 12). Logico-scientific thinking seeks to use categorization to form a

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34 The first line of the Dao De Jing: *The name that can be named is not the eternal name; the Way that can be described is not the eternal Way.*
system, deals in general causes, and seeks to test for empirical truth. Individuals and cultures characterized by narrative thinking deal with human action and intention, and try to locate experience in a time and place. Most Americans are trained from a very early age to believe the world should be divided into discrete categories, while most East Asians are taught to make connections between otherwise discrete objects. In a study by Nisbett and Miyamoto (2005: 469), Japanese and American mother-child pairs were put in a room with toy vehicles and asked to play. The American mothers used the toy vehicles to teach their children categories like “truck” and “car”, while the Japanese mothers used the toys to teach the children what to do and say when offered an object. In another study (Masuda & Nisbett, in Nisbett, et al 2001: 297), Japanese and American subjects were shown an aquarium and asked to describe what they saw. The Americans listed the individual objects in the tank, like ‘fish’ and ‘plants’, while the Japanese participants saw ‘a fish in front of a plant’, relating the objects in the scene to form a whole. From an early age, cultures program our brains to process our environments very differently.

Scholars in international business have tended to follow the Western approach to cultural inquiry, using quantitative data to establish categories into which various national cultures can be placed, the belief being that categorization is the first step to understanding. Scholars in fields like anthropology, human cognition and foreign
language pedagogy, however, have been taking what could be called a holistic Eastern approach to cognition, trying to improve cross-cultural understanding by learning how culture and meaning are connected. Instead of using statistics to make a point about culture, humanities scholars often try to relate words and deeds to culture, to find out what particular performances mean to particular groups of people. Several influential scholars in the humanities have brought us closer to an understanding of culture as being a connection between learning and instruction, between meaning and intention, and between who-I-am and who-I-think-you-are. With so many divisions being broken down, perhaps these scholars took a page from the Classic of the Way: “the name that can be named is not the Name, the way that can be described is not the Way”.

2.1.2.1 Culture and meaning-making

Clifford Geertz defines culture as the “webs of significance in which man is suspended and which he made” (1973: 5). As an anthropologist focused on ethnographic field study, Geertz’ self-described goal in the study of culture was to “interpret meaning, not establish laws,” (5) thus placing him squarely in Bruner’s narrative thinking mode. As Trompenaars emphasized the importance of aligning intention and interpretation, Geertz approached the study of culture as an attempt to learn how other peoples construct what they do and to understand the meanings that actions make. Taking observable action as
the basic unit of meaning-making, Geertz believed that declarative knowledge about another society – of the kind Hofstede and his colleagues produced – cannot align intention and interpretation like procedural knowledge can. In Geertz’ words, “formulations of others’ symbol systems must be actor-oriented” (14). Furthermore, Geertz believed that the way meaning is made in “village A” cannot be inferred to be the standard for “country A” – every society and group has ways of making meaning, and if we hope to converse with a group in which we want to operate, we must gain access to the world in which they perceive themselves living. This group could be a rural village in Indonesia, or the American Society of Mechanical Engineers – each has their own way of making meaning that members follow in order to make themselves understood and respected.

As a career ethnographer and field researcher, Geertz’ conception of culture has a very personal face that cannot – and should not, according to the logico-scientific model – be described by the mass-mailed questionnaires of international business research. Geertz does not seek cultural generalities but specifics that will allow him to communicate meaningfully with a given target group.

In keeping with Hall’s and Vygotsky’s ideas that we create our realities socially through learning and communicating, psychologist Jerome Bruner believes that culture is the tool kit with which we make meaning. Bruner writes that culture pre-assigns meaning
to messages: rather than decoding on the fly, members of a community interpret acts performed by others by pulling out of their mental database the meaning that their culture has already associated with the observed act/utterance (1990: 4). Bruner believes that there is no significant difference between act and utterance in meaning-making, saying “saying and doing represent a functionally inseparable unit” (1990: 18).

Bruner draws another connection between communication and social identity. Culture provides the tool kit for communication, and an individual’s ability to use the tools that a particular community values will affect that individual’s level of membership in the community. People are socialized to “say and do” according to the norms of the group in which they were raised and their actions are indicators to co-members of their groups. Literature professors indicate expertise at conferences by reading their papers aloud, and so a person that presents only a PowerPoint at a literature conference might be perceived as being amateurishly un-academic, with the same being true of a paper-reading at a business presentation. Chinese linguist Chen Songcen gives an example in which a young Chinese girl uses foul language to curse someone on the street. Bystanders hear her and comment on the dirty mouths that young girls have ‘these days’. As Chen points out, the bystanders expect girls in polite society to avoid curse words, while mainstream Chinese culture does not expect this of men (Chen 1989: 12). By using foul language, the young girl has placed herself outside of mainstream Chinese society; if
she wanted to be considered a “good girl”, she would hold her tongue because she knows what the bystanders’ expectations would be. The key to creating a particular identity in a particular culture is to produce performances that members of that community recognize as representing that identity.

Following the tool kit metaphor, cognitive psychologist Michael Tomasello believes that culture fills the tool kit with items we can use to convey meaning. These items are not words that would require decoding, but are entire chunks of meaning that make sense to others as units because they have already been programmed by their culture to understand them (2003: 159). For instance, American speakers of English learn to say “I dunno”, “I don’t know” and “I do not know” as roughly equivalent and without building the sentences up word-by-word. These chunks can transcend sentence-level constructions as well – when a person who is normally forthright with friends dodges a friend’s question, it is understood that within that particular context, the answer is embarrassing or “private”.

Tomasello found that in first-language acquisition, young humans learn these chunks by attending to what others are saying to them and to what others are saying to each other in specific contexts. For instance, if an adult says “look at that” to a child of a certain age, the child knows that the adult is referring to something within their common environment. As humans age and become more sophisticated thinkers, this association
between context and language becomes even tighter, with utterances joining up with context as indicators of a previously-learned interpretation. It is at this point that communication becomes symbolic, not a jumble of words in syntactical formation, but units of meaning that *stand for* culturally-assigned interpretations. Many humorous examples of cross-cultural miscommunication arise from the application of one culture’s symbols in another culture. Recently, an older Chinese gentleman told me – in Chinese – that I am a “pretty boy”. In Chinese culture, an older gentleman saying that a young man is pretty is a recognized compliment. He then corrected himself, saying, “I guess in America, I should say you are ‘sexy’”. It seems that this individual assumed that compliment ‘chunks’ are identical in the US and China, and because ‘sexy’ in Chinese is a translation from English, he thought the culturally appropriate compliment in the US should be to call me ‘sexy’. As a learner of Chinese, I understood what was happening, but nevertheless felt uncomfortable. I have been called “pretty” by other elderly Chinese before, and so had learned to accept it as an act of innocent compliment. When this gentleman used a compliment he explicitly described as an American word, he triggered my already-programmed *American* interpretation of his intention, even though he was clearly using the “American” word in a Chinese way (that is, to compliment people of the same sex but of differing ages).
Tomasello believes that a central component of learning and communication is “attending to the intentional states of others” (2003: 290). In order to interpret meaning accurately, and to induce accurate interpretations of their own intentions, individuals must attend to the expectations of natives of the culture in which they are working. This is an important point for foreign language learners – and American foreign language learners in particular – for it means that successful communication is accomplished by mastering the symbols that members of the target culture associate with meanings. For the older Chinese fellow in the example above, it probably would have been more appropriate for him to compliment something I had bought or produced rather than something with which I was born.

Philosophers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) and *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999) also believe that language is a symbol system that refers to culturally-defined meanings, many of which are so deeply embedded that we are unaware of the way in which they shape our perception of the experienced world. Their core theories are that our bodies and the cultures that we have built around ourselves establish the parameters within which we can conceive things, and that our physical existences and cultural learning both serve to perpetuate these categorical constructs.

For instance, because healthy humans stand upright, “up” is often used to indicate happiness and goodness (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 14). In English, we say “She’s feeling
up today,” and in Chinese, 她今天很高兴 *ta jintian hen gaoxing*, or literally, “She today [is] high-arise”. Just as English speakers normally do not think about the spatial meaning of “up” in “feeling up”, Chinese speakers do not ponder the etymology of the characters for “happy”… but such is the depth to which these metaphors are embedded. Drawing from Lakoff and Johnson’s analysis of the common western metaphor “argument is war” (1980: 4), it seems as if many Western firms approach contract negotiation as a kind of war that is formally concluded with a business treaty – the contract itself. Both parties are expected to follow the treaty and failure to do so results in a legal “battle”. An appropriate metaphor for how many Chinese people approach establishing a business relationship may be “dating and marriage”. When a couple dates and marries, they only lose if they break up; in order to avoid breaking up, frequent renegotiation is necessary. In a war, there is one victor, and following the war, it is understood that one side was victorious. In marriage, each member is considered equal, even if each party has control in different areas, such as the household or in financial matters. The existence of these metaphors allows people to say and do things with a certain level of commonality and without having to spell them out to other community members. When Chinese people negotiate a deal, both sides understand it as a dating process and so do not need to remind each other that there will be bumps and hiccups. When American firms make deals, both sides frequently operate under the negotiation-is-war metaphor and so do not need to
remind the other side that the winner gets to call the shots.

These metaphors guide the way people from different cultures speak, act and think, and, as Geertz pointed out, using culturally inappropriate metaphors marks an individual as an outsider. When the elderly Chinese gentleman in the anecdote above used the western-influenced Chinese translation for “sexy”, he thought he was using an American metaphor for “compliment”, but in fact he was using the Chinese metaphor “attractive physical attributes are complimentary”. In this gentleman’s reality, calling me “sexy” did not mean I am sexually attractive to him, it was just filling the slot in a Chinese linguistic formula that, as a whole, stands for “you are an appealing person”.

In this section, we saw how the leaders in international business research address culture by identifying a finite number of universal attributes. These typologies are academic in nature, and may reflect the academic business community’s own standards for creating an expert identity. To gain respect in the academic field of international business, scholars must perform large-scale, preferably multi-country quantitative surveys in order to establish general rules or models that can be published in scholarly journals. As in structural linguistics, these typologies are explanatory descriptions of phenomena that only make sense to readers who are already familiar with that which they describe. Reading academic business literature on culture arms individuals with general rules of cultural behavior and some examples of how they are reflected in the cultures,
but they are not intended to be a guide to interaction; they are guides to recognizing, perhaps, but not to performing according to local standards.

Anthropologists and psychologist approach culture from a different direction, as their fields have different expectations of what constitutes good scholarship. Coming from a narrative tradition, these academic fields encourage ethnographic research with individual observation, and encourage drawing conclusions about what is important to the subjects themselves. Anthropologists like Geertz and Hall work in a field that values qualitative data for its ability to contextualize meaning. To an anthropologist, statistics have limited ability to explain why people say and do things the way they do, and field observation is one way to collect this kind of data.

Through observation and clinical studies, several scholars in the humanities have concluded that culture is a self-perpetuating network of meaning and learning. Clifford Geertz and Jerome Bruner both describe culture as man-made and self-perpetuating means of creating meaning, and both stress the importance of acting meaningfully according to the standards of the community in which one operates. Tomasello’s language-as-referent and Lakoff and Johnson’s language-as-metaphor concepts are two more methods of operationalizing culture, explaining how people in different communities express meaning differently.
One popular article from the Harvard Business Review, “The Chinese Negotiation,” came very close to ameliorating business and humanities approaches to culture. Authors John Graham and Mark Lam (2003) describe eight Chinese concepts that are central to understanding how Chinese businesspeople think, followed by a set of Hofstedian dichotomies of American and Chinese culture in terms of ways of thinking, approaches to time, and negotiation style. The eight points described as keys to success in China were 关系 guanxi (personal connections), 中间人 zhongjian ren (the intermediary), 社会等级 shehui dengji (social status), 人际和谐 renji hexie (interpersonal harmony), 整体观念 zhengti guannian (holistic thinking), 节俭 jiejian (thrift), 面子 mianzi (“face” or social capital) and 吃苦耐劳 chiku nailao (endurance, relentlessness, or eating bitterness and enduring labor).

You may have noticed that each of the eight concepts is labeled with its original Chinese name, a sign that the authors were seeking to describe the Chinese world in Chinese terms, literally and figuratively. Walker writes that performed culture starts with meaning and treats linguistic code as a medium for accessing and participating in that meaning” (2000: 226). By using Chinese terms, Graham and Lam hope to help American readers access uniquely Chinese concepts without resorting to misleading American “equivalents”. Just as the words “adverb”, “noun” and “preposition” are only meaningful to those who already speak languages in which those terms are used, Graham and Lam’s
Chinese terms are probably most meaningful to readers already somewhat familiar with Chinese culture. But how does one get there? How does one build the memories that target culture natives have and which they access to reach a common understanding? Turning “culture” into culturally appropriate action is where language pedagogues have split from social science scholars of culture and have built on the work of the anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists described above.

In the next section, we will look at how some philosophers and foreign language scholars have formalized the idea of language as performed culture, a concept useful for describing how members of a community define successful performance. If we know how a community defines successful performance, we can learn strategies for reproducing those performances.

2.1.2.2 Communication as performed culture

Clifford Geertz wrote that action is the core of meaning-making, and Jerome Bruner said that action is composed of behavior and intention (1986: 19). Few treatments of culture in international business research would refute this, but few of them advocate a model of culture that is actionable for those training to or already working in foreign environments. Recognizing cultural differences in terms of collectivism/individualism is an important first step to working with natives of another culture, but as Galal Walker
writes, “knowledge of a culture provides the basis for participation in the social interactions and transactions that lead to success or failure. In short, it gets us into the game. In foreign language study, the goal is to inculcate the default behaviors in language and society that sustain culturally appropriate behavior” (Walker 2000: 225). Individuals that hope to work effectively in a foreign culture need to be able to reproduce the actual ways of saying and doing that reflect the target community’s norms. These behaviors may not guarantee successful communication but they are necessary in order for the performer to be allowed to remain on stage at all. Marc Gold calls these base-line skills “zero-order skills”, skills that members of a community are expected to have, like responding to “Hi” with “Hi” (in Riches 1996: 9).

Walker goes on to point out that “the speed of social interaction requires that people operating in a foreign culture rely on learned default memories of the target culture to act and speak” (Walker 2000: 231), and that this cannot be accomplished through an intellectual exercise of reasoning out what is appropriate. Cultural typologies like Hofstede’s provide an excellent basis for discussing “ignored culture” 35(Walker 2000: 232) in an abstract/academic sense; conceiving of culture as a performance medium in which actors create meaning takes the next step, putting those understandings into practice.

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35 Walker expands on Hector Hammerly by dividing the study of culture into three types: achievement, informational and behavioral (2000: 231); of these, behavioral culture is further broken down into revealed – that which natives are happy to share; ignored – that which natives are unaware; and suppressed – that which natives are unwilling to share.
Philosopher Kenneth Burke describes a communication performance as being composed of a “pentad”: actors, action, a goal, a scene and an instrument; when any of these elements are ‘imbalanced’, it signals trouble (in Bruner 1990: 50). Whereas Burke was concerned with deviations from contextual norms (“trouble”), Walker takes the pentad and uses it to identify intention. Walker describes performances as “repetitions of ‘situated events’ defined by five elements: place, time, script, roles and audience.” (2000: 227). Combinations of the five elements index (point to) socially agreed-upon meanings in a particular community, often substituting for whatever literal meaning the script component may have had. For example, when a teacher says to a student at the end of class, “could you stay after the bell for a couple minutes,” if the student in question was the teacher’s pet, other students would interpret this to mean the student will be getting a special job to do. If, on the other hand, the student’s role/identity was that of the class clown, American students, at least, might holler, “you’re in troooouble!”, because they have already learned that “bad students” are held after class for punishment. Even if the teacher had used the sweetest, politest phraseology to keep a bad student after class, other students would still interpret the meaning of the utterance from the context and assume the student was going to get in trouble.

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36 Christensen and Warnick (2006:23) refer to three types of meaning: referential, indexical and pragmatic. Referential meaning is objective, with words representing particular objects/concepts; indexical meaning is context-based, with words like ‘this’ and ‘he’ indicating things that must be commonly perceived by both speaker and listener; pragmatic meaning is the ‘meaning behind the words’, like “would you mind not smoking?” is a request rather than a question.
Substitutions in the five elements constitute a new context and a new intention. Walker (2000:228) describes this as a “chain of being”: Culture creates contexts → contexts provide meanings → meanings produce intentions → intentions define individuals. In high-context cultures, many intentions are found only in the context. Building on an example from Chen Songcen (1989: 77), if someone asked, “我去，行不行? wǒ qù, xíngbuxìng?/Would it be all right if I went?” and the respondent did not think it would be appropriate s/he might reply, “你去也可以 nǐ qù yě kěyī/Your going would also be possible.” The listener would have to know that when a Chinese person must refuse a request, “也 yě/also” can be an indicator that a positive response is not possible. The intention of the respondent in this context is embedded in the context of the performance, and only those socialized in the norms of the community know how to understand contextually-embedded intention.

Taking performance as the basic unit of culture allows us to break culture down into learnable chunks. As noted previously, culturally appropriate performance keeps us in the game, even if it does not guarantee success. Indeed, who among us has never wished we had been able to practice our performance a few times before ‘going on stage’ and flubbing our ‘lines’? People working in a foreign culture environment presumably hope to succeed in their work; how can we define that success, and how might it affect our ability to succeed in a foreign culture? If people in other cultures do not define success
the same way Americans do, what kinds of performances would invoke impressions of success in the minds of a particular foreign audience? In the next section, we will see how there are alternative prescriptions for success in the United States and China, how these definitions sometimes conflict with each other, and how some scholars have built on the ideas of Geertz, Bruner, Hall and even John Dewey to create a model for resolving these conflicts.

2.2 What Constitutes Successful Performance?

In the fall of 2006, I was an interview subject for a visiting Japanese instructor’s certification to perform American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) oral proficiency interviews. She began by asking me my name, to which I replied, “makaruun desu” (I am McAloon). She paused and then asked – perhaps a second time – “what is your given name?” Japanese instructors at Ohio State tell us that given names are reserved for family and close friends, so I had never heard anyone use Japanese to ask for a given name. After the interview, she apologized in English for the fact that the certification process requires that learners be referred to by first name during the interview. The instructor went on to apologize for conducting the interview in a discussion format when she believed that a truly acculturated student of Japanese would feel uncomfortable engaging in discussion or debate with an instructor figure. To that
Japanese native, the *most* successful student of Japanese would be the one that says the *least* to an authority figure.

In the example above, we see that differing concepts of successful performance already exist between American culture and East Asian culture. Where do we learn these different standards? Are there models for successful performance in American culture that could be used by professionals working in East Asian cultures? In this section, we will get some help from self-help gurus in the US and China to understand popular conceptions of what makes a person appear to be successful. Having looked at where both sides are coming from, scholars in international business will tell us how American businesses are supposed to evaluate successful performance in international environments. Finally, we will look at a powerful and practical model for achieving cross-cultural interaction.

2.2.1 American concepts of success

Robert Zemeckis and Tom Hanks’ 2000 film *Cast Away* was nominated for two Oscars, won 11 other awards and was nominated for another 19\(^{37}\); clearly this film was well received by critics. More importantly, as the fiftieth top-grossing US movie of all time, and 74\(^{th}\) worldwide\(^{38}\), *Cast Away* apparently appealed to many non-critics, as well.


\(^{38}\) The Numbers, www.the-numbers.com/movies/records, April 10, 2007. These figures are updated daily.
A movie can only be this successful if it fits within the audience’s framework of reality. Movies that fall beyond the average moviegoer’s understanding of reality are ‘avant-garde’, and rarely gross as much as Cast Away. The fact that so many Americans related to the film indicates that the themes of the movie coincide with audiences’ ideals of the way the world ought to be, and there are two versions of what constitutes a successful person portrayed in Cast Away.

In the first 20 minutes or so of the movie, Tom Hanks’ character, Chuck Noland, is a FedEx manager who travels the world showing appreciative employees how time is money39, and who is always thinking about his fiancée. People like and appreciate him because he is genuinely helpful and thoughtful. On the way home to see his fiancée, the cargo plane on which he is riding crashes and he is washed onto a desert island.

Most of the film portrays a lone hero wrestling success from the jaws of fate, a longstanding trope in Anglo-American art and literature. Like reading a Sherlock Holmes novel, audiences are fascinated to see what clever solution Chuck comes up with to address each difficulty he faces: he uses stone tools to open coconuts, uses coconuts to store fresh water, burns tree trunks to make them easier to cut down, and even performs emergency dental surgery on himself with an ice skate. Physically alone on an island, Hanks’ Chuck Noland could be taken as a metaphor for individuals in a sea of people, having to survive with the tools that God gave them. The popularity of the idea that

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39 One of the metaphors that Lakoff and Johnson (1980) say governs Anglo culture.
successful people triumph by force of will is demonstrated by the popularity of survival stories and biographies in America. In the popular television show “Survivor,” cooperation is required to remain in the game, but contestants know that there is no prize for second place.

The fact that Noland used the products of human knowledge to survive on the island does not diminish the message that successful people achieve success alone. Rather, the existence of items from human society on the island furthers the metaphor that the island is society; individuals must recognize resources around them and take them to create a successful outcome. To drive this point home, the items Noland used did not just fall into his lap; he obtained most of his items by consciously deciding to violate the sanctity of sealed FedEx boxes. He had to violate the rules of society in order to survive.

Though three-quarters of Cast Away seem to promote the idea that success is taken, physical survival may not be the best measuring stick for success. After returning to human company, Noland must once again succeed among people and as the beginning of the movie showed, professional & social success is, under normal circumstances, given by others as a reward for satisfying their needs. The lone hero and help-giver models of successful people both exist in American culture, but the former seems to dominate the

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40 Among other things, Noland adapts a commonly-taught method of making a campfire to his tropical resources, extracts a tooth with an ice skate, keeps his sanity by talking to a volleyball, uses VHS tape for rope, and gets off the island sailing a raft made entirely out of natural materials… except for the sail of metal scrap that actually gets him past the surf offshore.
Every American who has taken an introductory psychology class learns about Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. In this construct, people seek autonomy and self-actualization; each person’s *raison d’être* is to make him or herself independent and happy. There are many versions of the hierarchy, but the graphic below is borrowed from Hofstede (1980: 376):

![Maslow's hierarchy of needs](image)

**Figure 2.3 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs**

In the hierarchy, humans first need to satisfy their need for physical security (food and shelter); having satisfied this, humans then consider their need for companionship. Individuals that have joined a social group then seek autonomy within the group; finally,
all the lower-level needs having been satisfied, humans are supposed to seek personal fulfillment. Self-actualization is a self-defined version of success that may be found in volunteerism, wealth, or any number of things that can make a person happy.

As Geert Hofstede pointed out, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a distinctly American construct, informed by American individualism, and low uncertainty avoidance (1980: 376). Individualists see themselves as being individual operators situated in a society of individuals and people with low uncertainty avoidance would feel that security is a low-level need, easily met. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a common management training tool in the West, and perpetuates the idea that success is individual, and that individuals are successful by satisfying their own needs. As longtime US/China Links internship program manager Eric Shepherd says, “typical American learners are egocentric: they are focused on what is happening to them as individuals rather than on the people or events around them” (2005: 4).

American students are trained to believe in Maslow, and adult American business professionals are given Stephen Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People to find out how to move up. This book has sold over 15 million copies, has been translated into 38 languages, and was named by Forbes Magazine one of the top 10 most influential management books. My own experience has shown this book to be as ubiquitous as the numbers would indicate. In March 2007, shortly after reading the book for this

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dissertation, I found a copy of The Seven Habits in an auto supplier’s corporate training room. In February 2007, a participant in the Chinese Flagship program’s pre-internship training in Qingdao quoted Covey to frame his interpretation of a Chinese person’s actions. As the instruction book for professional success in the United States, what are the principles that so many American business people are told lie behind success?

Much like Hall, Geertz and Walker, Covey believes that action creates meaning, intention and identity, saying “we are what we repeatedly do” (1990: 46). He goes on to say that “our character is a composite of our habits,” (46) a line reminiscent of psychologist William James’ “a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind” (James 1890: 294), except that Covey’s idea is markedly individualist. From Covey’s perspective, we are who we make ourselves to be, rather than who others allow us to be. We create our identities through personal action, and those identities are limited only by the individual’s own determination; there is no apparent cultural/social framework into which one’s actions must fit, and by which those actions will be judged.

Covey’s basic principles reflect a deep influence of the individualism that also informed Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. In Covey’s own words, “effective interdependence can only be built on a foundation of true independence” (184). In terms

42 For this discussion, the principles that Covey promotes and that inform his Habits are more pertinent than the particular habits themselves. For the record, Covey’s seven habits are: 1) Be pro-active; 2) Begin with the end in mind; 3) Put first things first; 4) Think win/win; 5) Seek first to understand, then to be understood; 6) Synergize; 7) Sharpen the saw (self-renewal).
of the relationship between self-actualization and socialization, Covey and Maslow seem opposed to one another, but both unconsciously assume that the self and society are separate units to begin with. Only by espousing a self-other duality can Covey promote achieving “private victory” before “public victory” (49).

In Covey’s conception, the interface between the private self and others consists of an “emotional bank account” (188). Effective people make deposits by performing acts of kindness, keeping commitments, clarifying expectations, demonstrating loyalty to self and to others not present. Effective people also explicitly apologize for withdrawals, which happen when they offend, fail to meet commitments, fail to show respect, and so on. The emotional bank account idea is very similar to some versions of social capital theory, in which people can build up and lose trust, status and esteem in a community through their actions. Scholars including Mayfair Yang, Yan Bianjie and Alan Smart have related the idea of social capital to guanxi, and therefore Covey’s emotional bank account could almost be thought of as analogous to Chinese ideas of reciprocity. Covey’s emotional bank account and Chinese guanxi differ on one core point: Covey believes that all human beings are equal by nature and should interact with each other as equals. In The Seven Habits, he writes that people should not derive power from their position because it stunts subordinates’ thinking skills (39). Using Hofstede’s typology, Covey’s

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43 This follows Bourdieu’s (1986 in Smart 1993: 392) view of social capital as actual or potential resources linked to a network of relationships and provides ‘credit’. For a brief introduction to social capital theory across disciplines, see Harvard University professor Michael Woolcock’s review of Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action by Lin Nan (2001) in Social Forces. Volume 82, number 3, pp. 1209-1211.
belief in the equality of all people reflects Americans’ low power-distance index score, and sets up the “emotional bank account” for difficulties in Chinese contexts, where relative social status is an important guidepost for proper behavior. The Chinese Flagship student who invoked Covey’s bank account in Qingdao felt that he and his Chinese teacher should treat each other as equals, while the Chinese teacher – being Chinese – had no such expectation, and acted like the superior he was in their Chinese relationship.

Hendrie Weisinger’s *Emotional Intelligence at Work* is another popular book on how to be a successful professional that takes “me” as the core of effective communication. Weisinger writes that there are four building blocks for making “intelligent use of your emotions... making emotions work for you” (1998: xvi): 1) perceiving and expressing emotion, 2) Accessing feelings on demand, 3) Understanding emotions, 4) Regulating emotions. Expression of emotion, or affective behavior, is highly informed by cultural norms, and Weisinger reflects American standards when he writes that effective communication is composed of self-disclosure, assertiveness, dynamic listening, constructive criticism and team communication (107). Much of *Emotional Intelligence* is devoted to constructive ways to say what is on one’s mind, i.e., to a boss: “I’m starting to feel frustrated because I don’t think you’re listening to what I’m saying. I won’t be working this weekend.” (122). Here, Weisinger is scripting an employee near

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44 On April 13, 2007, Weisinger’s book was ranked #14,010 in sales on Amazon.com, which pales by comparison to #59 for *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*... but isn’t too bad compared to #187,760 for Geert Hofstede’s *Culture’s Consequences*. 
the end of his rope, but the underlying assumption remains that the work environment is populated by equals who should be comfortable asserting their precious emotions. Weisinger does, however, demonstrate that within American culture, there exist behaviors that, while still me-centered, attempt to mitigate friction between me-focused people. In Emotional Intelligence, Weisinger advocates maintaining interlocutors’ ‘face’\textsuperscript{45}, meeting others’ needs, and tuning into others’ emotions.

Napoleon Hill’s 1928 self-help book, The Law of Success, further demonstrates that there is space in American professional culture for an intersubjective approach to successful communication. Andrew Carnegie told reporter Hill that there should be a formula for success, and that if Hill were to interview all the “great men” of the time, that formula would surely become apparent. With only letters of introduction from Carnegie, Hill paid for all his expenses traveling the country for these interviews. The resulting “formula” has now sold 30 million copies and has spawned a foundation that promotes his findings.

Hill defines success as “achieving your definite chief aim without violating the rights of other people” and “tactful negotiation with other people” (Hill 1979: 26)\textsuperscript{46}. Thus, the heart of Hill’s path to success is effective communication that takes others’ thinking and

\textsuperscript{45} Americans and Chinese may approach “face” somewhat differently from each other, however. Ting-Toomey (1991) found that Americans and Chinese protect their own “face” to the same extent, but Chinese people do more to protect the face of others than Americans (in Yabuuchi 2004: 293).

\textsuperscript{46} A note on the page numbers for The Law of Success: Hill’s book is composed of a number of thematic booklets originally published separately, each of which has its own pagination.
perspectives in to account. Hill goes on to say that “a pleasing personality is the fulcrum upon which you must place the crow-bar of your efforts,” (29) and elaborates to say that having a “pleasing personality” involves talking for your listeners (17) (emphasis my own). Hill’s “pleasing personality” is foundationally intersubjective because it requires recognizing what interlocutors find pleasing or normal, and working to remain within that framework.47

As we have shown previously, culture defines what its members find pleasing. What we call culture, Hill calls “social heredity… the principle through which the young of the race absorb from their environment and particularly from their earlier training by parents, teachers and religious leaders, the beliefs and tendencies of the adults who dominate them” (73). Preceding Donald Merlin’s idea of culture as a web of networked brains (2001) by over 70 years, Hill writes that success comes from what he calls the “mastermind”, the power that comes from two or more people working together (23); as Hill says, “all of nature’s plans are based upon harmonious, cooperative effort” (96). If he were alive today, perhaps Hill would design motivational posters with “There is no ‘I’ in Success” written underneath.48

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47 A similar minded self-help author says, “Always be thinking about others’ journeys in order to achieve maximum collaboration” (Maxwell 2003: 223)

48 Alice Bunkle (1987) published a revealing look at how the “great men” and women of our time explained their success. Sidestepping the thorny question of what defines success, Bunkle’s used a working definition of success that consisted of being famous enough to write an autobiography that got published. Reviewing the autobiographies of 40 people – 21 of whom were writers or artists and another 9 of whom were public speakers of one kind or another (lawyers, politicians, broadcasters, etc), she found that ‘successful’ Americans of the time attributed their success to: their own hard work; self-discipline; personal sacrifices like missing a family wedding; liking their work; luck. Apparently, these individuals did not see their achievements as being situated in a “mastermind”, but instead saw
Coming from opposing individualist and communalist perspectives, Covey and Hill agree that eliciting positive responses from one’s audience is central to effective communication and professional success. Both self-help gurus require adherents to develop what Kellmer Pringle calls social competence: “the extent to which an individual is able and willing to conform to the customs, habits and standards of behavior prevailing in the society in which he lives…” (in Riches 1996: 5). Riches elaborates, saying that social competence includes an ability to interpret others’ behavior and feelings, to respond emotionally, to adapt to or predict others’ roles, and to manage conversation through turn-taking and guiding conversation topics (1996: 7). These abilities become “social skills” when put into action as identifiable behaviors, and the combination of the abilities and behaviors she calls “interpersonal competence”.

Another current term for interpersonal skills is “emotional intelligence”, coined by Daniel Goleman (Farnham 2000 in Lewicki, et al 2003: 330). Goleman proposes a corollary to IQ called EQ that reflects an individual’s ability to empathize – “the ability to see life as somebody else sees it” (331). Some companies are even testing for EQ now, hoping to find employees that are not only book smart but socially skilled, as well.49

themselves as so many Chuck Nolands, wrestling success from a cruel and lonely world.

49 Goleman seems to believe that EQ is largely innate and static. In one study, four year-olds were given a marshmallow and told they would get a second one if they could delay eating the first one until later. As adolescents, the children that waited for a second marshmallow were said to be more socially adept, and that their SAT scores were better predicted by the marshmallow test than the IQ tests they also took at age four. Using EQ and IQ tests on four year olds to predict high school age achievement without reference to the environments in which they are raised implies that social skill and intelligence are things humans are born with and cannot be changed.
As far as American thinkers are concerned, is social competence sufficient for social success or effective communication? As Marc Gold pointed out, zero-order skills are merely the threshold for participation. Even Vivienne Riches, who wrote about interpersonal competence, was writing for people who train the mentally handicapped simply to be able to participate in common society. Napoleon Hill saves us from the disparaging thought that competence and effectiveness are composed of two entirely different skill sets when he writes, “there are few new principles in [my] book, but you will find but few who seem to understand how to apply them” (1979: 17). A couple thousand years earlier, Mencius said much the same thing: 夫道若大路然，岂难知哉? 人病不求耳 Truth is just like a road. Is it difficult to learn about it? No, the problem is that people are disinclined to pursue it (in Li 2001: 158). The difference between participation and effective participation is practicing effective interaction.

2.2.2 Chinese standards of effective interaction

In the previous sections, we have been looking at how Western scholars and practitioners have defined professional success and effective communication. Are these approaches equally applicable to the Chinese environment? In his 1967 book Studies in Ethnomethodology, Harold Garfinkel (in Poore 2000) suggested that people make sense of their worlds in socially constructed ways. Using Garfinkel’s words, Americans take for
granted a certain set of assumptions about what constitutes proper professional communication. In order for an American to create identities and messages that are meaningful to Chinese interlocutors, however, they must know what Chinese people take for granted about effective communication. In this section, we will look at the standards by which Chinese people create and interpret professional personae. Picking up where we left off with American standards, we will start by looking at Chinese “success” literature, a fairly new genre in China. From there, we will work back to traditional ideas of what a respected individual in Chinese society should be like, and then come full circle back to modern day Chinese perspectives on professional communication and guanxi, a very Chinese category in communication.

2.2.2.1 Chinese success literature

On Chinese bookshelves and Chinese online book stores, there appear to be two main types of success literature in China: biographies of rich people and lectures by self-described accomplished people on self-actualization. An important feature of Chinese success literature is that it is a blend of Chinese and Western traditions. China has a long history of intellectual syncretism ranging from the acceptance of Indian Buddhism during the Eastern Han (25-220AD) to the adoption of German Marxism as the state ideology in 1949, and that tendency continues today in success literature.
In the United States, biographies seem to be as much about self-promotion as instruction, and even when the biography describes someone worthy of respect, readers do not necessarily seek guidance for their own lives. The Chinese biographical tradition, on the other hand, is explicitly didactic. The most common Chinese biographies were the 列传 liezhuan. These biographies compose over half the content of the dynastic histories and describe almost 30,000 people (Wilkinson 2000: 125). Because they were meant to serve as models of virtue, many of the biographies are nearly carbon copies of one another, and sometimes contained complete fabrications in order to increase the worthiness of the individual in question.50

Today’s popular biographies in China follow in this tradition of displaying models for success, but the definition of success has changed somewhat. Model citizens in ancient Chinese biographies included loyal officials learned in the arts and in government, chaste widows who preferred to drown themselves than remarry, and filial children willing to do anything for their parents; today’s popular biographies describe people that have made a lot of money. On April 18, 2007, stories of people successful in business (that is, they were rich and/or powerful) made up all five of the five top-selling biographies on Amazon.com’s Chinese partner, Joyo.com. The top-seller was about a young woman who aced the Chinese college entrance exams, got a full scholarship to People’s University in Beijing, went to Harvard, and became successful on Wall Street…

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50 One common cliché was to say that the subject learned to speak and write Chinese just months after birth.
neatly wrapping modern Chinese parents’ dreams into one – a good student, American experience, and a high-paying job. Number two was a biography of Carly Fiorino, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard.

Another popular genre is the collective biographies of several rich people, a modern liezhuan. In 中国富豪谈发家史 zhōngguó fùhào tán fājiā shì (China’s rich and powerful talk about how they got rich, Dang (2004), 12 men and women describe their individual stories of success, including such nationally-known figures as auto parts maker 鲁冠球 Lu Guanqiu, chicken feed magnate 刘永好 Liu Yonghao, and pharmaceutical maker 吴一坚 Wu Yijian. Biographies such as Dang (2004) and the ten-volume 中国 100 首富创富秘笈 zhongguó 100 shōufù chuàngfù mìjí (The secret to how China’s 100 richest people made their money, Zheng, et al 2002) bear a striking resemblance to the biographies of famous Westerners described by Alice Bunkle (1987) in that the subjects stressed themes of struggle, bootstrapping, and seizing opportunities. These Chinese industrialists – like many of their American counterparts – saw themselves as the reason for their success. Whether or not they actually did achieve their success despite other people rather than because of other people is hard to say, though it is also possible that Chinese people, accustomed to the importance of interpersonal relations, might take others’ help for granted and tell biographers what is necessary in addition to personal connections in order to succeed.
Contemporary Chinese industrialists who see their success as the fruit of their own hard work may reflect a certain amount of agreement with Maslow’s concept of self-actualization. Insofar as bookstores’ shelving reflects the categories by which societies order their thinking, it appears from the book section of popular Chinese online store Dangdang.com that self-actualization ("自我实现") is part of the Chinese mental landscape…as a foreign concept to be learned from.

A recent best-selling work in Beijing bookstores is the self-actualization book 做最好的自己 Make your best self, by Li Kaifu. Li’s biographical sketch and several of the chapter headings belie the foreign influence in this book: Li earned a master’s degree at Carnegie-Mellon and is a VP in Microsoft; chapter topics include “Find your real self”, “the Invisible Hand”, “What is enthusiastically taking initiative”, and “Good enough is not enough”. Some of these concepts are classic western ideas, and the last example could have come from a motivational poster in an American HR department. As a returned overseas Chinese, Li would naturally have amalgamated foreign ways of doing and thinking with the Chinese ways in which he was brought up. He would also probably have noticed items in American thought that have correlates in Chinese intellectual history. In chapter four, one finds the subject 别人眼中的自己,才是真正存在的自己 the self that others see in you is your real self, a relativistic social definition of self that, though found in Western thought (i.e., Gardener), is usually trumped in mainstream
American thought by Descartes’ *I think, therefore I am*, which places independent individual consciousness at the center of selfhood.

A general theory of self-actualization is not unique to western culture, however. Respected Peking University professor of philosophy Zhang Dainian\(^{51}\) describes how concepts of self-fulfillment have existed in Chinese thought from Confucius to more modern times. Zhang notes that Mencius believed realization of one’s full potential (*践形* jiànxíng) was indicative of sagehood (*圣人* shèngrén), and that in the Classic of the Mean (*中庸* zhōngyōng), sages are characterized by an ability to maximize their potential, know themselves, and express the goodness within themselves. The Ming dynasty neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming and other idealists like him emphasized self-cultivation through independent thinking (Xu 2004). Zhang Dainian notes, however, that self-actualization in the Chinese sense has always been linked to cultivation of one’s virtue while Maslow’s version includes cultivation of knowledge, feeling and morality. For Maslow, self-fulfilled people had a number of defining characteristics, among them (from Boeree 2006):

- Differentiating means and ends
- Having only a few deep relationships rather than many acquaintances
- Enjoying solitude

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● Being independent of physical and social needs

● Being nonconformists who are not susceptible to social pressure

Zhang Dainian indicated that Chinese self-fulfillment focuses on “virtue”. Is traditional Chinese virtue (德 dé) the same as the virtues that Maslow described? As Zhang points out, the phrase “self-actualization” in Chinese is a direct translation of the foreign term (自我实现 zìwó shìxiàn, lit. self-actualization), implying that the foreign term means something different from traditional Chinese conceptualizations of self-fulfillment (otherwise it would have been unnecessary to use the loan word to begin with). If becoming the best that one can be in Chinese culture is different from American cultures, it may be useful to learn what a successful/virtuous person in traditional Chinese thought is.

2.2.2.2 The successful person in traditional Chinese thought: A social being

Like Plato in the west, the Confucian tradition is commonly understood to be the foundation of Chinese philosophy, and in Confucian thought, five attributes are considered to be the hallmark of refined men (君子 jūnzi)52: 仁 (rén “benevolence”), 义 (yi “righteousness”), 礼 (lǐ “ritual propriety”), 智 (zhì “wisdom”), 信 (xin “trust”). Four of the five attributes are interpersonal skills – rén is roughly ‘humane kindness’, yi is doing the right thing to/for other people, lǐ is treating others properly and xin requires

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52 We might call junzi “successful people” today.
at least two parties to be involved for trust to exist.53

Though these concepts appeared over two thousand years ago, public relations writers Zhao Linghua and Ren Yingwei tell us that interpersonal relations in modern China are deeply influenced by traditional culture, and that Mencius’ admonition that people be 恭敬谦虚 gōngjìng qiānxū (respectful and submissive, modest and self-effacing) is still important today (Zhao and Ren 1989: 25). Mencius also contributed to Chinese thought the concept of the Five Relationships (五伦), five pairs of social roles that dictate role responsibilities and proper interaction: ruler-minister, husband-wife, father-son, older brother-younger brother, friend-friend. All five pairs are hierarchical and constitute two-way relationships of reciprocal obligation54. This model of relationships became the basis for understanding all relationships, from foreign policy to local neighbors. Wherever there are two people, it is believed that one is naturally superior to the other, even if marginally so. This is in clear contrast to the Western Enlightenment tradition, in which all men are thought to be naturally equal. The idea of natural inequality does not preclude the existence of deep feelings between the two parties, however. As indicated above, responsibility and loyalty are intrinsic elements of all relationships.

53 For a brief description of the five attributes in Chinese, read Henan Province party secretary Xu Guangchun’s article on Guangming Daily’s website: http://www.gmw.cn/01gmrb/2007-01/25/content_541075.htm.
54 The friend-friend relationship appears to be equal, but the older-younger sibling relationship is often applied to this pair, thus adding a superior-subordinate aspect to friendship, as well. With the ruler-minister relationship often considered analogous to the father-son relationship, all five relationships are essentially familial.
Zhao and Ren point out that in the modern market economy, ‘reason’ (理智 lìzhì) is now more important in Chinese interpersonal relations than ‘feeling’ (感情 gǎnqíng), but as we will see in the following discussion of modern Chinese professional communication, ‘feeling’ is still more important to successful interaction in Chinese culture than it is in American culture.

2.2.2.3 Modern Chinese professional communication and guanxi

As in the United States, numerous books about professional communication can be found in Chinese bookstores, the internet is full of articles about effective communication at work, and there are even video lectures given by professors and businesspeople that can be bought on DVD/VCD. The categories that Chinese people use to discuss professional interaction can also be divided into imported terms and native terms. In Chinese, effective communication can be talked about as 良好沟通 liánghǎo gòutōng good communication, 有效沟通 yǒuxiào gòutōng effective communication, 有效交流 yǒuxiào jiāoliú effective interaction, 社交能力 shèjiāo nénglì social skills, 交际能力 jiāoji nénglì interaction skills, 关系学 guānxíxué networking and 人际关系 rénjì guānxì interpersonal networking. Terms using yǒuxiào and gòutōng tend to be imported, while the others are home-grown ways of thinking about interpersonal interaction. Looking at imported and native concepts of professional interaction in China, we will
find that even the foreign-influenced approaches cannot avoid the influence of traditional Chinese thought.

Perhaps accompanying the increase in popularity of American MBA degrees in China, “effective communication” has become a popular topic among Chinese business people. Many books and articles on effective communication in Chinese bookstores and on Chinese websites are translations of foreign works and Chinese summaries of foreign-language books on professional communication, thus bringing foreign concepts of what effective communication is to Chinese readers. However, the process of choosing which books to translate and summarize is an editorial decision that can easily target works that already “make sense” to Chinese readers because of their similarity to existing Chinese concepts. What do works on “effective communication” in China have to say?

Interestingly, several pieces approach communication from the same perspective as performance-based language methodology pedagogues like Walker and Noda. Echoing Geertz, Hall and Tomasello, Zhao and Ren write that “communication is a process of socialization” (Zhao and Ren 1989: 147). One article on the leading international trade website in China, Alibaba.com writes (my translation), “for communication to take place, it must be suited to the listener’s education, experience and even emotional state. Communication depends on the interpretation of the listener, therefore, the first issue of communication is, ‘is this message within the scope of the listener’s ability to accept it?’”
This attendance to context is also found in an article in the online version of the People’s Daily titled “走向成功: 细致分析如何提高社交能力” (Zouxiang chenggong: xizhi fenxi ruhe tigao shejiao nengli) Move towards success: A meticulous analysis of how to improve social skills (Zhang 2002). Author Zhang Aijing explains that successful people discriminate between social contexts, and change their behavior to suit the situation. Zhang also cautions that these successful people are not insincere “chameleons”, but are only changing their behavior to meet their personal goals while making their interlocutors feel comfortable at the same time.

When Chinese writers use Western terms to describe effective communication, Chinese tradition can find its way in, as well. In his lecture series “Effective Communication”, Harvard business school graduate and business executive Xu Shiwei reminds listeners to always be looking for ways they can help others without their having to ask (translation and emphasis mine) (Yu 2006). Anticipating others’ needs and fulfilling them without being asked is an important component of Chinese social skill, one that is frequently manifested in host-guest situations. For instance, a guest in a Chinese home should never have less than half a cup of tea in his or her cup, and will have many fruits to eat (and eat they must, lest it appear that the host anticipated incorrectly). As Xu indicates, giving help without being asked for it will often benefit the help-giver in the long run, and this is in part because it begins a cycle of reciprocity in
which both parties give to the other.

Some contemporary works in China try to teach readers to be as active and aggressive as they perceive Westerners to be, and from the fact that these authors find it necessary to point these things out, we can deduce what the Chinese native standard might be. In the sales staff training book 业务员教材 Yewuyuan jiaocai (salesperson teaching materials) by Guo Fangrui (2001), staff are taught to make direct requests like “we need some envelopes” instead of “the envelopes are used up,” which is presumably a common strategy. To an American listener, making a request in the form of a statement may sound passive and weak – and this is what Guo Fangrui is implying – but to the average Chinese listener who is in tune with the tradition of offering help before it is asked for, employees that say “the envelopes are used up” may be leaving room for their supervisors to appear to satisfy their needs without them having to ask. As the superior in this Confucian relationship, the supervisor is expected to take care of the subordinates. If s/he has to be asked for envelopes, it would mean s/he neglected his/her duty. The same result would happen were a guest in a Chinese home forced to ask for more tea.

Another traditional Chinese value that appears in Chinese discussions of communication is an emphasis on being reserved. Office Depot’s China website contains a section composed of articles written to help people learn to get along well at work. In an article copied from the Hong Kong Ming Bao entitled “Silence is Golden”, a writer
warns readers not to toot their own horns as in college, but to stay quiet (“Huxia” 2006).

The reader may be reflecting a passage from Confucius’ Analects that reads:

子长学干禄。子曰：“多闻阙疑，慎言其余，则寡尤；多见阙殆，慎行其余，则寡悔。言寡龙，行寡悔，禄在其中矣。

Zi Zhang asked [how to attain] high rank and good pay. Confucius said, “Hear much, but maintain silence as regards doubtful points and be cautious in speaking the rest; then you will seldom fall into error. See much, but maintain silence as regards what is doubtful and be cautious in acting upon the rest; then you will seldom have repentance. He who seldom errs in speech or repents his actions will surely be rewarded with high rank and good pay.” (in Li 2001: 175)

Chinese writing on effective professional communication emphasizes the idea that communication takes place in an ordered social context, and that order is framed by Confucian relationships. Chapters in the popular book把握好沟通的尺度和交流的分寸 Bawohao goutong de chidu he jiaoliu de fencun (Master the proper measure of communication) are organized by how to communicate with the different roles played by people that professionals encounter: bosses, subordinates, coworkers, clients, friends and disliked people (Qiao 2003). Fitting with Zhang Aijing’s assertion that successful people are context-conscious, author Qiao Yi writes that employees must change to suit their boss and not vice-versa.
2.2.2.4 Locating oneself in adult society through *guanxi*

The adult Chinese person’s awareness of context is crucial because s/he lives in an intricately networked social system. In western culture, we speak of “six degrees of separation”, playfully borne out in the “Kevin Bacon Game”\(^{55}\), and in China, adult socialization is a never ending series of situations in which the degrees of separation are consciously reduced. At daily social events such as banquets and golf games, Chinese professionals introduce each other to everyone they know until the who’s-whos in a given industry or region have at least heard of one another, if not actually know each other.

This web of relationships is called *guanxi* in Chinese, and it is often left untranslated in American business writing because it is not truly equal to anything in the American experience. Yang (in Smart 1993: 396) defines the establishment of *guanxi* as “skillful mobilization of obligation and reciprocity in pursuit of both diffuse social ends and calculated instrumental ends”. *Guanxi* can be likened to the result of “networking”, but a fundamental difference between American networks and guanxi arises from the collectivist influence of Chinese culture: individuals in a Chinese relationship network can be thought of as interconnected nodes, while Americans in a social network are more like so many bumper boats at the carnival. Americans do have the saying, “it’s not what you know, but who you know,” but the Chinese have even institutionalized this system in

\(^{55}\) The “Kevin Bacon Game” is an American parlor game in which a player is given an actor or actress’ name and must link Kevin Bacon to that person though as few mutual costars and movies as possible, i.e., Henry Fonda ➔ Kevin Bacon = Henry Fonda was in How the West Was Won (1962) with Eli Wallach, who was in Mystic River (2003) with Kevin Bacon. Answer to this example from [www.oracleofbacon.org](http://www.oracleofbacon.org).
the form of the “letter of introduction” (介绍信), a document that job candidates bring to
the interviewer to describe which node is tugging on the social web to get the candidate
into the job.

Zhao and Ren point out that without clear role identities within a social network,
expectations can be confounded (1989: 152). Different professions have different
expectations for the volume and style of relationship building that goes on. Technical
professionals like engineers, are not expected to actively expand their relationship
network, and so those that do so stand out as people who may be interested in pursuing
more than just technical tasks. Conversely, Chinese professionals in international trade
are constantly banqueting with government officials and manufacturers in order to
increase the likelihood of hearing about potential business opportunities and decrease the
likelihood of running into bureaucratic hurdles that could hurt a deal. An international
trader that either shuns banqueting (the primary venue for relationship building) or is
demonstrably uncomfortable in such situations will soon find him/herself not having to
attend any more banquets… or handling any more deals!

Regardless of a given profession’s standards for relationship building, there are
certain categories of guanxi that Chinese people recognize and cultivate. Zhongguo
Shiyong renji guanxi 中国实用人际关系 (Yang, et al 1986) lists the following types of
guanxi that are meaningful threads connecting nodes in the social web:
1) Family: husband and wife, parents and children, older/younger brothers and older/younger sisters, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, and extended family.

2) Relatives & friends ("亲友"): romantic couples, friends, relatives, and “relatives overseas”.

3) Academic relations: high school teachers/students, university teachers/students, classmates, advisors and advisees.

4) Work relations: boss and subordinate, village head and peasant, officer and enlisted, between bosses, between staff.

5) Relations in general society: neighbors, strangers, host/guest, army/civilian

The guanxi primer (Looking from the East to the West) (Ren 2002) offers a similar set of categories, focusing on family relations, classmates, people from the same hometown, and adding army buddies, neighbors, couples, tripmates, teammates and drinking buddies.

Of course, all of these relationships exist in any culture, but what they mean differs from culture to culture. In Chinese culture, each of these dyads represents a thread between nodes in the social web, with expected forms of obligation and reciprocity. Readers may note the similarity between the relationships described in these books and the superior-subordinate relationships described by Mencius.57 Many expectations for

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56 “Parents and children” are literally referred to as “father-mothers” and “son-daughters”, again showing the importance of clear roles in Chinese society.
57 Yang, et al (1986) actually suggests that bosses treat everyone as equals and be willing to admit mistakes, but it
behavior and speech in Chinese culture are based on an understanding of the relative hierarchical position of interlocutors. Successfully building and maintaining *guanxi* in China requires understanding the exact roles that everyone may have.

Relationship networks or 关系网 *guānxi wǎng* are maintained by debts of obligation. Nodes in a relationship network strengthen the threads between them by taking turns inviting each other to banquets, giving souvenirs from business trips, and so on. When a real favor is needed, the nodes connected by the strongest threads can then request assistance from one another. Some relationships can be very low-maintenance – i.e., close family – while others require a significant amount of time and attention, like government officials, who have many people who would like to have a strong relationship with them.

For many Americans, *guanxi* crassly seems to place an instrumental value relationships. As Smart (1993: 403) points out, however, there is a difference between relationship building and buying friends. In the Chinese social system, successful people establish relationships with an emphasis on the relationship rather than the possible benefits of the connection. It is second nature for most Chinese to be aware of what assets are within their *guanxi* network, but they are “friends” first and “assets” second, if they think of them as “assets” at all, which might sound incredibly crass to Chinese ears.

should be noted that 1) the book is written in a highly didactic style, perhaps implying that Chinese society is not conforming to their view of right action and 2) the authors continue to use the patriarch model of company management, in which bosses look after their employees’ personal affairs as well as professional issues, a direct descendent of Mencius thought.
2.2.2.5 Etiquette

Smart (1993: 404) points out that what makes the difference between successful gifting and making the gift recipient feel like an asset is the gifter’s ability to adhere to accepted norms of social etiquette. As guanxi scholar Ren Jingsheng points out, you must know how to act before you take action (做事要先做人) (Ren 2002: 82). If someone gives a gift in such a way that it appears to be a genuine expression of conviviality, it will strengthen the relationship. If a gift is given immediately before a request is made or immediately after a request is fulfilled, then it appears like a payment. Ritualized behavior helps members of a society operate effectively without having to second-guess the possible results of their actions; when ritual is adhered to, the results are generally pre-scripted. As noted above, understanding ritual propriety – what we might call etiquette – was one of the five essential attributes of the Confucian jūnzi, and that ideal remains alive today.

Mature professionals in China are expected to understand and adhere to commonly understood standards of behavior, though the specific behaviors associated with these standards can vary from region to region (Ren 2002: 44). Numerous books have been written in English about Chinese business etiquette, including the popular Chinese Business Etiquette (Seligman: 1999), Chinese Business Etiquette (Bucknall: 2002), and
Cowboys and Dragons (Lee: 2003). “Foreign” books on etiquette understandably tend to focus on situations that arise in the course of doing international trade or investment, including site visits, meetings, and negotiations – in other words, the immediate tasks of international business. The best selling etiquette book on BooksChina.com at the time of this writing was 酒桌上的生意经 jiuzhuoshang de shengyijing (Principles of business at the banquet table)\(^{58}\). English books also cover relationship building and banqueting, but usually within the western framework of trying to accomplish specific tasks during the businessperson’s “China trip”. The Chinese book, on the other hand, describes how to perform in a ritualized situation where friendships are made and maintained. Zhao, et al write that the point of proper etiquette is not to make people like you, “succeed” or even to make money, but to show our care for friends and family (2001: iii).

2.3 Models for performing successfully in cross-cultural contexts

Academic literature in business and the humanities understandably take different approaches to successful cross-cultural performance. Academics looking at professional cross-cultural communication (e.g., “business”) must include quantitative measures as well as qualitative measures of performance, while anthropologists and foreign language teachers tend to stress the purely qualitative aspects of success in cross-cultural professional contexts. The two models are, in fact, complementary: success in Western

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business is measured by value created for shareholders\textsuperscript{59}, and so professionals are held accountable by quantifying their contributions; at the same time, ‘soft’ people skills contribute greatly to accruing or losing value.

2.3.1 Successfully crossing cultures in American business literature

Academic business research looks at cross-cultural communication in two main contexts: expatriate assignments and “negotiation”. Because they involve moving people and things, financial incentives and sometimes cultural training, expatriate assignments are extremely costly for companies. However, firms that use expatriates believe that the cost is offset by the value gained by having a headquarters-trained individual on the ground in the host country. As a conduit of information, the expatriate’s first job is usually communication, and by virtue of his/her overseas location, cross-cultural communication. Cross-cultural negotiation literature looks at how to interact with foreign professionals, wherever the interaction takes place. For logistical reasons, Chinese business interactions often take place in China, with attendant implications for whose ‘house rules’ apply to the negotiation game, as well as an implied supplicant/donor relationship.

Gregerson, Hite and Black (1996:714) suggest three criteria for successful expatriate performance: hard, soft and contextual. Hard criteria are quantifiable and include profit

\textsuperscript{59} This includes both literal holders of a firm’s shares and shareholders in a business’ profitability, the employees.
and market share. The authors point out that hard criteria alone are insufficient to judge an expatriate’s success because that would assume equivalence between the foreign and domestic market environment. Soft criteria are relationship- and trait-based factors such as an individual’s ability to create goodwill and establish productive relationships. Such interpersonal skills are traditionally difficult to quantify for institutional use, but as the article suggests, these are the criteria that are critical to success in an international setting. Finally, contextual criteria refer to environmental factors that could affect expatriate success, including exchange rates and cultural differences.

It is encouraging that the authors of this oft-cited article emphasize the importance of soft skills in expatriate assignments, but unfortunate that they confine ‘culture’ to a third set of criteria. It is possible, however, that the authors themselves had not completely fleshed out the relationship between ‘soft’ and ‘contextual’ criteria. One of their examples of contextual success is an expatriate in Latin America who was unable to achieve higher levels of production, but who, through goodwill and tact, was able to avoid a strike that would have shut down production entirely. Depending on the actual facts of the story, the expatriate’s ability to preclude the strike could arguably be a shining example of culturally-appropriate social skills.

Teagarden and Gordon (in Selmer 1995: 17) suggest a similar tripartite model of expatriate success: strategic management, pragmatic measures and human resource

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60 According to Google Scholar, this article had been cited in 45 other publications as of November 28, 2007.
management. “Strategic management” is outcome-based and describes the expatriate’s ability to meet personal, subsidiary, and headquarters objectives. “Pragmatic measures” include subjective managerial assessment of goal attainment (e.g., profits and market share) and the aggregate frequency and cost of early repatriation. By introducing subjectivity into the assessment of goal attainment, Teagarden and Gordon account for the environmental factors that Gregerson, Hite and Black say complicate interpretation of “hard criteria”.

Teagarden and Gordon’s “human resource management” criterion is concerned with cross-cultural adaptation. This category describes the expatriate’s ability to work effectively through adjustment, satisfaction, professional competence and intercultural activity (1995: 18). They describe full expatriate cross-cultural adaptation as “going native”, and say it is generally a positive turn of events for host country nationals (HCNs), but may be negative from the standpoint of headquarters. Born of typology-based cultural comparisons that Hofstede’s research begat (but that he cautioned against), Teagarden and Gordon seem to believe that “Culture A people do X” and “Culture B people do Y” and that never the twain shall meet. If, on the other hand, one believes that cultural adaptation involves packaging one’s [foreign] intentions in such a way that they are acceptable to HCNs, then 100% adaptation should be beneficial to both HCNs and headquarters.
Human resource management scholars tend to agree that the hard measures of success on which firms often concentrate in employee evaluations are directly influenced by soft, or people, skills. If an expatriate can effectively bring headquarters knowledge to his/her HCN subordinates, efficiency and/or profit will increase; if an American businessperson creates a relationship of trust with a foreign partner, that trust can lead to quantifiable product orders. Business scholars that describe how to negotiate in foreign cultures usually draw an explicit line between cultural knowledge and quantitative success.

Chinese business negotiation literature such as Yan (2005), Graham & Lam (2003), Woo and Prud’homme (1999), Buttery and Leung (1998) stress cultural factors that affect successful cross-cultural communication, generally pointing to traditional Chinese concepts such as Confucianism, Taoism, face, harmony, guanxi, and so on. For instance, Woo and Prud’homme relate that in China, individuals represent not only themselves, but also the networks of which they are a part. Thus, the successful foreign businessperson in China will be mindful of their role as organizational diplomat at and away from the negotiating table.

In academic business literature, successful expatriates are described as balancing their commitment to the home office with their commitments to the HCNs around them. Gregersen and Black (1992:84) believe that adjustment to the local environment can lead
to “going native” (a pejorative) or “dual citizenship”. Gregersen and Black’s “dual citizen” has been further developed (Janssens 1995, Osman-Gani 2000, Prud’homme and Trompenaars 2000, Nicholls, Rothstein and Bourne 2002) to mean individuals that are able to satisfy the needs of local and headquarters stakeholders while maintaining loyalty to both. A model for how this can be accomplished may be found in humanities scholarship.

2.3.2 Successful cross-cultural communication and the “game” metaphor

In many high schools, there are certain students who are so athletic that they play more than one sport. During football season, they put on pads and head to the stadium; during basketball season, they play on the court. Even when the seasons overlap, the players know whether they should score points by putting the ball in an end zone or through a hoop. One person can be a basketball player and a football player as long as they adhere to the rules of the game they are playing. Walker (2000) suggests that individuals engaged in cross-cultural communication are players in a game, an idea further developed in Shepherd (2005) and Christensen (2006).

Every game has established rules for how points are scored and fouls accrued; participants in any given game either obey the rules or leave the game. Successful participants master the physical processes involved in scoring points and avoiding fouls.
In cross-cultural communication, the “game” is defined by the cultural context of communication. People who “win” in culturally Chinese contexts are able to “play” by Chinese rules. Points (e.g., “brownie points” or social capital) are scored when proper etiquette is followed, when ideas are understood as intended and are accepted, and when face is given. Fouls are charged when etiquette is breached or ignored (a faux pas or “party foul”), when face is lost, or when the cultural player simply fails to make him/herself understood.

Game rules are socially agreed upon; no single player can decide whether their actions count for points. A football player standing on a basketball court is still constrained by basketball rules, and will not be allowed to carry a ball down the court. Likewise, an American in a Chinese environment must play by the rules of the game as understood by Chinese in order to remain in the game and hopefully score points. In China, students are awarded for quietly listening to their teachers and repeating back what was imparted; in the US, many teachers award points – literally called participation points – to students that say anything in class. Chinese students in the US cannot cry “foul” if their grades are adversely affected by low participation grades, even though class participation is considered a foul in Chinese culture. Likewise, a vocal American subordinate in a Chinese meeting may appear arrogant, even though that behavior may score points in an American office.
Culture game winners accumulate social esteem, friendships, successful business projects, loyal employees, and so on. Losers, on the other hand, are simply excluded from the game, at best, or even ejected, as is the case with early expatriate repatriation. In a study of expatriate English teachers in China, one man consciously refused to “play their game”, and consequently was left out of it (Lund and Barber 2004: 510). In the author’s own experience with the Ohio State University study abroad programs in Qingdao, China, there have been several students who refuse to “play the game”. Some did so because they thought their religious or philosophical beliefs were in opposition to Chinese norms, while others simply had not reached a point at which being successful in Chinese culture was more important to them than feeling righteous.

Many sojourners to other cultures confuse values with behaviors, and so get caught in the trap of believing that if they change their behavior in a foreign culture, then their values have been betrayed. The game metaphor for cross-cultural communication is so powerful because it provides a mental model for achieving success in a foreign culture while maintaining one’s own personal, national or corporate values. Americans in a company that believes strongly in continuous improvement may confuse the value of continuous improvement with the behavior of subordinates bringing up new ideas during staff meetings. If these Americans were to go to China they may feel they are compromising the company value of continuous improvement if they did not force their
Chinese subordinates to challenge their Chinese bosses at staff meetings. With the game metaphor, the seeming clash of values disappears. Chinese and American professionals both value improvement, but Chinese subordinates who hope to see their new ideas come to fruition must play by Chinese rules and find a way to float the ideas in private and perhaps even allow the boss to share the honor of promoting the idea publicly.

The game metaphor dovetails nicely with Geert Hofstede’s normal distributions of cultural norms. To recap, Hofstede proposed that for any given norm or behavior in Culture A, a normal distribution curve describes how many people in the population adhere to that norm or behavior. When comparing individuals, it is possible that an outlier in Culture B appears similar to mainstream individuals in Culture B. A Chinese person good at self-promotion would be an outlier in contemporary Chinese society (for now), but would fit well in the US. Using Hofstede’s normal distribution model and Walker’s game model, it follows that even outliers in a distribution have culturally-recognized ways of making themselves understood by their mainstream compatriots – outlier ideas can still be expressed according to the rules of the game. Chinese political rule today is largely the “rule of man” (人治 renzhi), while the “rule of law” (法治 fazhi) is an outlier on the Chinese political spectrum. Despite being an outlier today, the rule of law was actually in currency under the reign of the first Qin emperor. Using the game metaphor, an American diplomat promoting the rule of law in China would ask him or herself, “how
would a Chinese person who shares my stance package it for a Chinese audience?”

That Chinese person may be an outlier, but s/he would probably use ancient Chinese examples in his or her rhetoric rather than the Roman or Biblical examples more meaningful to Westerners.

Black and Gregersen’s idealized “dual citizen” expatriate achieves success in cross-cultural communication by demonstrating commitment to both host country and headquarters country nationals. This metaphor does not, however, indicate how this is accomplished, and, thanks to its implications for national loyalty, may even hinder effective communication. The game metaphor provides professionals working in cross-cultural environments with a means of mentally bridging the gap between intent and reception. When Bo Jackson played baseball, no one accused him of betraying the game of football or vice-versa. As appropriate to whatever field he was playing on, Jackson followed different rules to realize consistent values – winning and being a good sportsman.

2.4 What we know about non-Chinese working in Chinese professional environments

In this section, we take a look at what has been written about the jobs Americans are doing in Chinese-speaking environments. Fieldwork for this dissertation tests whether writings on Americans working in China are representative of reality, or they may reveal
domains in which Americans are working but about whom little is being written. After describing the actual jobs that Americans hold in Chinese language environments, we look at how Americans and other non-Chinese actually fare in those environments. Many foreign professionals studied in Chinese environments do not actually speak Chinese – how do their experiences compare to those of people who have mastered the language?

2.4.1 In China: Why expatriates go and what they are doing

Thirty years since Deng Xiaoping re-opened China to trade with the West, a large and growing population of Americans live and work in the People’s Republic. A USA Today article estimated that there were 110,000 Americans living in China in 2005 (MacLeod 2005), and by all accounts, that number continues to rise. As the article points out, Americans in China are engaged in all manners of work, but we can divide them into two groups: individuals sent to or hired in China to represent an organization and entrepreneurs working for themselves. Each group goes to China for different reasons, but these reasons tell us something about how important it is for them to be able to communicate successfully in Chinese culture.

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61 This study is largely limited to the PRC due to the author’s lack of personal experience elsewhere in Greater China.
2.4.1.1 The traditional corporate expatriate

Organizations send employees on overseas assignments for international operational continuity and/or organizational learning (Franke and Nicholson (2002: 31). When an individual is sent from headquarters to an overseas office, s/he brings along the personal connections in headquarters that the overseas office needs in order to give and receive information in a timely and effective manner. Making sure that branch office operations are aligned with headquarters strategy is an important duty for this type of assignment. Expatriates in this role are conduits of information between branch and home offices, requiring that they be in regular communication with both sides. Especially in East Asia assignments, distance from headquarters inevitably takes a toll on the expatriate’s personal connections in the home office – people retire or get promoted and relationships back home that the expatriate once relied on for news and a sympathetic ear disappear. Some organizations then repatriate their employee to the home office and send a new expatriate, with current personal relationships and guidance.

Organizational learning is achieved by sending expatriates to an overseas office to effect structural improvement, managerial change, or technical training. These assignments often come at the beginning of an organization’s operations in China, whether starting a joint venture with a Chinese company eager to learn from a Western partner or greenfielding a new operation and hiring people unfamiliar with the particular
processes to be used. Organizations with mature operations in China send expatriates to update local staff on new product developments, train them on new systems being implemented company-wide, and, occasionally, to learn from innovations being made in China, as well.

Cross-cultural communication skills are at the heart of both expatriate roles; operational continuity and organizational learning involve the transfer of information between individuals from different national, regional, corporate and professional backgrounds. Though technical skills remain the most common criterion for expatriate selection, communication skills are ranked highly by both corporate executives and scholars of expatriation (Franke and Nicholson 2002: 23, 28). As has been argued previously, communication is a game whose rules are governed by culture – a “good communicator” in the United States may or may not be perceived as a good communicator in China. Multinational corporations today have taken to heart previous research indicating the importance of good interpersonal skills for ensuring a successful expatriate assignment (Bolino and Feldman 2000: 891). These companies choose individuals who are perceived (at headquarters, at least) to have good communication skills, and sometimes receive additional cultural or communication training prior to their international assignment.
In Franke and Nicholson’s study comparing how corporate executives and expatriation scholars rank the relative importance of 10 expatriate selection criteria, communication skills and interpersonal sensitivity were in the top three for both sets of respondents. Language fluency, however, ranked in the bottom 2 on both lists (Franke and Nicholson 2002: 28). Galal Walker suggests that process of learning any foreign language increases an individual’s sensitivity to the existence of alternative methods of meaning-making and meaning interpretation. Even if an expatriate is not fluent in the language of the target country, fluency in some language would be a useful indicator of the candidate’s cross-cultural communication skill.

Americans sent to China on expatriate assignments hold a relatively narrow range of positions. The task of maintaining operational continuity with headquarters usually falls to executive-level expatriates. These include country managers, chiefs of finance, accounting, marketing, purchasing or human resources, and chief engineers (Areddy 2005, Selmer 2000, Riley et al 2000, Yung 2006, personal experience). Located in the organizational structure at the top of the country branch, these positions interface directly with headquarters. Having risen to these positions based on their technical skills and American interpersonal skills, executive-level American expatriates in China are generally not Chinese speakers.

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62 Personal communication
Executive-level expatriates may serve an organizational learning function, but this role is also filled by middle-level technicians. Firms such as Ashland and Eaton buy Chinese factories and invest in improving production technology and processes; companies like GM and Haldex enter into joint ventures to do the same; in industries not protected by Chinese regulations, foreign firms may establish wholly-foreign owned operations, like Ford’s engine plant in Nanjing and O’Melveny and Myers law offices. Expatriates sent to these operations include product and assembly line engineers, accountants and lawyers.

Some people believe that it is unnecessary for foreigners sent to China to learn Chinese because many of the Chinese with whom they work speak English (“False Eastern Promise” 2007). Corporate expatriates sent to China rarely speak Chinese at an advanced level, and their direct reports are usually college-educated Chinese who took English in school. Professional-level Chinese ability is so rare among expatriates that respected expatriate scholars Graham and Lam even exhort Harvard Business Review readers to always have an ethnic Chinese person involved in Chinese negotiations (Graham and Lam 2003).

One study conducted in Taiwan found that expatriate managers unable to speak the local language are handicapped in their ability to fulfill their core communication function (Du-Babcock 1997). In this study, it was found that after expatriate managers
chaired meetings for Taiwanese employees, the meetings were often re-discussed in Chinese for the benefit of participants whose English was not good enough to understand everything. In the process of discussion, the manager loses control of the meaning of his/her remarks as they are re-interpreted. In addition, because the Taiwanese employees did not always feel confident enough in their English to express themselves, the meetings had less employee participation, the expatriate received little feedback, and the meetings, originally intended to be two-way, became announcements rather than discussions. Granted, traditional Chinese culture inhibits employee participation in the presence of a superior, but the observing researcher in this study was herself Taiwanese and likely to be attuned to the root causes of the employees’ taciturnity.

It should noted that when expatriates depend on English-speaking reports for information, the expatriate is limited in the amount and types of information that reaches his/her ear. Details of what is really going on in the company are often embedded in offhand comments made by HCNs, comments that are rarely translated or expressed in English.

2.4.1.2 Entrepreneur expatriates

In addition to expatriates sent to China by multinational organizations, there are also Americans in China, pursuing their own entrepreneurial opportunities. As Ohio State
University business professor Oded Shenkar points out, small and medium-size enterprises do not receive the amount of scholarly and media attention that large corporations do\textsuperscript{63}, making it difficult to study them without costly and time-consuming fieldwork. Anecdotal evidence of Americans on their own in China tells us that these individuals often find work based on their language skills: English speakers teach English and Chinese speakers bridge the gap between Chinese and foreign organizations or markets. The reasons they go are myriad: seeking adventure, seeking a niche, seeking the proverbial billion-customer market. Some return home after satisfying their wanderlust, while others make a home in China and only leave to visit family and friends where they grew up.

The jobs that these self-made expatriates hold are extremely diverse: hairdressers, dancers, musicians, artists, playwrights, dance club owners, restaurateurs, travel guides, cruise directors, factory owners, factory managers, advertisers, exporters, importers, trade consultants, public relations consultants, product quality testers, logistics consultants, management consultants, English teachers, grocers, bakers, and even prostitutes (MacLeod 2005, “Rags to Riches” 2007, Zachary 2005, personal contacts). Some monolingual entrepreneurs engage the Chinese market through local business partners, while others, like many in the arts, use a combination of pidgin Chinese and English. An increasing number of foreign entrepreneurs, however, are former students of Chinese or

\textsuperscript{63} Personal communication.
learned the language in-country (MacLeod 2005, Fernandez and Liu 2007). Their Chinese ability has allowed them to interact directly with employees whose technical skills exceed their foreign language skills, as well as with customers who do not speak a foreign language at all.

2.4.2 In the U.S.: Where Chinese and English speakers interact at home

When most people think of Americans working in Chinese language environments, they think of expatriates living in Greater China. With over 2.2 million foreign-born Chinese people living in the US (US Census Bureau 2006), there are ample opportunities for Americans to use Chinese professionally in the United States as well. There are three main arenas in which this could take place: public services, national security and business.

State and Federal government agencies interact with Chinese speakers dealing with issues of immigration, law enforcement, health care, taxation, and food safety. By virtue of living in the US, immigrants must find ways to negotiate English-language government services, but these services are increasingly being offered in translation or with interpretation as a constitutionally-guaranteed right to equal service. Chinese-speaking hospital patients in Columbus, Ohio are guaranteed free interpretation services if they request them; Chinese speaking defendants are also guaranteed
interpretation in the court room. The state of Ohio has paid for translation of food safety guidelines into Chinese for restaurant owners and commissioned Chinese versions of fish consumption advisories. Oftentimes, the language barrier in these areas is crossed by contract interpreters rather than public servants. According to the Health Research & Educational Trust, hospitals in the Midwest have the lowest percentage of bilingual staff available for interpretation (Hasnain-Wynia, et al 2006). Courts also rely heavily on contract interpreters: Ohio courts had 18,465 interpretations performed between 2003 and 2004 (Romero: 2006). On the other hand, some agencies, like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Coast Guard are trying to internalize their foreign language capacity: ICE recently considered making Spanish a required course for new hires, while the Coast Guard tracks Spanish speakers within their ranks (Marino 2006).

In the area of national security, Americans monitor Chinese media for political and military news. Though these individuals do not often interact with Chinese people face-to-face, they do interact with advanced Chinese language materials, and must interpret them accurately. Some agencies are more proactive in regards to achieving in-house Chinese language capacity than others, however. The Federal Government’s job announcement website, www.usajobs.com, regularly reveals Chinese teaching positions in the Department of Defense as well as Chinese-related intelligence jobs at the Defense Intelligence Agency. The Transportation Safety Administration, on the other hand, does
not track foreign language speakers among its ranks, nor does it compensate for such ability.  

Finally, Americans could – but usually do not – engage Chinese people in domestic commerce. There are businesses throughout the country that primarily serve the Chinese community, from restaurants to grocers to hairdressers to long-distance phone service. In cities with dense Chinese populations, this list also includes real estate agents, dentists, accountants, doctors, lawyers, travel agents and banks. From personal experience, it is apparent that most – if not all – businesses that serve the domestic Chinese community are owned by overseas Chinese who learned to speak Chinese at home rather than through years of expensive schooling. Occasionally, Chinese-owned businesses expand beyond the Chinese community and serve other ethnicities, as well. Panda Inn, a California restaurant chain owned by overseas Chinese, has over 800 locations worldwide and over 13,000 employees.  

In addition to serving overseas Chinese living in the US, there is a growing need to serve Chinese people coming as investors, potential business partners and tourists. The Chinese government has begun using its $1.43 trillion in foreign exchange reserves to buy ownership and interest in foreign firms (Zhou and Regan 2007), and privately-held Chinese companies going international are also establishing operations in the US through

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64 Personal communication with Port Columbus TSA staff, June 2007.
acquisition and construction (Cha 2008). Until recently, Chinese companies were not encouraged to invest in the US, but there were already 250 as of 2006 (Magnusson 2006), and that number continues to grow. Some examples include:

- The first major investment in the US by a Chinese firm, Qingdao-based Haier built a $60 million factory near Camden, South Carolina in 1999

- Shenzhen-based Lenovo bought IBM’s PC division for $1.25 billion in 2004 (Sohu 2004)

- Shenzhen-based telecom giant Huawei and Bain Capital Partners have made a $2.2 billion bid to acquire Massachusetts-based 3Com (Lemon 2007)

- Chinese Minth Group Limited bought 56% of Ohio auto supplier Plastic Trim, LLC in mid-2007, sharing the purchase with a Japanese partner (Sojitz.com 2007)

- China Manufacturer’s Alliance, US subsidiary of Shanghai-based Double Coin Holdings, bought a tire production facility in Memphis, TN for $4.1 million in 2007 (Smith 2007)

As Chinese investment in the US increases, so will the number of Chinese-speaking businesspeople who move here as managers and technicians. Milwaukee is even considering building a Chinatown so that future Chinese stakeholders will have a place where they feel comfortable (Magnusson 2006).

Many Chinese businesspeople visit the US in anticipation of a business deal with American firms. Most of the 320,000 Chinese visitors to the US in 2006 came for
business, and this figure represented a 19% increase over 2005 (International Trade Administration 2006). These are often group visits, and the decision makers in these groups often do not speak English. In order to serve visiting Chinese potential partners better, oil company ARCO once paid for employee Chinese language training (Dolainski 1997). The Berlitz classes were 1.5 hours long, twice per week. Of the 28 employees that started the course, 10 finished. With the given attrition rate and the unlikelihood that students who finished reached advanced levels, it is unlikely that ARCO was able to achieve its goal of reducing their reliance on outside interpreters.

Because of the difficulty of obtaining tourist visas to the US, most Chinese business visitors spend a portion of their time – and money - in the US as tourists. The State of Ohio recently scoffed at the idea of attracting and entertaining Chinese tourists66, but at the Venetian hotel in Las Vegas, the televisions in the VIP lounge are tuned to Chinese stations and the newspapers are in Chinese (Rivlin 2007). Chinese visitors to the US almost inevitably stop in San Francisco, Los Angeles, the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, New York and Washington, D.C. It is not uncommon to see visiting Chinese delegations in the Renaissance Center in Detroit, where General Motors is headquartered. With more and more Chinese visiting the US as investors and tourists, there is also increasing opportunity to speak Chinese professionally here at home.

66 Personal communication, Ohio State University professor Oded Shenkar.
2.5 Describing how working Americans fare in Chinese language environments

Scholarly inquiry on the quality of Americans’ experiences working in Chinese language environments is largely limited to research on the adjustment of corporate expatriates to new roles and environments. Small- and medium-size businesses are difficult to study in general, American government workers working across languages are infrequently studied, and only large organizations can afford to find out what constitutes a successful expatriate assignment. Black, Mendenhall and Oddou relate that 16-40% of Americans sent overseas return early\(^{67}\), and of those that remain in country, 30-50% are considered ineffective (1991: 291). In 1985, a failed expatriate assignment was estimated to cost the firm $250,000; by 1996, that figure was $1 million (Shaffer, Harrison & Gilley 1999). No definitive recalculation has been made since then, but it is generally accepted that an unsuccessful expatriate assignment – however you define it – is expensive.

A popular framework for describing expatriate adjustment divides it into three types: adjustment to work, adjustment to interacting with host country nationals, and adjustment to the general environment (Black, Mendenhall and Oddou 1991). Work adjustment refers to the expatriate’s adjustment to a new role and new duties; adjustment to interacting with HCNs describes the novelty of working with people from a different culture; adjustment to the general environment is generally defined as adjustment to the

\(^{67}\) It is also estimated that 51% of early returns are caused by “lack of cultural fit” (“China easily attracts…” 2006).
“non-work” aspects of expatriate life.

This tripartite framework has been validated by Shaffer, Harrison and Gilley (1999) and measured with a questionnaire (Black & Stephens 1989 in Selmer 2006), but as Selmer (2006) points out, it has its shortcomings. First, the three categories are not mutually exclusive: adjustment in both work and non-work environments is inevitably affected by interaction with HCNs. At work, positive interactions with HCNs may contribute to smoother administration of one’s technical duties – peer learning is facilitated, and risk-avoidance in the new role is probably reduced by positive interactions with HCNs, as well. Outside of work, expatriates that do not live in the “Golden Ghetto” must interact with HCNs every day for food, services, and sometimes, transportation. Another problem with this adjustment model is that its division of work and non-work environments is not necessarily appropriate to China, where many activities that occur “after work” (e.g., banquets and karaoke) are often venues for discussing business or at least for establishing guanxi.

Zimmermann, Holman and Sparrow (2003) accede that the three adjustment categories are theoretically useful, but they point out that they are not practical – they tell us nothing about how expatriates actually adjust. In their study, the authors explored adjustment mechanisms by interviewing 18 expatriates in Guangdong Province on the specific behaviors they use to increase their effectiveness in the People’s Republic of

68 Expatriate-only neighborhoods that reproduce home-country living in nearly all regards.
China. The participants discussed such things as being more polite, learning the code of indirect communication, fostering personal relationships at work, laughing to save face in embarrassing situations, recognizing that it is acceptable to criticize someone to their face as long as it is not in public and learning to chat for extended periods of time before “getting down to business”. Having found that everything the expatriates did to improve their effectiveness at work involved how they interacted with Chinese natives, the authors concluded that it is “fundamentally limiting to focus only on the expatriate’s adjustment and neglect its interactive nature” (Zimmermann, Holman and Sparrow 2003: 63). Bochner, McLeod and Lin (1977) wrote that adjustment is the acquisition of culturally acceptable skills and behaviors (in Aycan 1997), which is reflected in the 18 expatriate interviewees’ unanimous belief in language as the basic problem for interaction adjustment.

2.6 How culture and language ability affect expatriate performance

Zimmermann, Holman and Sparrow (2003) were told by people on the ground in China that language and culture knowledge are keys to successful expatriate performance there, and yet many business leaders believe that language fluency is, at best, icing on the
cake, or at worst, a mask for possible disloyalty. Most business leaders in today’s global economy promote being culturally aware, but a “cultural awareness” that is a general skill that can theoretically be acquired without understanding any particular foreign culture. The nearly limitless number of articles in the popular press describing one or two taboos for a laundry list of cultures around the world fits this worldview. If, as this dissertation asserts, culturally-appropriate language ability is an important factor in being professionally successful in foreign language environments, why do many executives continue to believe that language ability and professional performance are not related?

Part of the problem is that research on the relationship between language/cultural knowledge and professional effectiveness has produced seemingly mixed results. In this section, we will review the major studies relating language and culture knowledge to expatriate performance and then take another look at why American business leaders might have the impression that fluency in Chinese does not add value to an American professional’s skill portfolio.

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69 An American friend of the author’s worked for Wal-Mart in China until visiting executives became uncomfortable with her ability to interact with local employees in a language that the executives did not understand. She was then transferred to Arkansas.
2.6.1 Studies on language/culture knowledge and its effect on expatriate adjustment

Studies in this category usually take the adjustment framework advocated by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou and use questionnaires to support or refute a relationship between one or more types of adjustment and expatriates’ cultural or language ability. Some of these studies replace adjustment with “culture shock”, another term describing the process of coming to terms with a foreign culture. One study in the oft-cited Brislin (1993), asserts that expatriates’ willingness to use the local language has a greater influence on successful adjustment than actual fluency in the language.

Another study looked at the relationship between language ability and “cultural affinity” (Swift 2002). This study defined cultural affinity as the degree to which individuals like various aspects of the foreign culture in which they live. A 20-item questionnaire answered by 276 respondents around the world asked how much they like things such as, “the extent to which politics are discussed”, “keeping appointments and meetings on time”, “standards of ethics and morals in business”, “extent to which men and women appear to have the same opportunities open to them”. Language ability was measured by asking the respondents to rate themselves on the following scale:
Following the questionnaire, the researcher randomly interviewed 15 respondents, and taking all data into account, found a small correlation between language ability and cultural affinity. It is unclear whether or not the correlation is a causal one, however, so the study does not tell us whether or not cultural or language training leads to cultural affinity or vice-versa. In fact, the author ascribes to the commonly-held notion that students who learn a foreign language because they want to get further into the culture do better than those who learn it to make more money” (Swift 2002: 9). So many Chinese learn English in order to make more money that this assessment may reasonably be called into question. The main problem of this study is not this chicken-and-egg question, but rather that it reiterates the expatriate-centered approach to describing the expatriate experience. Almost by definition, expatriate adjustment research focuses on the feelings of the expatriate him or herself – does he feel comfortable? Does he like the host country? Does he think his language ability is good enough to get by in most circumstances? Expatriate adjustment research is published with the intent of reducing expatriate failure rates, but what if an “adjusted” expatriate is not necessarily an effective one? Is it possible that an expatriate likes his or her host culture, and even tries to learn
the language, but just doesn’t “get it”?

Janssens (1995) studied expatriate adjustment, as well, but with an important twist: she related the degree of intercultural interaction and time in-country that expatriates had to their adjustment to life at and outside of work. Janssens found that the degree of cultural interaction is significantly influenced by an expatriate’s time in-country and the location of the foreign assignment. Expatriates assigned to countries whose cultures were culturally distant from their own engaged in more intercultural interaction than those assigned to culturally similar foreign countries… because many Europeans in her study were assigned to other European countries and so could just go home when they had free time instead of making local friends. Not surprisingly, the longer an expatriate lives in a foreign country, the more s/he knows about the local culture, and the more HCN friends s/he has. The study found that having local friends contributed to expatriates’ non-work adjustment, but not to work adjustment. This raises the question whether or not self-evaluation is appropriate for expatriate adjustment and effectiveness research. Janssens found a statistical relationship between having HCN friends and non-work life adjustment, but what if the expatriates simply are not in a position to recognize whether or not the cultural learning achieved outside of work actually affects their work? Might someone else be better qualified to tell researchers whether or not a foreigner’s work behaviors have improved as a result of their making local friends? Critiques aside,
Janssens’ research is significant in that it acknowledges the importance of interaction in the expatriate experience.

Jun, Gentry and Yong (2001) took a novel approach to explaining expatriate satisfaction in the host country by relating it to expatriate satisfaction as a consumer of host country goods and services. The authors of this study, following the principle that cultural adaptation is a social cognitive process that reduces uncertainty and is an affective process that reduces anxiety, wanted to discover if expatriates felt better in the host country in general when they were able to accept prevailing patterns of consumption. As Schmid (1962) said, comfortable participation comes when you feel like a contributor (in Jun, Gentry and Yong 2001: 371). The results of the study, conducted with 194 Korean expatriate respondents, found that marketplace participation reduces marketplace alienation and therefore increases the likelihood that an expatriate will feel satisfied enough to stay in the host country. Like Janssens (1995), this study recognizes that expatriate adjustment or satisfaction is interpersonal in nature – a single expatriate cannot single-handedly create a positive experience abroad; rather, the positive experience is co-created.

If culture has a significant impact on expatriate adjustment, then it follows that the relationship between language/culture knowledge and adjustment should be studied on a single-country level, as well. The preceding studies looked at adjustment of expatriates
around the world; the next two look specifically at expatriates in China. Kaye and Taylor (1997) look at whether or not language ability mitigates expatriate culture shock and Selmer (2006) relates language ability to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou’s three types of adjustment.

Kaye and Taylor queried expatriate hotel managers in Beijing to study variables that might affect culture shock, including age, education, cultural distance between the expatriate’s home country and China, extent of direct contact with Chinese employees and fluency in Chinese. Of the respondents, 64% spoke little or no Chinese, while 23% were fluent in the language. Without controlling for region of expatriate origin, the study found that Chinese-speaking expatriates were actually more prone to culture shock than expatriates that could speak little or no Chinese. The Chinese speakers also scored lower in intercultural sensitivity. As the authors point out, however, the Chinese-speaking expatriates were overseas Chinese who would have grown up speaking Chinese but in culturally non-Chinese environments. These overseas Chinese working in Beijing would have been held to local Chinese cultural standards because they look and sound like local Chinese, even though they think like foreigners. For their part, overseas Chinese expatriates in China may not be aware that they are operating in a different environment from the ones in which they grew up and have inappropriate expectations regarding HCNs’ behavior. Controlling for region of origin, Kaye and Taylor actually found a
correlation between Chinese skill and intercultural sensitivity (and therefore reduced culture shock).

Jan Selmer, a scholar of the expatriate experience in China also studied the correlation between Chinese language ability and expatriate adjustment, using Black, Mendenhall and Oddou’s division of adjustment into work adjustment, HCN interaction adjustment and adjustment to the non-work environment. Western expatriates in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou assessed their own adjustment to examples in each of the three categories (e.g., How adjusted are you to Chinese food? 1 = very unadjusted, 7 = very adjusted; How adjusted are you to speaking with HCNs?) To measure language ability, the 165 respondents used a Likert scale to rate themselves in 6 language situations (e.g., “I cannot manage a conversation in Mandarin” 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

The average Chinese language ability of his respondents was 3 out of 5, which Selmer felt was not high. Compared to other studies of expatriate language ability, 3/5 may not be too poor. As would be expected, Chinese language ability was correlated to all three categories of adjustment, with interaction adjustment having the highest correlation and work adjustment the weakest. Selmer accedes that work adjustment may only be mildly correlated to Chinese language skill because so many Chinese speak in multinational office environments speak English. As Selmer points out, interaction adjustment may be the most important category, because Feldman and Thomas have
demonstrated that effective expatriates have a high degree of interaction with HCNs (in Selman 2006: 358). If Chinese language ability leads to higher HCN interaction and high interaction leads to effectiveness, then Chinese language ability should lead to higher expatriate effectiveness. Selmer warns that interaction adjustment is the most difficult of the three standard categories, but apparently, it is the most important for successful expatriate task completion.

Harrison and Shaffer (2005) agree that interaction adjustment is crucial and that it is tied to both time in-country and language proficiency. These authors point out that, taken together, these three factors promote leader-team exchange and team building. It is clear that interaction adjustment – comfort with interacting with HCNs – is directly related to professional task completion, and that language proficiency is related to achieving this comfort.

2.6.2 Studies relating language/culture knowledge to expatriate task completion

Individuals working in cross-cultural environments may find that their ability to complete tasks is affected by language/culture, as well as their ability to adjust to the new setting. This is not to say that adjustment and task-completion are mutually exclusive processes; rather, adjustment literature is more narrowly focused on the expatriate experience while task-based literature is more easily related to any kind of foreign
language work environment, abroad or in the US. The few existing studies relating language ability and successful task completion strongly suggest that foreigners who speak Chinese and/or understand Chinese culture are at an advantage over those who do not.

Weiss and Bloom (1990) surveyed expatriates based in Beijing and Shanghai who have opportunities to go to rural areas for work and asked how they were doing in relating to Chinese people. Their informants consistently indicated that language and culture knowledge had a direct effect on their professional effectiveness – the presence of this knowledge facilitated the development of work relationships, while ignorance created barriers. The study found that many informants believed that Chinese people are racist and prefer not to associate with foreigners. Drawing from my personal experience as well as the experiences of my classmates, friends and students who have lived in China, Chinese people are generally more welcoming of foreigners than Americans are. That many expatriates could believe otherwise may be explained by their inability to interact with the Chinese using Chinese behavioral standards (including language). It would be reasonable to assume that the Chinese these expatriates imagine are standoffish are actually only afraid of entering into a conversation or relationship fraught with uncertainty and misinterpreted gestures. One informant pointed out that being able to create meaning and manage relationships in a Chinese way is directly related to
professional effectiveness. This expatriate explained that foreigners who are able to negotiate face are more able to share authority, delegate tasks and resolve conflicts. Because most foreigners working in Chinese cultural environments are in a managerial and/or bridging role, accomplishing these tasks successfully is equivalent to accomplishing their work effectively.

Demonstrating the friction that cultural misunderstanding can generate, one informant said, “if you’re a type A personality, get used to frustration,” as if there were no type A people in China (a country where everyone knows their blood type and puts much stock in its relationship to personality). Highlighting the danger of misattributing negative experiences to “Chinese culture” instead of situational causes, a Shanghai-based executive with a mid-cap steel processing company once annoyed an entire delegation of Chinese lawyers by blaming the Chinese government for changing contracted export steel prices… to meet WTO regulations.70 The executive’s company had contracted to import product from Bao Steel at a certain government-subsidized price, but that price increased several times when the Chinese government removed the subsidy and added a WTO-mandated tariff. The executive blamed the Chinese government for being fickle and complained to his Chinese audience that contracts and long-term financial forecasting are simply not respected in China. While China hands know that contracts are viewed differently in China, a culturally savvy professional might have realized that this

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70 Personal experience, Columbus, Ohio on December 7th, 2007.
was actually a business issue rather than a cultural one. The American firm initially contracted for the steel exports because non-WTO-compliant subsidies allowed Bao Steel to sell at very attractive prices. When Bao Steel had to adjust its prices up, it was because the prices were now *market-based* instead of controlled by the Chinese government. Not recognizing the hypocrisy of his accusations, the executive efficiently alienated 10 of China’s future leaders.

The relationship between language ability and task completion was made explicit by one interviewee who told the researchers that “without at least some knowledge of the language, every small task takes an inordinate amount of time” (Weiss and Bloom 1990: 25), revealing that, even in a country where many foreigners say ‘everyone speaks English’, the ability to speak Chinese has a direct impact on getting work done. Another expatriate told the researchers that the local employees did not keep them informed of what was going on, a problem exacerbated – if not created – by the language barrier.

Hoon-Halbauer and Sing (2001) looked at the effects of the language barrier in Sino-foreign joint ventures and learned that many ideas and suggestions from Chinese employees are disregarded because the Chinese cannot promote them adequately in English. In one meeting where only 30-40% of the content was interpreted into English, the Chinese speakers agreed with a proposal being made and the foreigners – who only heard part of the argument – disagreed. Perhaps the deepest effect of having a language
barrier to cross at work is that communication must be mediated by a third party, making it difficult to establish what the authors call “heart-to-heart talks”.

Perhaps the most telling observation about the relationship between language/culture skill and effectiveness was made by a Chinese participant in a study by Walsh, Wang and Xin (1999):

“…Expats are very smart but after they joined the Chinese system, they almost cannot function or show their talents and expertise... Even if they have excellent experience, they cannot do anything. I guess there are two reasons for this. The first is personal. They cannot adapt to the Chinese operating system and are unable to find a clue to get the system to work. They always stay outside the system and rely on the Chinese to do the job for them. The second difficulty is language. I think language is a very big barrier.”

Without being able to participate in Chinese society, non-Chinese can only skate on the surface… and rely on Chinese to do everything for them.

2.7 Relationship building and professional success

Lund and Barber (2004) write that 90% of effective management is emotional intelligence – being able to see life as others see it.71 Professionals working in cross-cultural environments who have well-developed emotional intelligence are able to create and sustain relationships with the locals because they understand how the locals see life. For example, Hitt, et al (2002) writes that sustainable success in China requires fitting into a Confucian hierarchical system of duty and respect. Being able to empathize

71 Refer to section 2.2.1 for a discussion of EQ.
with natives of another culture facilitates relationship building, and therefore facilitates effective working. As Black and Gregerson (2002: 58) write, “successful global managers establish social ties to the local residents, from shopkeepers to government officials.” William Newman (in Gannon 2000) says very clearly that operations people in business must deal with local Chinese in their daily work, that the execution of plans in China calls for localized interpersonal skills that were not needed during the planning phase that took place back at headquarters. Unfortunately, as Randall Stross (1990: 136) points out, the value of the relationships and information that is gained by foreign Chinese speakers is not apparent to non-speakers. Because of the language barrier, these non-speakers simply do not know what they are missing.

We know from experience and research that relationship building creates social capital that can be drawn upon to achieve professional (and personal) goals. Hitt, et al (2002: 354) define social capital as “the relationships between individuals at organizations that facilitate action and thereby create value.” The idea of social capital is a relatively recent arrival in Western thought, but it has been recognized in Asia for millennia. Social capital is somewhat analogous to guanxi in China. Park and Luo (in Hitt, et al 2002: 358) found guanxi to be positively related to firm performance: as a company’s employees’ guanxi grows, the company gains access to more resources. On

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72 Newman was referring to JV’s, but this assertion applies equally to WOFE’s, now the preferred market entry method for foreign firms in China.
the macro level, Buckley, Clegg and Tan (2006) point out that *guanxi* reduces transaction costs by reducing uncertainty and decreasing the likelihood that actors will engage in opportunistic behavior.

On a personal level, researchers have proven that foreigners who establish relationships in Chinese society (though this should apply equally to any two cultures) have a greater sense of well-being and this positive attitude is reflected in greater productivity. Wang (2002) has attempted to create a model that describes the extent of an expatriate’s relationships, using criteria such as size, quality and diversity (the number of HCNs the expatriate knows). Wang suggests that an expatriate’s relationships may have an effect on his or her performance in four dimensions described by Caligiuri (1997, in Wang 2002: 332):

1) Technical performance  
2) “Prosocial” performance (commitment to the job)  
3) Managerial performance (relationships at work)  
4) Expatriate-specific performance (knowledge transfer, building HCN relationships)

As Wang’s paper is theoretical, she is unable to provide empirical support for drawing a relationship between *guanxi* and performance, but the existence of this article is itself some measure of proof. The author wrote this article because she already perceived a relationship between the quality of one’s *guanxi* and one’s professional success in China and had to put it in terms of a theory or model in order for it to be
accepted in Western scholarship. The lesson here is that, to the Chinese mind, personal relationships are already believed to contribute to success, so any foreigner that hopes to be successful in a Chinese environment must manage his or her *guanxi*.

Empathetic to their Western peers’ scholarly expectations, Liu and Shaffer (2005) take Wang’s assumption that relationships affect performance in China and test it using the scientific method. In a study of expatriates working in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, Liu and Shaffer found that the depth of expatriates’ relationships with others, as well as their ability to engage in reciprocal relationships with Chinese nationals had significant effects on performance. The study found no statistical relationship between relationship trust and work effectiveness, but this seems counterintuitive. This study also related relationships to expatriate adjustment, finding that HCNs’ interpersonal skills were predictors of expatriates’ work adjustment. Ironically, the authors take this finding to mean that Chinese people should receive more training in how to deal with the handful of expatriates living in China rather than vice-versa.

As noted previously, happy expatriates tend to be more effective workers. To study the relationship between personal connections and expatriate well-being, Wang and Kanungo (2004) queried expatriates living in Beijing, Shanghai, Dalian and Suzhou. The expatriate respondents were composed of Europeans and North Americans and these groups were further broken down into ethnic Chinese and ethnically non-Chinese
individuals. The study found that relationship network size (the guanxi wang 关系网) had the greatest effect on expatriates’ psychological well-being, but that network localization – the degree to which an expatriate’s network is composed of HCNs – had no real effect on well-being. While this may appear to support the idea that it is unnecessary for professionals to learn to develop local relationships, it really just means that expatriates can feel perfectly content with themselves when they have few local friends. Psychological well-being is necessary for professional effectiveness, but is not sufficient for it.

Interestingly, the study also found that ethnic Chinese expatriates had the smallest, most localized, and least diverse networks. The authors theorized that non-ethnic Chinese expatriates in China require wider and more diverse networks in order to obtain the same amount of information as ethnic Chinese expatriates do with small networks. It seems clear from this finding that sharing cultural and/or linguistic knowledge allows for more efficient information gathering, and probably more efficient work. A final note, the study found that the language barrier made it harder for non-Chinese-speaking expatriates to get emotional and feedback support during their assignments, indicating that language ability may contribute in other ways to an expatriate’s effectiveness.
Riley, Yester and Elkin (2000) reached conclusions similar to Liu and Shaffer. In a study of 27 expatriates and 8 of their spouses in Beijing Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong, they found that expatriates who made friends outside of the expatriate community are happier and better assimilated than those who do not.

2.8 Foreigners manage differently from Chinese people

Black and Porter (1991) write that some people in the 1970’s did not think culture had much to do with managerial effectiveness, but it is now commonly accepted that Chinese and Westerners have different management styles and different expectations of how a firm should operate. There may be some disagreement over whether or not the Chinese should work like we do, but most American businesspeople agree that Chinese management standards and practices differ from ours in some important ways.

David Ralston and his colleagues (Ralston, et al 1992) developed an instrument to identify areas in which Chinese managerial values differed from Western values. For some reason, the authors believed that Shanghainese managers were more representative of Chinese culture than managers elsewhere, despite Shanghai’s historical identity as being a mix of Western and Chinese culture. In any case, the instrument was developed with Chinese respondents in mind, with questions generated with the help of Michael Bond’s Chinese Value Survey and with the input of ethnic Chinese contributors. The
study compared managers’ beliefs in the PRC, Hong Kong and the US and, predictably, found that Mainland managers were most concerned with maintaining a harmonious work environment while American managers favored a task-oriented perspective in which task completion is superior to relationship management. Also not surprisingly, hierarchy was found to be stressed most in the PRC, somewhat less in Hong Kong, and least in the United States.

Black and Porter found that American managers in Hong Kong in the late 1980’s used the same management style in Hong Kong that they did in the US, but also found that only 1 of 12 identified leadership qualities\textsuperscript{73} that were effective in the US were related to positive performance in China. A few years after Black and Porter conducted their study, Ralston, et al (1995) compared the managerial behaviors used by Hong Kongnese in Hong Kong, Americans in the US, and Americans in Hong Kong. With an average time in Hong Kong of 1.9 years, the expatriate respondents were found to [say they] use the same managerial behaviors in Hong Kong as they did in the US, and these behaviors differed from local Hong Kong managers in 6 out of 7 categories of hypothetical scenarios. The only category in which American and Hong Kong managers had shared standards was “image management” – apparently everyone cares about face to some extent.

\textsuperscript{73} The quality was “integrated behaviors”.

174
Wang and Clegg (2002) found that Chinese managers are less likely than Australian managers to trust their subordinates’ understanding of their jobs and encourage less subordinate participation in decision making. The authors point out that in Confucian hierarchy, leaders are expected to be experts in their field and are responsible for telling subordinates what to do rather than asking them (i.e., asking for input). Working in this tradition, Chinese managers may be concerned that they will lose face if they ask their subordinates to collaborate on problem solving. This Confucian tradition also explains why Chinese managers are less likely to believe their subordinates are capable of carrying out their jobs independently and sharing in managerial work – subordinates are subordinate *because* they are unable to carry out their work independently; if they were able to, they would be managers. The authors conclude that Chinese managers do not believe in their subordinates’ psychological maturity. This sounds quite condescending on the surface, but read in terms of Mencius’ Five Relationships, Chinese managers traditionally see their subordinates not as clinically immature, but temporarily immature – that is, children. Seen in this light, there might be no contradiction were foreign managers to assume the paternal role that comes with management but use it – as many Chinese do – to cultivate subordinates’ work skills rather than dictate them.

Cultural differences between Eastern and Western management also appear in terms of how hierarchy is treated. Hoon-Halbauer and Sing (2001) write that sometimes
Western expatriate managers promote youthful Chinese staff past older employees with more seniority. When this is done, the older employee is offended and the younger employee feels uncomfortable with his/her being shoved up the totem pole against social standards. In addition to the psychological effects such a practice has on both the older and younger employees, fast-tracking Chinese employees sometimes puts them in positions that require more guanxi and status than they have had time to accrue. The author once trained an American moving to Shanghai who did exactly what Hoon-Halbauer and Sing warned against, with the predicted results. A young engineer was promoted to be the boss of the man who originally brought the engineer into the firm. In the Confucian system, the older man would have played the role of a father-mentor to the younger man, regardless of their relative technical abilities (after all, in a society in which relationships often trump technical skill, age and experience are still very valuable). The up and coming engineer would have been proud of his promotion, but uncomfortable with being his mentor’s superior. The situation had not yet been resolved when the pre-departure training was given.

Westwood and Chan (in Gannon 2000) take us back to metaphors when they say that Western and Chinese management are fundamentally different. They write that the ideal Western manager is a leader, which implies ameliorating conflicts among equals; Eastern managers, on the other hand, are heads in the company family, maintaining harmony
through top-down power. We can see that the idea of headship comes from a Confucian
tradition in which the family unit is a metaphor for all human relations. With such
metaphysical differences in management styles, it is no wonder that Westerner managers
often feel frustrated – and probably often produce frustration – in China.

Keeping metaphors in mind is useful because using the wrong metaphor can cause
cross-cultural researchers to ask the wrong questions altogether. Adler, Campbell and
Laurent (1989) set out to compare managerial behavior of Europeans, Americans and
Chinese using a questionnaire designed by one of the authors. In the questionnaire,
respondents were asked to use a Likert scale in agreeing/disagreeing with a series of
value statements such as “the main reason for a hierarchical structure is so that everybody
knows who has authority over whom,” and “in order to have efficient work relationships,
it is often necessary to bypass the hierarchical line.” After the data were collected, the
authors found that responses to 55% of the questions were bipolar, that is, instead of
finding a normal distribution of responses, the answers looked like a Bactrian camel’s
humps. The authors concluded that the cause was one or both of the following: 1)
respondents were composed of two age groups that split fairly evenly in their answers
and 2) the questions themselves were irrelevant to the Chinese working world and
therefore caused respondents to make up an answer based on own their personal
interpretation. In the end, the authors concluded that, if we want to know about how the
Chinese work and how they think about working, we need to follow locally relevant frames of reference.

Throughout discussions of cultural differences between Western/American business practices and Chinese custom, it is important to recognize that the Chinese business community has been learning American management for a couple decades now, and the current generation of young professionals grew up in a China much more affected by modernity and capitalism than their parents’. Ralston, et al (1999) looked at whether or not work values had shifted between generations, and found that some values changed and others remained the same. The study compared individualism, collectivism and Confucianism scores among three age groups: under 40 years old, 41-51 years old, and 52 years old and above. The results showed that the youngest group showed greater individualism than the other two groups, and both Confucianism and collectivism increased steadily through the age groups. The study also found that these values varied by demographic variables, for instance, males and people living in industrialized regions were more individualistic than females and people in less developed areas. The former finding aligns with Western studies on gender traits (e.g. Deborah Tannen’s You Just Don’t Understand and John Gray’s Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus), while the latter seems to validate the idea that individualism is related to affluence. As cultures change, some values change with it while others remain the same. Americans
who hope to be successful in Chinese environments need to be sufficiently plugged into Chinese culture to be able to ascertain which values remain vastly different from their own and which have come into a kind of alignment.

2.9 How do the Chinese feel about foreigners’ performance?

Knowing that there are differences in managerial style, Walsh, Wang and Xin (1999) studied how American and Chinese managers in joint ventures view each other. Given the consistency with which researchers found foreign managers to continue using foreign behaviors in China, perhaps it is not surprising that the interviews revealed a great deal of negative impressions held by managers of both nationalities. The Americans saw the Chinese as lazy or industriously working for personal gain, self-interested, unable to make a decision, unable to assume responsibility, unable to delegate and unaware of the importance of quality. It should be noted that not all negative impressions are the result of cultural misunderstandings – many joint ventures are Chinese government-promoted partnerships between foreign firms and failing state-owned enterprises that really do have employees who are not professionals. Do the Americans have a similar excuse for negative images they convey? The Chinese complained that Americans were arrogant and condescending when transferring technological and managerial expertise, and wondered why they were so strict and inflexible in their management. If the Americans
were invited to China because of their professional/technical skill, then it can only be said that – excluding the influence of individual personality – negative impressions they create come from an inability to adjust their behaviors to fit their environment.

Li and Kleiner (2001) found that expatriate roles in China sometimes have an adverse effect on personal relationships. Because many expatriates assigned to China hold mid- to upper-management positions, it is easy for them to see themselves as superior to Chinese people. Second, almost all expatriates assigned to China are at least in part sent as trainers, tasked with educating the locals on how to work correctly. This situation can create a colonial master image for expatriates, an image that is particularly negative in China. Using a Confucian metaphor, expatriates often see themselves as being ‘parent’ figures to the childlike Chinese. Understandably, the Chinese do not appreciate this kind of attitude (though they themselves regard other Asians as being China’s cultural children). In Li and Kleiner’s study, the few expatriates in German-speaking joint ventures that were able to establish positive working relationships with local Chinese all had Chinese wives.

Another factor that may contribute to expatriates in China being perceived as haughty is that most of the Chinese with whom expatriates interact probably truly are lower in the social hierarchy. Though China has many individuals of greater power and/or wealth than any given expatriate, most of them do not speak English and do not travel in
the circles in which expatriates travel. The English-speaking Chinese with whom expatriates can interact, while still well-paid, are rarely in top echelons of Chinese society.

Being haughty and arrogant is not accepted in American culture, either, but the key issue in cross-cultural communication is that often times, negative impressions are made in a foreign setting by doing what would be the ‘right thing’ in one’s native environment. Weiss and Bloom (1990) found that some Chinese people felt that foreigners (e.g. Westerners) are rude because they persistently ask questions and are always pushing to get things done. To many Westerners, persistently asking questions and pushing for results is what professionals are expected to do. Articles in previous sections proposed that “what works in LA may not work in Hong Kong,” and the reaction of Chinese employees in international joint ventures seems to confirm this.

Not all the news is bad, however. Studies on how Chinese locals perceive foreigners in the workplace have found that the Chinese are willing to forgive foreigners for their foreignness (Walsh, Wang and Xin 1999), and may even prefer foreign managers to local ones. Li, et al (1999) found that, if given a choice of foreign managers, many Chinese prefer to work in American joint ventures because Americans are polite, honest, friendly and quick to make decisions. Singaporeans came in second, which might indicate that there is still a strong desire to work with people who understand Chinese culture.
Interestingly, Li and his associates found that the Chinese were least interested in working for Taiwanese and Hong Kongnese managers, as they were perceived as trying to take advantage of mainlanders and thinking they understood China better than they actually do.

Kwok, et al (1996) studied job satisfaction of Chinese JV employees working for overseas Chinese, Japanese and Western managers and expected them to be more satisfied the closer to Chinese culture the managers’ home cultures were (overseas Chinese > Japanese > Western). Contrary to the researchers’ expectations, the Chinese preferred working for Westerners. As a study in organizational justice, this article paid more attention to whether or not the Chinese employees felt valued in their respective joint ventures than whether or not they felt more comfortable with the behavior of their managers. As the authors point out in the article, the employees in Sino-Western JV’s are paid better than in other JV’s, which would contribute significantly to how much they felt valued in their firm. In short, the study reports that Chinese prefer working for Westerners, but perhaps it should say that they prefer working for Western salaries. For the purposes of this dissertation, a more helpful study would analyze Chinese employee preferences for local or Western managers based on their respective management styles.
The China expatriate expert Jan Selmer published just such a study in 1996. At the time of Selmer’s study – and the situation has changed little since then – few studies had been performed on subordinates’ leadership style preferences. For this study, Selmer administered Stogdill’s Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire to Hong Kongnese managers working in Hong Kong who had experience with local and expatriate managers and who were graduates of business schools. The respondents indicated how much their past and current managers aligned with their management ideals in terms of a variety of criteria like “tolerance of freedom” and “demand reconciliation”. The study showed that the Hong Kongnese subordinates preferred American managers most and local Hong Kong managers least (US > UK > Japanese > Hong Kongnese).

Selmer admits that it is unclear whether or not a subordinate’s ideal boss is necessarily the most effective one. Despite having been educated in business schools that are based on American models, Selmer believes the Hong Kong respondents had worked for a sufficient period of time since graduation to overcome any bias the schools may have created. If a business school – or any educational program, for that matter – is effective, it changes the way you think and approach problems. If the Hong Kong respondents received quality business educations, they should be affected by the American values embedded in their texts, lectures and case study projects. It may be unrealistic to believe that people educated in a business school can forget what they have

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74 Fareed Zakaria (2003) once wrote that freedom is appealing, but you need leadership.
learned over the course of their careers. Perhaps a more likely outcome is that many subsequent work experiences are often evaluated in terms of the ideals learned in school.

The few studies asking what Chinese employees thought of their foreign managers seem to indicate that Westerners are regarded rather well. Selmer (2006) wonders if this means that culture-specific training is unnecessary for business people about to embark on cross-cultural assignments. There are a few important caveats regarding the findings of these studies. One, there have been no studies comparing Western or American managers to Mainland managers, especially “modern” Mainlanders who have had time to develop mix Western and Chinese business concepts in practice. Two, as Selmer points out, liking a Westerner does not necessarily indicate that that Westerner is professionally effective (though it is an important prerequisite). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, if Western managers are preferred in China, what can make one Western manager preferred over another one? What might make an American company more competitive than a German one? We have already seen that understanding Chinese culture and language contribute to establishing effective relationships with Chinese people, and that relationships or guanxi are necessary for being competitive in the Chinese professional world. Apparently, foreigners that have mastered professional Chinese language and culture will be more competitive than those who have not.
2.10 What do we know about Americans that interact effectively in Chinese environments?

We know that effective professional interaction with Chinese-speakers, wherever they are, requires being able to establish relationships and to exchange information in terms that both sides can understand. Americans that speak Chinese and/or understand Chinese culture are more likely to adjust to working with Chinese people and more likely to establish relationships with Chinese people. Just by doing what they are accustomed to doing with other Americans, American managers seem to be preferred over managers of other nationalities... and yet ‘business as usual’ can also engender some negative reactions on the part of Chinese people. Van Oudenhaven, Mol and Van der Zee (2003) write that successful multicultural professionals share five traits: cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability and flexibility. These traits are universal and general, but we are training Americans to succeed with Chinese people. What teachable skills do American professionals need in order to be effective in Chinese environments?
2.11 What do we not know about what and how professional Americans are doing in Chinese contexts?

The short answer is, not as much as we should. Liu and Shaffer (2005) suggest that what we need is a theory describing ideal expatriate characteristics. Firstly, it may be time to look beyond just expatriates and talk about all professionals working in foreign language/culture environments. There are many people in Detroit who only go to China on short trips once or twice a year but who interact with Chinese-speakers almost every day. Some of these Chinese speakers are in China while others are in the US. While it is in the immigrants’ self interest to learn how to work in American culture, it cannot hurt for Americans to be able to plug into the culture that they bring with them from home and that they will not forget. Secondly, we already have a theory that describes what makes an effective cross-cultural communicator. We may even have more of these theories than we need, but the collective works of Galal Walker, Mari Noda, Matthew Christensen, Scott McGinnis, Jianqi Wang, Xiaobin Jian and Eric Shepherd seem to provide an excellent working theory.

These scholars have shown that effective communication comes from understanding how members of a culture (and subcultures) create meaning, and participating in that culture by framing meaning-making and meaning-interpretation with the rules of that culture. Walker, Christensen, Wang, Jian and Shepherd have also done much to describe
the specific speech and behaviors that are used in effective Chinese communication. Due to practical limitations, much of the published research\textsuperscript{75} in this field has been limited to observations of American students in China rather than professionals with work experience. Asking what learnable skills makes an American professional successful in Chinese language environments elicits a number of other questions as well.

We know that the average American HR manager and the average American executive does not need foreign language skills for their daily work. The question, then, is who does? Snippets in newspaper articles about Americans speaking Chinese for work appear now and then to describe how much interest in learning the Chinese language has grown, but what are the people in this growing pool of Chinese speakers doing with their skill?

In addition to a lack of published material on what Americans are doing professionally in Chinese, there is a lack of material discussing what Americans could do, were they properly trained for the roles. It is unlikely that fluent foreign Chinese speakers will be short-order cooks in Chinese restaurants, but Fuchsia Dunlop has proven that fluent foreign Chinese speakers can become master chefs of Chinese cuisine (Dunlop 2001). Fortune 500 executives that must work with people from all over the world may not need to speak Chinese, but it is not inconceivable that a Chinese-speaking American

\textsuperscript{75} I submit that these and many other “China hands” have a tremendous amount of unpublished knowledge describing what typifies successful professional Chinese language/culture use.
could work in the Chinese R&D center of a Fortune 500 firm. Finding out the educational backgrounds of today’s Chinese-speaking foreign professionals may give insight into what training would be necessary to produce these Chinese-speaking managers of the future. As Mol, Born and Henk (2005) point out, we lack an explicit knowledge structure of what should be trained.

It has already been suggested that we can learn much about what to teach the next generation of Chinese-speaking Americans by looking at the current crop and how what they are doing. Simply looking at what they do, however, would not provide qualified information upon which to base training regimes. Based on the preceding literature review, we have virtually no idea how Chinese natives believe Americans are doing in professional Chinese language environments. We know that Chinese subordinates with American-style business educations prefer American managers, and we know that Chinese prefer working for foreign companies that pay better, but we do not really know if Chinese-speaking foreigners are effectively creating and maintaining professional relationships. Asking Chinese professionals to tell us how their American coworkers have done well or need improvement will greatly assist educators in designing the next generation of advanced Chinese training programs.
CHAPTER 3

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

3.1 Research Questions

With widespread Chinese language education in the US just beginning, it would be helpful to establish a common understanding of what can and should be the end result of this endeavor. Lacking examples of truly advanced non-native Chinese ability, it is common to find native speakers of Chinese teaching the language under the assumption that their students cannot actually attain professionally-useful levels of ability. Documenting the performance of Americans with truly advanced Chinese ability may help these instructors believe that conscious, targeted program design can result in consistently high levels of skill.

Three research questions guide this attempt to describe the goal of practical Chinese language programs:

1. What are Americans currently doing with advanced Chinese skill? As indicated earlier, truly advanced foreign language skill is domain-based. Foreign language
learners generally know how to ask for directions and make introductions, but advanced speakers develop foreign language expertise in specific professional fields. In a world of limited resources, it may not be practical or even necessary for educational institutions to develop advanced foreign languages speakers in every conceivable domain. For example, there are foreign hairdressers in China, but are there enough of them – and enough of them serving monolingual Chinese clients – to justify targeting this domain for institutional Chinese instruction? On the other hand, there are numerous Americans that travel to China as engineers and managers, indicating that these may be worthy domains on which advanced Chinese language programs can focus.

2. What creates an impression of successful communication in Chinese eyes? That is, how do Chinese people assess communication ability? Galal Walker found in Stanley Coren’s The Intelligence of Dogs (2006) that dog breeders often rank dog intelligence by the level of their obedience to their masters. While this may seem unfair to independent thinkers among the canine set, it is a useful lesson in the subjectivity of perception. Successful communication – like intelligence – is in the eye of the beholder, and Americans that hope to achieve success in Chinese environments must learn from dogs and adjust their behavior to match the audience’s expectations. This dissertation hopes to identify imitable behaviors

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76 Here, “foreign” is used in the Chinese sense of “not-Chinese”.
that the Chinese themselves perceive as defining successful Chinese-foreign professional interaction.

3. How can successful professional Chinese performance be reliably assessed?

Knowing what constitutes truly advanced language ability becomes operationally useful when such ability can be assessed. There are currently a small number of tools available for assessing advanced level Chinese ability, none of which were designed to evaluate domain-based skill. One of the goals of this dissertation is to begin the process of evaluating the new Advanced Language Performance Portfolio System (ALPPS), a program designed to assess advanced foreign language skills.

Answering these research questions will help guide decision makers as they make funding and hiring policy decisions that affect how educational institutions teach Chinese to Americans. Pieces of the answers can be found in journal articles, books and anecdotes, but this will be the first time that policymakers will have systematic field research describing what Chinese language programs should accomplish and who makes for the best judge of success. The remainder of this chapter elaborates on each research question and then describes the methodology used to answer it.
3.1.1 What are Americans doing with advanced Chinese skill?

As described in the literature review section, foreigners are engaged in a wide range of professional activity in China, from dancers to product quality testers. Considering the variety of jobs held by foreigners in China, is there a subset of jobs that are commonly held by foreigners with advanced Chinese language ability? Are there “typical” jobs for foreigners who use Chinese professionally? If so, what are they? The answer to these questions may help American Chinese language programs allocate resources to learners in certain domains. For instance, if few foreign dancers in China need to speak Chinese in order to be successful, it may be unnecessary for American schools to establish scholarships for double majors in dance and Chinese. On the other hand, if Chinese-speaking Americans frequently start their own businesses in China, it may make sense for business schools to establish joint programs in Chinese and entrepreneurship.

An ancillary question related to what Chinese-speaking foreigners are doing in China is what could Chinese-speaking foreigners do, were they trained to do so? Many Chinese-speaking foreigners began learning Chinese in college, leaving them insufficient time to master Chinese written composition. Is it possible that, if Americans were to begin learning composition from an early age, they would be able to perform even more tasks in a Chinese work environment? Or, is the status of foreigners in China such that, even with such skill, they would rarely be called upon to use it? Another question still
is, would Chinese people perceive highly literate foreigners to be more “expert” than those limited to oral skills, even if rarely called upon to compose?

This brings us to the next question – for what tasks do foreigners in China use English and for what tasks do they use Chinese? What environmental factors contribute to the mix? Some expatriates-to-be are told by their colleagues that “everyone in China speaks English,” but when they arrive, they find that this English ability varies greatly between demographic groups and is non-existent in most. Are there forces at work in China that might require some foreigners to be able to accomplish more tasks in Chinese than others?

Resource limitations prohibit this study from collecting large amounts of data to answer these questions, but sample information from Chinese and foreign informants may help frame further research.

3.1.2 What creates an impression of successful communication in Chinese eyes?

As described in the literature review chapter, there have been numerous explanations of how to work successfully with the Chinese, some of which even approach the subject from the Chinese perspective (e.g., Graham and Lam 2003). This dissertation seeks to supplement these works with current information and new video evidence. Many people – Chinese and American – still believe that the burden of cultural accommodation can
and should fall on Chinese shoulders. Such beliefs can be found in all fields, including Chinese language instruction. Some Chinese language instructors even allow learners to call them by their English or given names, denying those students an important opportunity to learn important Chinese social expectations regarding relative roles and titles.

This dissertation seeks to add to research that supports adapting to Chinese culture when in Chinese-dominant environments. Much of this research has been written for Americans that have not learned Chinese but may interact with Chinese natives in English. Presenting descriptions and evidence of successful professional Sino-foreign communication may help convince Chinese language instructors that it is just as important – if not more – for foreign learners of Chinese to adapt to Chinese expectations than it is for English speaking foreigners to do the same. Perhaps there needs to be a critical mass of practical data before many Chinese language instructors believe that their students will be more successful if they are forced to change their behavior for the Chinese rather than vice-versa.

3.1.3 How can advanced Chinese language performance be meaningfully assessed?

The issue of assessing successful performance in culturally Chinese work environments has heretofore been divided into two fields: expatriate performance
evaluation and Chinese language assessment. Expatriate performance evaluation is informed by work in human resource management, bringing to the table contextual considerations such as job expectations, corporate goals, and social skills. Chinese language assessment, on the other hand, is traditionally part of the field of foreign language testing, where mastery of the target language’s linguistic structure is often critical for high marks.

3.1.3.1 Performance evaluation methods for professionals working across cultures

The only methodologies available specifically for evaluating employees in cross-cultural jobs are those relating to expatriate performance assessment. Teagarden and Gordon (in Selmer, ed. 1995) assert that expatriate success is defined in terms of strategic management and human resource management.

Strategic management success is outcome-based in that it is based upon the expatriate’s ability to meet personal, corporate subsidiary and corporate headquarters goals and objectives. Success in these areas is best evaluated subjectively because of the complexity of the issues involved. Human resource management-based definitions of success are social-based and are mainly concerned with cross-cultural adaptation. Criteria for this definition of expatriate success include the ability to work effectively in the target environment by adjusting to the local culture and office, exhibiting professional
competence and intercultural activity. Due to the organization-specific nature of strategic management definitions of expatriate success, the assessment tool tested in this dissertation largely follows the principles of the human resource management definition of success, which are applicable across organizations.

Gregerson, Hite and Black (1996) also support the idea of outcome- and social-based success criteria for expatriates, but add a third category called “contextual” performance criteria. Contextual criteria include local exchange rates and cultural differences such as collectivism vs. individualism, and the ability to keep locals happy. It is unclear how this differs from social-based “soft criteria”, as the authors call them, for the latter include relationship management and personality traits.\(^7\) These international human resource management scholars agree that evaluation of employees working in foreign cultures should look at social factors, and that the employee being evaluated cannot be assessed in a cultural vacuum.

The approach that expatriate performance appraisal methodology takes to the opinion of host country locals is significant to this study. In the literature, full cross-cultural adaptation is described as “going native”; it is said to be positive for host country local interests, but negative for headquarters interests (Teagarden and Gordon 1995). In this conception, there is no possibility of using locally-accepted ways of conveying headquarters’ otherwise foreign perspectives. For instance, many American managers like

\(^7\) Presumably the authors believe that personality traits are immutable.
to delegate responsibility while many traditional Chinese managers merely expect their subordinates to carry out specific assigned tasks. According to the “gone native” theory, fully-adapted American managers in China would cease delegating responsibility and adopt the traditional Confucian management model. However, an American manager in China can be fully adapted to Chinese culture and delegate authority by referring to chapter 17 of the Dao De Jing: “…Of a good leader, [he] who talks little, when his work is done, his aims fulfilled, they will all say, ‘We did this ourselves’” (Bynner, trans. 1986: 46).

This lack of recognition that local cultures might already have their own versions of “modern” business practices could be what led some scholars to believe that inviting local employees to participate in expatriate assessment is an invitation for appraisal disaster. Some believe that host country nationals often “do not understand the needs of the firm” and so cannot be relied upon to accurately evaluate their expatriate colleagues. However, it could be argued that if a company’s overseas employees do not understand the needs of their firm, it is because the company failed to communicate it in a way that is meaningful there.

It has also been written that HCN appraisals are unreliable because local raters “do not understand their own cultural biases” (Gregerson, Hite and Black 1996: 731) and because “they will use local cultural frames of reference to evaluate” (Oddou &
Mendenhall 2000: 31). According to social-based definitions of expatriate success, local frames of reference should be an essential component of expatriate appraisal. If expatriates cannot accurately and successfully communicate their own intentions to HCNs, how can they accurately and successfully communicate the firm’s needs and goals to them?

Despite this bias against the opinions of HCNs, some research on Chinese perceptions of expatriate performance has been conducted. Jan Selmer (1996) noted that expatriates rarely adjust their leadership style to the local culture, so he studied the leadership preferences of Hong Kong subordinates working for managers of different nationalities. Selmer compared Hong Kong subordinate reactions to Hong Kong, Japanese, British and American managers’ leadership styles and found that Hong Kong employees’ preferred American management style the most, followed by British, Japanese and lastly local Hong Kong management.

These results initially seem to indicate that Americans do not need to adjust their management style at all for the Chinese environment, but there are three factors that mitigate the validity of such a conclusion. First, the Hong Kong subordinate subjects had all earned formal business degrees. Worldwide, business school curricula are based on the American model of management, often merely translating American texts directly into the target language. Chinese business schools are beginning to develop indigenous case
studies, but for the most part, business education is still highly Americanized. Thus, the Hong Kong subordinates in this study would have been conditioned to appreciate and expect American-style management. Selmer feels that the subjects’ average 6.4 years post-graduation work experience is sufficient to temper the American bias that business school can create, but that may or may not be the case. Second, the study was conducted in a colony of Great Britain, and before its 1997 return to the mainland. Hong Kongers have long been accustomed to Western business practices and may be inclined to prefer them both for their “freedom” (1996: 170) as well as their prestige value.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, this study measured subordinates’ preferences regarding their managers’ styles and attitudes, not their superiors’ effectiveness. It is one thing to be able to make subordinates like you, quite another to actually make unpopular decisions that are best for the company and for the subordinates. By analogy, teachers with the best student evaluations are not necessarily the most effective instructors. For the purposes of this study, whether or not foreigners can communicate effectively is more salient than the quality of their professional decisions. Effective communication, however, also requires making some difficult choices sometimes. For example, an expatriate can increase his/her chances of being liked in China by not talking too much, but in order to be professionally effective in Chinese, foreigners need to be able to navigate difficult situations such as negotiating price or trying to convince someone that they are mistaken.
Foreigners that never try to change a Chinese person’s mind may get high marks for likeability, but not necessarily for effectiveness.

Ralston, et al (1992) also studied the behaviors of expatriate managers in China, focusing on Americans, Hong Kongers and local Shanghainese. This study found that mainland managers are more hierarchy-conscious than Hong Kong or American managers, and that mainland managers are more concerned with maintaining a harmonious work environment while Americans are more task-oriented. This is reflected in all Sino-US cross-cultural communication literature, but it contributes more evidence to the fact that there are local standards for professional behavior and there are foreign ones. While the two standards continuously inform one another, it may be safe to say that there will always be a difference between Chinese expectations regarding professional behavior and communication and American expectations. The fact that this study was conducted in Shanghai, a city that many foreigners say “isn’t the real China” should be a wake-up call to foreigners who believe that there is anywhere in China that operates by American or Western standards. Chinese professional standards are not becoming more American, they are becoming modern Chinese.

The third and only other study found on how foreign managers are perceived by the Chinese themselves looked at Chinese job satisfaction in joint venture Chinese hotels (Kwok, et al 1996). This study also found that Chinese employees prefer working for
European/American managers than overseas Chinese or Japanese, but the study also found that employee satisfaction in American and European hotels was related to higher rates of compensation. Perhaps money can buy happiness – or at least happy workers – but there comes a point at which compensation evens out within an industry, and soft factors decide employee satisfaction. When China advances to the point where Chinese employers pay as much as foreign employers do, foreigners’ ability to communicate effectively with the Chinese will become a deciding factor in organizational competitiveness.78

3.1.3.2 Existing foreign language assessment tools

Most foreigners working in China do not speak Chinese, and so their performance evaluations would not include a language component. As more Americans are trained to higher levels of Chinese language ability, however, it will be increasingly important to assess professional Chinese language skill accurately. There are currently a handful of tools available for assessing advanced Chinese foreign language ability: China’s *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (Chinese Level Test, or HSK), the Foreign Service Institute (FSI)/American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT), and the

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78 Already, Chinese firms can offer employees intangible benefits that equal or exceed the salaries that foreign firms do, including faster advancement, more opportunities to manage people, and the opportunity to contribute to China’s strengthening.
Advanced Language Performance Portfolio System (ALPPS).

The *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* (HSK) was developed in 1988 and has become the standard test of Chinese language proficiency for non-native applicants to Chinese universities. There are four levels of HSK, designed to assess proficiency on a scale of 1 to 11\(^79\):

- HSK Threshold, for students with less than 200 hours of coursework or equivalent
- HSK Basic, for students with 100-800 hours of coursework or equivalent
- HSK Elementary-Intermediate, for learners with 400-2,000 hours of coursework or equivalent
- HSK Advanced, for learners with 3,000+ hours of coursework or equivalent

The advanced test costs RMB400 in the PRC and lasts about three hours. The three hours breaks down into the following components (table on following page):

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\(^79\) From the official HSK website, May 12, 2008, [www.hsk.org.cn](http://www.hsk.org.cn)
Learners can earn a maximum of 500 points on the advanced test. Scores between 220-339 (56-68%) are given a proficiency rating of 9 out of 11; scores of 340-399 are rated a 10, and scores of 400-500 (80-100%) are given the highest rating, 11. According to the official HSK website, Level 9 proficiency (56-68% questions answered correctly) is the minimum required for jobs that require using Chinese for communication. Interestingly, Level 11 proficiency is described as “the higher standard to be qualified for the jobs requiring using Chinese for communication and to be viewed as being qualified for a translator at the intermediate level.” The fact that a perfect score on the HSK only qualifies foreigners to be ‘intermediate’ level translators may indicate that the HSK does not attempt to assess the upper reaches of ability.
Like the American Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the Commonwealth International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the HSK provides a useful baseline for comparing general foreign language proficiency. Using HSK results, learners who have not yet attained professional-level Chinese skill can be directed to level-appropriate programs of study. However, the HSK is still an imperfect instrument for measuring truly advanced language ability.

First, the test has a traditional reading/writing focus that is reflected in the scoring system. Every portion of the test assesses reading ability, with no components that test only speaking/listening. Granted, literacy is an important component of being a respected member of society, but it is not the only component. An illiterate expert Shaanxi storyteller may wish he could read and write, but it is unlikely that he would lose esteem in any Chinese person’s eyes for not being able to. Likewise, an American working in China would do well to be highly literate, but the relevance of that literacy to his or her professional effectiveness depends on his or her professional domain.

Because the HSK is primarily used to qualify foreign applicants for Chinese universities, it is understandable that it should be domain-free; after all, college precedes professional work for most learners. It would be unusual for many college applicants to have domain expertise worthy of evaluating. Based on sample tests provided by the
official HSK Center\textsuperscript{80} and the Confucius Institute at Portland State University\textsuperscript{81}, the HSK advanced exam is a test of general language ability. In order to be useful to employers, a tool for assessing professional ability must be able to assess professional expertise. The general nature of HSK content is not a shortcoming of the test, only a limitation on its utility for assessing professional-level Chinese language ability. That is, it makes a good college entrance exam, but a poor graduation one.

In December of 2007, the Office of Chinese Language Council International (also known as \textit{“Hanban”}) announced the creation of proficiency scales for foreign learners of Chinese (Bi 2007). Like the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency scales\textsuperscript{82}, the \textit{Hanban} scales have separate descriptors for reading, writing, speaking and listening and are divided into five bands, or skill levels. For the sake of simplicity, the general descriptors for proficiency are listed below:

\begin{center}
80 高等汉语水平考试（HSK（高等））介绍 \textsuperscript{http://www.hsk.org.cn/english/intro_hsk3.aspx}
81 HSK Advanced Sample Exam \textsuperscript{http://ci.oia.pdx.edu/hsk/hskadvancedsample.pdf}
82 The scales can be found on the Interagency Language Roundtable website at \textsuperscript{http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/ILRscales1.htm}
\end{center}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Able approximately to comprehend simple, basic and very limited language material that is closely related to personal or everyday life. Able to introduce oneself or make oneself understood by others in very limited simple vocabulary with the help of body language or other means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Able basically to comprehend simple and familiar language material that is closely related to personal or everyday life. Able to exchange ideas with others on common topics in relatively simple terms, such as describing the basic personal profile of oneself or others, sometimes having to resort to body language or other means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Able to comprehend basic language material that is related to everyday life or work that would be encountered in a general communicative situation. Able to get one's ideas across or communicate with others on familiar topics, and able to give a simple description of the basic conditions that are related to the topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Able to comprehend language material with a clearly expressed familiar content which is encountered on a general social occasion or in a work or study situation, able to understand the important points and grasp the details. Able to communicate with others on familiar topics, expressing oneself clearly with a certain degree of coherence and using basic communicative strategies, and able to describe one's past experience, expressing one's opinions, giving simple reasons or explanations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Able to comprehend general language material encountered on a variety of occasions in a variety of fields (including one's own field of specialty), able to grasp the important points and synthesize and analyse them. Able to take part fairly competently in communications and discussions on a wide variety of topics, including general topics in specialised fields, using a wide variety of communicative strategies to express one's opinion and attitude, and able to explain various opinions in a coherent and fairly appropriate manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi* proficiency descriptors
The Hanban scales sound very similar to other foreign language proficiency scales, with proficiency being defined by the fluency, ability to express oneself, and ability to converse across a variety of topics. Though the band 5 descriptor does mention “one’s own field of specialty”, there is no accommodation in the proficiency scales for excelling in one’s own field but having only general ability in other fields (as most people have in their own language). The Hanban scales also seem to share with the ACTFL guidelines a belief that learners cannot achieve native-like proficiency. Whereas the ILR scales make the ultimate proficiency equal to an educated native speaker, Hanban defines band 5 as being able to participate only “fairly competently”.

Another test commonly administered to assess “advanced” foreign language skill is the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), adapted from the original Foreign Service Institute OPI. The federal government developed the OPI in the 1950’s; it was originally only administered at the Foreign Service Institute, and always conducted by pairs consisting of a native-speaking interlocutor and a linguist observer. After each interview, the two would compare their evaluations and arrive at a final rating for each individual. Generally, only those individuals who had spent years in the target culture would rate at 3+ or above on the federal ILR proficiency scale of 0-5. Until the creation of the ILR, only speaking and reading were tested at FSI, as listening was assumed to be included in the speaking
assessment, and writing in L2 (the target language) was considered an unnecessary skill for Americans working for the government abroad.

Following the creation of its own proficiency guidelines, ACTFL created an OPI based on the FSI OPI. Unlike the original FSI version, the ACTFL OPI may be conducted by a single tester who tape records the 20-30 minute interview. These tests may be conducted face to face or by telephone. According to ACTFL, role-play situations may also be included in the OPI to elicit production that would not naturally be found in an interview. Following the interview, the rater listens to the entire recording and awards a rating based on the criteria of the ten ACTFL proficiency levels. A second rater listens to the recording and also rates the performance. An official ACTFL OPI administered by the sole licensed ACTFL OPI testing agency LTI currently costs $134 per test.\(^{83}\)

Bachmann and Clark (1987: 32) point out that the OPI is good at testing a person’s ability to engage in polite conversation with a stranger on general topics. This might be an excellent measure of non-professional language ability, but, like the HSK, the ACTFL OPI is unable to assess domain-specific foreign language skills. Under its current structure, ACTFL OPI interviewers are generally experts in foreign language education or foreign language testing, making it difficult for them to assess professional knowledge outside these fields. Bachmann and Clark fear that domain-specific testing would require

\(^{83}\) Based on the application process for individual test-takers on the Language Testing International website on May 13, 2008. [http://www.languagetesting.com/application/individual5.cfm](http://www.languagetesting.com/application/individual5.cfm)
domain-specific proficiency scales (28), but there may be universal criteria that could be used to assess subjects in different domains (e.g., “is the subject knowledgeable on current trends in his/her domain?”).

One of the largest ‘consumers’ of foreign language ability is the United States military, and they have their own foreign language test, called the Defense Language Proficiency Test, currently in its fifth version and commonly called the DLPT5. By early 2007, this test had become the military test of record for proficiency in 14 languages (Air Force Link 2007). Unlike the HSK and OPI, test results on the DLPT are directly linked to test takers’ incomes, with proficiency pay for service members worth up to $1000/year (Miles 2005). The DLPT5 contains a reading component and a listening component, and all questions are multiple choice. There is a low-range test for assessing proficiencies of 0+ to 3 on the ILR scale and an upper-range test for assessing ILR 3-4 level proficiency. A condition for taking the upper range test is earning a 3 on the lower-range test. There is no test for assessing ILR 5 proficiency.

The upper-range Chinese DLPT5 consists of approximately 36 English questions on 14 Chinese reading passages and approximately 36 English questions on another 14 Chinese listening passages. The text in the test is approximately 50% in traditional characters and 50% in simplified characters. Test takers have three hours to complete

each of the two sections. According to a familiarization guide on the Defense Language Institute website, the passages cover a broad range of content areas, including “social, cultural, political, economic, geographic, scientific and military topics” (DLI 2008).

There are two main characteristics of the DLPT that reduces its utility for widespread assessment of professional Chinese ability. First, the DLPT has no oral component, which may merely reflect the professional needs of its military test takers. Many military foreign language speakers use the language to read and/or listen to target country media and produce English reports on their findings. The case could be made that accurate interpretation of Chinese media and military intelligence only comes from the kind of intimate understanding of Chinese culture which comes from repeated and deep interactions with Chinese natives. In practical terms, however, such interactions can hurt service members’ security clearances, so it may not be cost-effective to test for speaking/listening skills that the military would rather not see its members use. Without an oral component, the DLPT cannot be used to assess individuals in the myriad professions that require personal interaction.

Second, those who administer the DLPT acknowledge that it is a test of general proficiency, not a test of professional expertise in the target language. With content that covers a “broad range of content areas,” the DLPT is not designed to assess whether or not an individual would be considered knowledgeable in his/her professional field.
Though the DLPT 5 cannot test for it, the ILR proficiency scales themselves refer to domain expertise in their descriptors. The descriptor for ILR level 4 reading proficiency reads, “[subject] can read all styles pertinent to professional needs” and s/he “can read all materials in his/her field.” In its current iteration, the DLPT would be unable to ascertain if a service member tasked with keeping up with Chinese warplane development is competent to find and/or read Chinese materials on aerospace design or only able to read general newspaper editorials and history texts.

A recent development in foreign language assessment is the use of portfolios to capture and evaluate examples of foreign language use. O’Malley and Pierce (1992) observe that traditional tests, especially multiple-choice exams, are unable to assess higher-order foreign language skills and skills needed for professional effectiveness. Outside of foreign language education, many fields already use portfolios to demonstrate skill, including graphic design, painting, and architecture. When architecture firms bid on a project, they are commonly expected to present their portfolio so that the prospective client can decide for themselves whether or not the samples provided represent the kind of style and skill that is desired.

Use of the term ‘portfolio’ varies from application to application. In some classrooms, a student’s portfolio is the collection of all the homework a student has done on a certain topic and is the basis for self-evaluation (cf. Lee 1997); in others, portfolios consist of a
variety of student work assessed by the student’s teacher (cf. Gagliano & Swiatek 1999). The National Capital Language Resource Center indicates that foreign language portfolios should be created by the learner with support from teachers, parents and peers and assessment performed by the “audience”\(^85\).

In the case of professional-level Chinese-as-a-foreign-language skill, who constitutes the audience that should perform the evaluation? In traditional educational settings, the primary audience for foreign language learners has been the learners’ instructors. At beginning levels, when learners have not accumulated enough skill in the target language to be assessed for proficiency, portfolio assessment might be considered another means of conducting achievement tests. That is, instructors can use portfolios to compare learner progress to material that had been taught in class. At advanced, levels, proficiency testing is a more useful measure of ability. Proficiency tests are independent of any given foreign language program curriculum and assess learners’ ability to interact with their target native audience. Who, then, is the target native audience of a truly advanced Chinese speaker?

For any given foreign speaker of Chinese using advanced language skills for work, we have established that s/he is engaged in at least one professional domain. Therefore, the most appropriate audience to perform portfolio evaluation of professional-level

Chinese skills consists of Chinese natives in the learner’s professional domain. As Brown (1993: 1) points out, domain expertise is necessary for accurate assessment of professional foreign language use. Not be confused with the NCLRC’s definition of ‘peer assessment’ – evaluations made by fellow foreign language learners – this form of peer assessment is conducted by the Chinese language learner’s target peers, the natives with whom the learner would want to work.

3.1.3.3 Foreign language assessment methodology in international business research

In foreign language education, the OPI has become a standard method of evaluating language proficiency; in international business research and education, self-evaluation appears to be the norm. The simplest evaluation was found in Swift (2002). In this study on the relationship between foreign language skill and affinity for the target culture among expatriate executives from the UK, respondents were asked to use the following terms to describe their ability in the local language: no competence; a few words or phrases; can get by (in limited circumstances); confident (a good knowledge); fluent/near-native. By foreign language pedagogy standards, this scale is somewhat vague and conflicting – in many “limited circumstances”, “a few words or phrases” are actually enough to “get by” (finding a restroom, ordering some kinds of food, asking for help, etc.), and it is unclear what the difference between “a good knowledge” and “near-native”
is. A more common method was to ask respondents to say how comfortable they are performing certain tasks, and often using a Likert scale. With this method, the researcher can obtain a quantifiable score average, rather than relying on one all-representing description, as in Swift.

Self-assessment of foreign language skill may be necessary because of the limited resources and time available when conducting studies, especially studies whose main focus is usually not be the respondents’ actual language ability. However, there remain enough questions about the validity of foreign language self-assessment that its utility research on professionals working in cross-cultural settings may be limited. Selmer refers to Crampton & Wagner (1994) to defend the use of self-assessment, saying that much criticism of self-assessment has been exaggerated. Mats Oskarsson (1984) reviewed many studies on the validity of self-assessment, and found that the research has produced mixed results. Oskarsson found that self-assessment of receptive skills (reading and listening) was less reliable than that of productive skills (writing and speaking), that better learners tend to underrate their skill while worse learners tend to overestimate theirs, and that arts students overrate their skill while non-arts students underrate them. Depending on the study, self-assessment matched formal test results for the same individuals anywhere between 39-98% of the time. Perhaps a key finding was that

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86 In the study in which 98.5% of learners were said to have been fairly accurate in their self-evaluation, the criteria for accuracy was having a self-rating 2 levels or less different from the results of a validity-tested formal test… within 2 levels on a scale with only 5 levels (Oskarsson 1984: 26).
learners’ self-assessment tends to become more and more reliable over time, as they receive feedback regarding their performance (Oskarsson 1984: 21).

Based on the studies reviewed by Oskarsson, it would seem that foreign language self-evaluation is most reliable with learners of average skill and/or those with training in how they are assessed, so that they may assess themselves more accurately. There are many environments in which the latter can be built into the learning conditions, but the question is, are expatriate assignments and other instances of professional foreign language use environments in which these conditions hold? Are the expatriates who have acquired higher levels of foreign language skill through their overseas assignment more likely to underestimate their ability?

As Strong-Klaus (in Saito 2003:2) pointed out, a respondent’s own culture can affect accuracy in self-evaluation, with issues of humility (excess or lack thereof) causing assessment to be skewed. Padilla and Sung (1999:16) found that foreign language student self-ratings are consistently higher than the teacher’s ratings of those same students except for students of Chinese. Crampton & Wagner (1994:73) also point out that self-appraisal can be affected when respondents try to guess the researcher’s hypothesized correlation between language skill and adaptation and adjust their answers to fit. This would be serious problem if the appraisal were to be used in an organization as part of an individual’s performance appraisal rather than academic research.
In conclusion, the relationship between self-, peer- and instructor assessment of skill is still not completely understood. Though it may never be completely understood, additional data on the issue will be helpful to the field of foreign language and performance appraisal.

3.2 Experimental Design

Two of the stated goals of this dissertation were to identify what Americans are doing with professional-level Chinese language skill and how well they are doing it. In order to identify for what foreigners with advanced-level Chinese use their language skills, five foreigners using their Chinese for/at work in China were shadowed at work and interviewed. Their professional Chinese language use was assessed through interviews and a portfolio assessment tool developed at Ohio State. Observation, interviews and recording of portfolio materials were conducted during one month in China and portfolio assessment took place via the internet over the succeeding nine months.

3.2.1 Participant recruitment

The US Government Office of Personnel Management (OPM 1997) recommends that 360 degree evaluation programs include representatives of six professional roles: the employee him/herself; subordinates; superiors; peers; internal customers and external
customers. Financial and logistical limitations did not allow this study to recruit so many participants, but because the goal of this evaluation program is to evaluate language & culture skills and not specific job performance, it was felt that fewer roles would not invalidate the findings. Portfolios for this research were evaluated by the non-native subject of each portfolio, Chinese peers and/or subordinates, and Chinese natives external to the non-native’s organization.

3.2.1.1 The research subjects: non-native speakers of Chinese

Qualification for participation in this study was subjective but simple: participants were to be Americans using advanced Chinese for work on a regular basis. Because of the time and expense that would be involved in qualifying candidates’ “advanced” levels with formal assessment tools such as the OPI or HSK, I relied on self-identification followed by a telephone and/or Skype conversation with the researcher. If a potential subject 1) believed he or she had “advanced-level skills” in Chinese and 2) was able to participate in the study, s/he was qualified for a follow-up talk. Finding candidates who satisfied both criteria was extremely difficult.

Initially, it was hoped that 6-10 Americans could be recruited for this study. The recruitment process began with contacting former classmates and coworkers of the researcher who used Chinese for work. When none of them could participate, referrals
from the first group were contacted. In some cases, these referrals even included friends of friends of former classmates/coworkers. Cold call emails were sent to individuals in the American Chambers of Commerce in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, and recruitment postings were made on a number of expatriate BBS websites as well as two online overseas Chinese communities (MIT BBS and the Chinese Scholar & Student Society listserv at Ohio State). After contacting at least 80 potential research subjects, 4 Americans and 1 Englishman were recruited. All five were men, which reflects the predominance of males among foreign Chinese-speakers: only 11 of the 80+ candidates were women. The reasons for non-participation were greatly variable, but among the most common were:

- No response to initial inquiry or to follow-up detailed description of study or failed email address (19 individuals)
- No longer using Chinese for work (18 individuals). This group was composed primarily of people who had lived and worked in China for several years, had grown tired of the rat race, and came back to the US to recharge.
- Not convenient or not allowed to have outside researcher recording work environment (5 individuals). This segment was composed of people in three lines of work: law, finance and the US State Department.
The researcher spent August 2007 in China collecting data on the five research subjects. Two subjects were in Beijing and three were in Shanghai, so data collection was scheduled so that participants in the same city could be visited consecutively.

For the sake of observing Chinese language use in different domains, it would have been ideal to have research subjects from a variety of demographic and professional backgrounds; the practical limitations of being able to study the only five volunteers out of 80 people contacted made this impossible to accomplish. The five individuals that were able to join the study were typified by being in relatively self-managed positions, either owners of their own businesses or employed in an organization that gave them a large degree of autonomy. Though the research subjects did not represent widely divergent professional situations, this in itself may be useful data describing the roles in which Chinese speaking foreigners can currently find themselves.

Recruitment materials can be found in the appendices.

3.2.1.2 Native Chinese evaluators

For each foreign research subject, two Chinese coworkers were recruited as language ability evaluators. In order to qualify as an evaluator, the coworker had to be familiar with the subject’s daily work and professional domain, use Chinese with the subject on a regular basis, and be willing to submit to an interview and commit to spending anywhere
from 1-4 hours evaluating the research subject’s online language use portfolio. Identifying the Chinese research participants was much easier than recruiting the foreigners because each research subject had a limited pool of Chinese coworkers from which to choose evaluators. At four of the observation sites, I discretely obtained contact information for the entire office and sent emails and text messages to the two individuals who interacted with the subject most in Chinese and who appeared most likely to be able to cooperate. At a fifth site, the research subject’s immediate subordinate selected the second Chinese evaluator and, eventually, proxy for himself because he did not have time to complete the online portfolio evaluation.

The decision to recruit two coworkers per foreign research subject was a practical one rather than a theoretical one. In 360° evaluation, it is recommended that each evaluation subject receive feedback from up to 10 raters, or about three subordinates, three peers and three superiors (Lepsinger and Lucia 1997: 130). Each group brings different experiences of the subject’s performance as well as different biases, so having a few representatives of each is intended to even out the results. Rater anonymity is helped by having more participants, as well. Because I would only have 1-3 days with each foreign research subject, I would not have enough time to identify, recruit and interview more than two Chinese raters per subject. With the constraints of time, budget and limited recruitment pool, it was not possible to select Chinese domain expert raters and control
for rank or degree of westernization. The richness of the ethnographic data collected should help mitigate the effect of being unable to control for these variables in the portfolio assessments.

Finally, three native-speaking Chinese teaching assistants at the Ohio State University were invited to evaluate the five research subjects’ online portfolios from a language teacher’s perspective. All Chinese language TA’s at Ohio State in late 2007 were given an invitation to participate; three responded.

All participants were given honoraria of $20 in USD or CNY, though not all completed participation.

3.2.2 Ethnographic observation

LeCompte and Schensul (1999: 1) explain that “ethnography takes the position that human behavior and the ways in which people construct and make meaning of their worlds and their lives are highly variable and locally specific.” This dissertation seeks to describe how Americans do and/or should make meaning in order to be effective in culturally Chinese environments, making ethnographic research well suited to this purpose.

Ethnographic observation of the five research subjects was expected to contribute the following:
• Identify speech and behaviors that appear to be effective in professional Chinese environments

• Identify speech and behaviors that appear to be ineffective in professional Chinese environments

• Reveal which professional activities are performed in English and which are performed in Chinese

• Identify Chinese domain peers who are familiar enough with the subject to be invited to evaluate the subject’s language use portfolio.

Wilkinson (in Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Schaw, eds. 1995: 216) describes three modes of observation: casual, formal and participant. Casual observation is unstructured and avoids note-taking or recording during the actual period of observation; formal observation involves some form of recording of events and a systematic process of observation; in participant observation, the observer is part of the events being observed.

The researcher planned to shadow each research subject for three days, with the first day consisting of formal observation and the second two days consisting of a combination of formal observation and video recording events for later inclusion in the subject’s language use portfolio. The formal observation period would help with ascertaining which activities in the subject’s daily work are common and worthy of inclusion in the portfolio.

During most of the fieldwork, the researcher was able to remain an outside observer, taking notes in a spiral notebook. Occasionally, he was required to participate in the
events that he was observing, most often because it would have been socially
inappropriate to have a non-participant physically present in the event (e.g., at a banquet).
Participation in these events did not appear to affect the language use environment in any
significant way.

3.2.3 Interviews

Breakwell writes, “interviewing is an essential part of most types of social research”
(in Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Schaw, eds. 1995: 230). Two sets of interview
questions were developed for this study: one set for the five foreign speakers of Chinese
whose Chinese ability would be assessed, and one set for the Chinese colleagues who
would be assessing them. Because of Institutional Review Board requirements, interview
questions were formulated months before conducting the field work, resulting in fairly
structured interviews. The interview questions and answers can be found in the
appendices.

There were 30 interview questions for the foreign research subjects and they
consisted of personal background questions that include a Chinese learning history,
questions about the subject’s current work; questions about the nature of the subject’s
Chinese language use, and questions eliciting a self-evaluation of the subject’s language
ability. Four of the interviews were conducted near the end of the shadowing period, the
fifth was conducted on the morning of the sole one-day observation. The four interviews above were video recorded while the fifth was recorded by hand while taking the train with the subject to his factory outside Shanghai.

There were 26 interview questions for the Chinese colleagues. These were divided into categories similar to those described above, except the evaluation component referred to the foreign research subject rather than the interviewee. The researcher’s assistant (his Chinese sister-in-law) conducted the Chinese interviews with 6 out of the 10 Chinese participants before she had to return to work in Shenzhen. Because she can take notes in Chinese, her interview results could be typed up immediately after the interview. Of the four Chinese interviews conducted by the American researcher, two were conducted in person and recorded electronically and two were completed electronically after his departure from China. The two recorded interviews were transcribed by the author.

The purpose of the interviews was to contextualize the experiences of the portfolio subjects and evaluators. In addition, the interviews could serve as data points against which portfolio evaluations could be compared. As described below, portfolio evaluations would be based upon a finite number of edited video clips and written samples, while interview assessments would reflect a holistic understanding of what the interviewees can and cannot do well in Chinese. It may be discovered that individuals evaluate language
use differently when the language use is recorded and can be re-viewed *ad infinitum* versus a general impression of the subject’s language use that is composed of memory fragments. This question could also be posed as the difference between evaluators’ selective memories and the selective editing of the portfolio creator.

3.2.4 Language use portfolios

3.2.4.1 Portfolio construction

An online language use portfolio was created in the Advanced Language Performance Portfolio System (ALPPS) for each of the five research subjects. Each portfolio consists of 11-15 video clips of three minutes in length or shorter, and up to four writing samples. Examples of the ALPPS interface can be found in Appendix E.

Each subject was filmed at work for 1-2 days; when the subject entered a situation in which Chinese would or could be spoken, recording began. When the conversation ended or switched permanently to English, recording stopped. Budget and luggage limitations did not allow for purchase and preservation of new video tapes for each research subject. After each shadowing period ended, the action recorded on mini-DV tapes was downloaded to DVD using the researcher’s laptop. The tapes were then reused with the next subject. Storage capacity of the DVD’s did not allow for full-resolution copies of the original taped video, but the video and audio quality of most downloads were more than
sufficient for subsequent evaluation. Furthermore, the video file sizes would need to be less than 10mb for ALPPS uploading and viewed easily by evaluators with varying internet connection speeds. Full resolution video would have been impractical for portfolio use.

The video clips that compose each subject’s portfolio were edited upon return to the United States using Microsoft Movie Editor. Performances were selected for portfolio inclusion based on: video/audio quality; performance length (long enough to give a sense of the subject’s ability, short enough to watch in one sitting); performance variety; ‘typicality’ of performance vis à vis the subject’s overall ability and behavior.

Typicality is the most problematic editorial choice when creating a portfolio. Sample selection can be critical because these samples are parts being used to represent the whole. It should be possible that, with enough language use samples, a portfolio will, on average, be representative of the subject’s abilities. The more samples, the more typical the portfolio will be. On the other hand, the more samples a portfolio has, the less likely it is that anyone will have time to evaluate all the samples without full compensation\textsuperscript{87}.

3.2.4.2 Portfolio evaluation

Once appropriate clips were selected and edited, they were uploaded to ALPPS. The research subjects and their respective two Chinese coworkers were then given ALPPS

\textsuperscript{87} Twenty US dollars would not constitute full compensation for several hours of most people’s time.
user accounts to begin evaluation. Because ALPPS was originally designed to rate learners in academic settings, it does not differentiate between superior, peer and subordinate raters within a subject’s employing organization, as do other multi-rater performance evaluation tools (cf. Bozem 1997, Tornow, London and CCL Associates 1998). ALPPS does differentiate between the following evaluators: the foreign language learner him/herself, domain expert evaluators, and non-expert evaluators. Chinese coworkers in the study were given domain expert user accounts while the Ohio State graduate student teaching assistants were given non-expert evaluator accounts.

Initially, there were some concerns regarding the reliability of feedback provided by Chinese colleagues and subordinates of the foreigners. Despite the anonymity that ALPPS provides, it would have been natural for evaluators to reserve their strongest comments out of concern that they could come still hurt them professionally. Santini (2005) addresses this issue in “21st Century Human Resource Development: The Cross-Cultural Compatibility of 360-degree Feedback.” Santini tested the 360-degree evaluation process with employees from Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo, London and the US and, found that Americans were more uncomfortable evaluating colleagues than East Asians are, but East Asians are somewhat more uncomfortable evaluating superiors (41). It is hoped that the level of anonymity provided by ALPPS, as well as its lack of integration with the evaluators’ professional lives (unlike 360-degree evaluations used for
performance reviews) will allow all evaluators to feel comfortable providing reliable evaluations.

Santini also found that open-ended comment boxes for evaluators to fill in were likely to result in different types of data, depending on the nationality of the evaluator. The Americans tended to write an equal and voluminous amount of positive and negative feedback, while the East Asians provided mostly positive feedback. The comment box in ALPPS is also open-ended and without directions, so it may also result in lopsided feedback.

As designed for Ohio State use, language use samples in an ALPPS portfolio fall into one of the following categories: presentations, conversations, compositions, reading, and occasional/spontaneous events. These samples are evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5 using criteria researched and designed by the Chinese Flagship program at Ohio State (on following page):
Evaluators using the English evaluation interface saw:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Superior Competence/Superior Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strong Competence/Strong Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Competence/Passable Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some Competence/Some Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Minimum Competence/Minimum Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No Competence/No Performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluators using the Chinese evaluation interface saw:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>表现非常好</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>表现挺好</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>表现不错</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>表现一般</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>表现有进步</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>表现差</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This appears to represent a straight-line increase in skill, that is, the difference between a 4 and a 5 is equal to the difference between a 3 and a 4. This is different from the 0-5 ILR scale in which advancing from a 4 to a 5 is much more difficult than from 3 to 4, and so on.

Table 3.3 ALPPS scoring rubric

Participants were encouraged to switch to the Chinese language screen for help understanding criterion terminology and the grading scale, though doing so during evaluation would erase any ratings made but not submitted. After some evaluations had already been done, a participant pointed out that level 0 (“no competence, no performance”) was translated as ‘poor performance’. I notified the participants by email that criteria not seen in a performance (e.g., domain references) rate a 0, and will not be taken to imply that the subject made a poor performance. Unfortunately, only the TA’s at Ohio State read this email.

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88 Evaluators were notified by email that a 0 score was to be used when a particular criterion was not observed in a sample, e.g., “domain reference”, but only OSU Instructors read/understood this clarification.
Within a few months of completing fieldwork, ALPPS was complete enough to begin evaluations. Initially, ALPPS was available with only an English-language interface, so the foreign subjects were invited to complete their own evaluations before their Chinese coworkers were. Use of the system is not entirely intuitive, so each foreign subject was sent instructions on how to complete their evaluation. One subject completed his evaluation within a week of the invitation. At that time, it was discovered that there was a problem in the programming that prevented evaluation data from being recorded in the database. That subject re-evaluated his portfolio after the bug was fixed. Once a tool had been created for downloading evaluation results, the researcher discovered that the post-fix self-evaluation data for this subject was still missing. This subject evaluated himself a third time and was given $20 in Amazon gift certificates for his trouble.

Another couple months later, Chinese translations of the ALPPS evaluation criteria were completed and added to the online system, allowing Chinese participants to be invited to complete evaluations of their respective foreign research subjects. Prior to the sending of invitations, the researcher tested the ability of ALPPS to record domain expert evaluations by creating a test account and making some evaluations. Again, the database failed to record evaluation data and had to be fixed. Once the bug was fixed again, invitations were sent out. To compensate for the English-only environment that users encounter up until the evaluation screen for any given sample, each Chinese participant
was sent a Chinese instruction manual that included screenshots of the pages they would need to navigate (Appendix E).

As of July 8, 2008, all three OSU graduate teaching assistants had completed their evaluations of all 5 research subjects, four research subjects had completed their self-evaluations, and 8 out of 10 Chinese domain expert evaluations were completed. One foreign subject was unable to conduct his online self-evaluation due to time constraints; one Chinese domain expert was unable to log on to the system and gave up trying; one Chinese domain expert responded to some emails and indicated receipt of the evaluation directions, but did not begin evaluation; one Chinese domain expert was not heard from again following the interview conducted with her in a Beijing Starbucks. The researcher learned in the spring of 2008 that she had moved on to another company. Because the last two evaluators above were recruited for the same foreign subject, an alternate evaluator had to be found. The new evaluator for this subject was very cooperative and completed the interview and online evaluations within a month of first contact.

89 I was able to log in using this evaluator’s user name and password, so it is unclear what the problem was.
3.2.5 Lessons learned

3.2.5.1 Recruiting

The criteria for participation in this study were fairly strict; research subjects need to be:

1) “Foreign” (i.e., not a Chinese native)

2) Working in a Chinese language environment

3) Have advanced Chinese language ability

4) Allowed to/comfortable with a researcher shadowing him/her at work for 1-3 days, much of the time with a video camera

5) Able to commit a few hours for an interview and portfolio self-evaluation

The research was approved by the Ohio State Institutional Review Board on April 26th and the research assistant’s work schedule only allowed her to help with data collection in August, so participants had to be recruited in three months. Had the research design been completed earlier and therefore IRB approval obtained earlier, recruiting could have begun earlier, possibly resulting in more research subjects. Four out of the five research subjects were found through the researcher’s personal relationship networks and only one from a cold call (an advertisement placed on the internet).
3.2.5.2 Data collection

Portfolio creation and evaluation was highly time-consuming. If this study were to be repeated on a larger scale, or if the portfolio system were to be commercialized, portfolio management would need to be more scalable. Filming, editing and managing the portfolio content are the main bottlenecks in the process of making portfolios; many steps in this process could be carried out by the portfolio owners themselves, whether the owner is the portfolio subject or the subject’s employer.

3.2.5.3 Portfolio evaluation

The main difficulty related to obtaining portfolio evaluation was obtaining evaluations in a timely manner. As would be expected, some participants completed their evaluations quickly while others were delayed or prevented from doing their evaluations. This could be resolved by providing a comfortable and technically reliable means for participants to complete their evaluations shortly after uploading. This could be a fixed location or a mirror site in China with an entirely Chinese language interface.

Were ALPPS to be used on a larger scale, finding domain expert evaluators could become the main challenge. Portfolio subjects would want more than two evaluations for each sample, and evaluators would need to be compensated fairly in order to obtain fast and accurate results. As with the data collection process, the solution may be to leverage
the social nature of ALPPS and require portfolio subjects to recruit their own evaluators. This could create issues related to impartial evaluations, but it would eliminate the need to identify, qualify and manage a virtually limitless number of domain evaluators in an unlimited number of expert domains. Like the Wikipedia model, in which everyone is told the standards for contribution and then invited to contribute, social-based portfolio management could succeed if stakeholders were provided easy-to-understand online guidelines explaining how to effectively create and evaluate portfolios and a small team of editors made sure the standards were adhered to.
A large amount of data was collected for each foreign research subject, including observation notes, interview responses from the subjects and their Chinese colleagues and evaluations of Chinese performance samples. Taken together, the data describe what non-Chinese professionals can and are doing in Chinese. More importantly, the data suggests what it is that Chinese natives notice when evaluating professional foreign speakers of Chinese.

The five research subjects were:\textsuperscript{90}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>US Class Instruction</th>
<th>China Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric Klein</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake MacDonald</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Chatham</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>5 years Greater China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Ireland</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Coltrane</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>11 years Greater China</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Eric Klein

Eric was the first subject observed for this research and was 37 years old at the time (summer 2007). He owned his own public relations firm in Beijing was married to a

\textsuperscript{90} All research subjects are referred to by pseudonyms.
Chinese woman and they had a young son. In addition to building his 10-month-old PR business, Eric was also a manager at the Chinese PR firm D&S, a position out of which he was transitioning.

4.1.1 Interview with Eric Klein

4.1.1.1 Chinese learning background

Eric became interested in China when he took an introduction to political science class taught by former Clinton advisor Kenneth Lieberthal at the University of Michigan in the late 1980’s. After two years at Michigan, Eric returned to his home state of New York and began taking Chinese language courses at SUNY Buffalo in 1990. After one year of formal Chinese, Eric went to China in 1991 and graduated with a BA in political science while still in China in 1992.

In 1993, Eric began an MA in international affairs at American University in Washington, DC. He worked at the US-China Business Council from graduation in 1996 until 1998. That year, he moved back to China with his wife and has lived there ever since. He has not had formal Chinese instruction since an independent study course at SUNY Buffalo on translating Chinese literature in 1992/93. Eric credits his Chinese ability to his initial formal training, his wife, his Chinese friends and living in China for nearly 10 years.
4.1.1.2 Relationships with Chinese people

In order to ascertain the degree to which foreigners are integrated into Chinese society, each subject was asked if he had close Chinese friends. Eric said “I do. I like to think I do.” He described eight people as close friends with whom he regularly talks and socializes. Five of the eight were men and three were women; most of them are fluent English speakers and several were educated in the West. Through his wife, Eric is also friends with the actress Gong Li, who is godmother to their son. Even with a list of close friends, Eric said, “I don’t know that I have any real, real friends in China the way I have back in my hometown, but even when I was in Washington, I’m not sure that I had real close friends like that.”

4.1.1.3 Foreigners using Chinese for work that Eric knows

As a PR man, Eric interacts with many people in China and knows many foreigners that speak Chinese for work. Among them are:

- The head of United Family Hospitals in Beijing, who has lived in China since the 1970’s
- Some staff at the US embassy
- An owner of a cross-cultural service company
● People at Dolby and Siemens

● A government affairs representative at Google

● Foreigners in the PR community who have Chinese wives

● Foreign reporters (now required to speak Chinese), including the CNN bureau chief who graduated from Peking University

● Canadians from the Canada-China Business Council with whom Eric plays softball and hockey

● Artists, actors

● Engineers

● A professional clown

● A professional photographer

● Web consultants

● A Russian selling bottled water

● A Kazakh working at United Family Hospitals

Eric says that these foreigners are usually employed as the outward face/communicator for foreign organizations in China or for Chinese organizations working with foreigners. In Eric’s eyes, these bilingual foreigners should be communicators: “the people that America should be training to speak Chinese should have a broader communication, social skills, business skills background, so a global
MBA kind of person that understand markets, products, marketing, finance, but can also put together plans and execute them. That’s not an academic, that’s not a literature person.”

4.1.1.4 Eric’s professional Chinese use

Eric has used Chinese at all of his jobs and says he currently uses it approximately 60-70% of the time. Even on days when he conducts a training program for a foreign audience entirely in English, the training organizer is usually Chinese and during the training getting someone at the hotel to “turn down the air conditioning or whatever” requires Chinese, as well. Much of Eric’s work day is conducted in Chinese: “Asia is a very face-to-face place for doing business. When you try to meet at their office, for lunch, it gives them face. Some things are fine on the phone, like getting a password. For real meetings with potential clients, I try my best to meet face to face and then it’s all in Chinese.”

Eric tries to use Chinese as much as possible, but what language is used depends on the audience as well as the task. Eric’s emails are often written in English, and Eric will speak English with English-speaking Chinese when negotiating money in order to make sure he is not misunderstood. He now feels comfortable conducting contract discussions in Chinese though a few years ago he would have felt nervous about whether or not he
understood the legal ramifications of the contract. Now, he feels comfortable discussing contracts in Chinese because, as he says, “you have to sign the contract one way or the other, and it’s not the contract that matters, it’s the relationships.”

There are two skills that Eric wishes he could do better in Chinese: interpreting and writing. Eric says that he can interpret, but in some formal situations may have to resort to circumlocution or explanation for phrases that he can understand but has not learned to say. In terms of writing, Eric is frustrated by having what he calls a 6th- or 7th-grade writing level. He knows he can use Chinese to write a press release, but he also believes that it would look like a press release written by a middle-schooler. He has Chinese staff and partners to write copy for him, but he would love to be able to tap into China’s rich history and use idioms (成语 chengyu) and classicisms (典故 diangu) for writing his own Chinese press releases and presentations. Eric believes that use of chengyu and other cultural references make it possible for Chinese to convey and interpret meaning concisely and accurately. Eric keeps up with current terminology such as “N 组” and “八十年代”91, but would like to be able to access China’s 5000 years of history and shared understandings by using more literary idioms.

Eric believes that if his written Chinese were better, he would be able to write stories for Chinese audiences about subjects that are currently uncovered by the Chinese media,

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91 The French man’s sales pitch was related to the rollout of a sporty new car model in China; N 组 refers to a class of rally cars that have turbo-charged 2-liter engines. 八十年代 or “post-80’s” refers to Chinese people born after the one-child policy went into effect around 1979, roughly comparable to saying “Generation X” or “the Me Generation”.
but he also believes that he does not have time to achieve that level of writing ability. Eric
believes that being able to write better would help to make him treated like an authority
in China, like the boss and person of experience that he is, but he also recognizes that the
color of his skin may prevent him from being treated the same as everyone else for the
foreseeable future.

Eric believes the primary value that his Chinese ability brings to his work is the
degree of trust and understanding that immediately exists between a Chinese-speaking
foreigner and a Chinese person. Eric mentioned that sometimes Chinese people want to
move slowly for the sake of foreigners who presumably do not understand China, but
when they learn that Eric speaks Chinese, they will “skip to the chase”. Eric says that his
Chinese ability is his primary “hard skill”; there are better PR people in the world, but he
says his Chinese lets him work with Chinese people in a way that is unavailable to
non-Chinese speakers. He specifically mentioned one non-Chinese speaking expatriate
who is a marketing director for a foreign company in China and who sees his lack of
Chinese skill as a major barrier to effectiveness.

4.1.1.5 Eric’s interview-based self-assessment

In the interviews, subjects were asked to describe their own Chinese abilities by
relating experiences when their Chinese seemed to be excellent as well as times when
they were misinterpreted or at a loss for what to do/say, noting professional skills they do well and poorly in Chinese, and, finally, ranking their overall Chinese ability on a scale of 1 to 5.

There were only a few Chinese language situations that Eric indicated presented difficulty to him. One is working in an unfamiliar industry or context; another is reading Chinese newspapers, which is a slow process for him. When asked to describe situations in which he was misunderstood by Chinese people, his first response was that they occur when he is rushing and not taking the time to articulate his thoughts. Eric quickly shifted from this I-knew-it-but-I-just-didn’t-say-it explanation to saying that he sometimes just does not know the appropriate turn of phrase, saying,

“There’s a lot of words or phrases or idioms that express the idea that you’re trying to express and I use the 11th grade way of saying it, whereas [a Chinese] adult might say it a much different way. You can understand someone who’s in the 11th grade when they say, ‘that’s a big bummer,’ ‘that’s not cool,” but somebody will say, ‘but what are you trying to say?’”

Another cause for miscommunication that Eric identified was occasional problems with Chinese tones, saying that sometimes locals do not understand what he is trying to say if his tones are incorrect.

Klein noted that, while their occurrence is decreasing, there remain times when he misses the hidden meanings that are common in Chinese culture. He says that these intentions can be difficult to pick up “when you’re negotiating sometimes with officials
or when they’re giving you hints that they want some sort of kickback, that they want something. A Chinese person might walk out of one of those meetings and they’ll say, “did you understand,” and I’ll say no, and I’ll know what I said, you know, “I look forward to our cooperation” and whatever, then I’ll walk out and they’ll say, “no, no, no, they want you to send their kid to college in America,” or whatever and I’ll say, are you sure that’s what they want?” Another aspect of China’s high-context culture that still occasionally poses a challenge for Eric is the high demand for empathy; as he says, “people will surprise me with stuff and say ‘you should be thinking about me’”.

Eric said that meanings may be hidden from any non-native speaker of a given language, but that it is of particular importance in China because “there are so many things that aren’t said, emotions that aren’t expressed, that are assumed.” As an example, he described how his ayi (maid) had just quit by not returning from vacation. He said, “she lied to my face, she said, ‘yes, I’m going to come back’ and all this stuff, but maybe in her mind, ‘yeah, I’m lying to your face, but that means I can leave you if I really want to’. You have to spend your whole day trying to figure out what’s being said, what’s behind everything.”

Despite the occasional difficulty interpreting hidden meanings and getting his point across through some tonal errors, Eric’s Chinese ability is such that he is frequently mistaken for an ethnic Chinese person on the phone. Throughout the first year Eric dated
his wife-to-be in the US, he only talked with his future father-in-law by phone. Until Eric met his father-in-law in person, the latter was convinced that Eric was overseas Chinese. Other times, Chinese people think that Eric had grown up in China, and, occasionally, believe he is a Uighur from Xinjiang. Eric feels that he is treated more as an equal on the phone because the color of his skin does not color Chinese natives’ perception of his identity.

When asked what professional task he does best in Chinese, Eric first named teaching and training. He believes that he trains better in English because he can emphasize certain points and maintain audience enthusiasm with a steady tempo, but he is able to create a more positive training environment in Chinese because he does not ask pointed and discomfiting questions in the foreign language. He says, “sometimes it’s actually easier to deal with me in Chinese.” Eric added that he also facilitates communication and does business development well in Chinese, including daily phone conversations, organizing and planning.

Eric says that reactions to his Chinese ability depend on the demographic segment with whom he is interacting at any given time. He says that many younger Chinese are accustomed to interacting with the ever-increasing number of Chinese-speaking foreigners and do not react to his own Chinese ability. Publicists – his peers – are rarely surprised by Eric’s Chinese skill because they assume that anyone in the room with them
is a professional and is qualified to work in that environment. Eric’s friends know that he
does not like to be treated differently from native Chinese, so they will rarely point out or
compliment his ability. When people are surprised by Eric’s Chinese skill, he says it is
usually because of his understanding of the culture rather than of the language. For
instance, when he talks about the 下岗 xià gāng phenomenon (losing one’s job at a
state-run organization) or uses a Beijing dialect phrase like ha lazi (流口水 liú kǒushuǐ
in Mandarin, ‘drool’ in English), his audience will express surprise – even close friends.

Overall, Eric rated his own ability in Chinese as a “4-5 out of 5 in speaking,” without
elaborating on how that score would be different for other skills.

4.1.2 Interviews with Eric’s Chinese colleagues

Three of Eric’s colleagues were interviewed on the subject of Chinese-speaking
foreigners in general and on Eric’s Chinese ability in particular. For the sake of readers
unfamiliar with Chinese names, they will be not referred to by pseudonyms, but instead
referred to as “Klein 1”, “Klein 2” and “Klein 3”. Initially, Klein 1 and Klein 2 were
chosen for interviews and to evaluate his portfolio in ALPPS. Both of them completed
their interviews but did not evaluate his portfolio, so a third colleague was contacted.
Klein 3 completed the interview by email and completed the portfolio evaluation shortly
afterward.
4.1.2.1 Colleague backgrounds

Klein 1 was a woman from Beijing who, at the time of research, had worked in Eric’s own PR firm for three months and had only known Eric for those three months. Her title in Eric’s small company was “director.” She speaks English and Cantonese, rating her general ability in those languages as 4 and 3 out of 5, respectively. Because she had studied in England for seven years, she has many foreign friends, but few of them speak Chinese. Of the four foreigners with whom she interacts the most, only Eric speaks Chinese. Klein 1 believes tones and character-writing make it difficult for foreigners to learn Chinese. She does not believe it is possible for a foreigner to speak Chinese like a Chinese person, “just like us studying English” (“就像我们学英语一样”). Asked whether or not she hopes more foreigners learn Chinese, Klein 1 said, “It’s not a matter of whether or not I hope so; it is the general course of development. Because of China’s fast growth, certainly more and more foreigners will study Chinese.”

Klein 2 was a woman from Inner Mongolia who is a former coworker of Eric’s and now has the title of vice president at her current public relations firm. She had known Eric for over two years at the time of research. She speaks English and Mongolian, both at a level of 2 out of 5 in her estimation. She says she has many foreign friends, of whom

92 She left the company sometime after my visit.
1 “不是我希望的问题，是大势所趋，由于现在中国发展迅速，所以一定会有越来越多的外国人学中文。”
about six or seven speak Chinese. These few are mainly engaged in the PR, IT and training industries. Klein 2 agrees with Klein 1 that it is difficult for foreigners to learn Chinese. She adds that China’s dialects and shifting language contexts make it especially difficult for foreigners to acquire a deep understanding of Chinese culture. She also believes it is impossible for a foreigner to speak Chinese like a Chinese person, saying that there are certain meanings that they could not possibly understand.

Klein 2 said “of course I hope more foreigners study Chinese. This way, it will deepen Sino-foreign communication and understanding. And, if foreigners learn Chinese well, they will have more job opportunities. Many jobs, like in the media, PR, software, training and diplomacy, are appropriate for [Chinese-speaking foreigners]”.

Klein 3 was a Chinese MBA student at a prestigious American business school interning with Eric during the summer. He was born in China but has lived in the US since 1999. He met Eric the previous summer (2006), so he had known Eric for about a year at the time of research. Klein 3 speaks English very well and he gave himself 4 out of 5 for English skill. He knows many non-Chinese people, but Eric is the only one he knows who speaks Chinese well. Unlike the two women above, Klein 3 believes it is not too difficult for foreigners to learn Chinese because there are many helpful native speakers and many formal courses available for those who wish to learn it. He believes

94 “我当然希望更多外国人学中文。因为这样一来，更能加深中外的沟通与了解，而且如果外国人学好了中文的话，他们在中国的就业渠道就更广阔，很多工作，如传媒，公关，软件，培训，外交等，都适合他们做。”
that with time, foreigners can achieve native-like levels of ability in Chinese. Klein 3’s perspective on more foreigners learning Chinese was that it is a double-edged sword: it will make it easier to communicate in business, but reduce the number of English-learning opportunities for Chinese people.

4.1.2.2 Klein’s Chinese colleagues assess foreigner behavior

The following behaviors observed in foreigners appeared surprisingly Chinese-like to Eric’s colleagues:

- Bargaining in the flea market
- Using a cell phone during a movie
- Taking the subway (presumably as opposed to taking a chauffeured car or taxi)
- Not waiting in line
- Being modest

Some differences were observed as well. These Chinese informants felt that foreigners are more likely than Chinese to:

- Express strong opinions
- Wait in line (“if they had just come to China”)
- Think backwards. Chinese first give their conclusion then give reasons. Foreigners first list reasons one, two, three and four, and then last, give their conclusion.
4.1.2.3 Klein’s Chinese colleagues assess his Chinese

Based on their overall impressions of his Chinese performance, Eric’s three Chinese colleagues gave him high marks for Chinese skill:

- **Klein 1** gave Eric 4 out of 5, including culturally appropriate behavior.

  She said that, for the most part, Eric’s Chinese pronunciation is very accurate, that Chinese has become part of his life, and that sometimes he will even forget how to say a word in English, like “仓库” (cangku, warehouse), for instance.

  Asked to describe a time when Eric surprised her with a ‘foreignism’, she said that sometimes his grammar is incorrect or his word choice is inappropriate. To illustrate, she related how Eric frequently says “又要下水泥了” when it is about to rain in Beijing. Klein 1 understands that he says this because Beijing’s rain is often mixed with dust, but she believes it is an incorrect choice of words.\(^{95}\)

  Klein 1 also said that, China has many shifty people (狡猾头 jiaohua tou) and because Eric uses his American standards to judge people, he is easily taken advantage of. For example, they once hired a repairman to fix a broken computer. A Chinese person would never pay the repairman without being able to get a receipt on the spot. Alan, however, paid him on the promise that the repairman would bring a receipt in a few days. When the repairman did not return, it created much hassle for Alan.

- **Klein 2** gave Eric 3.5 points out of 5 because he basically has no handicaps in his Chinese working environment, but sometimes because his understanding of issues and Chinese culture are different, communication can break down.

  This assessment does not include culturally appropriate behavior, because when he talks, his gestures and emotions can be exaggerated, which is different from the restraint shown by Chinese people.

\(^{95}\) My Chinese interviewer assistant noted that she believes this may just be a reflection of American humor. The fact that Eric’s joke requires reflection on the part of either Kahn 1 or my assistant seems to indicate that it is a joke that does not translate well, though it may be perfectly humorous to a Chinese-speaking foreigner.
Klein 2 is particularly impressed by Eric’s Chinese when he unexpectedly speaks a little in a local dialect, like when he says 旮旯 (gala, ‘out of the way place’ in the Beijing dialect)

Klein 2 averred that she is not familiar enough with American thought and behavior to judge whether or not Eric displays any ‘foreignisms’, but she says he sometimes makes grammatical and word choice errors in expressing himself in Chinese.

- Klein 3 also gave him a 4, saying, “Maybe he lacks understanding about old-fashioned Chinese language, such as poems and novels. Other than that, he does his business well in Chinese and his everyday life. I recall that his wife is a Chinese. That helps a lot.”

This assessment includes culturally appropriate behavior: “he behaves very Chinese, in certain ways.” Klein 3 was impressed by Eric’s ability to give assignments to his colleagues in Chinese, and that he can joke about daily events in Chinese, as well.

Asked to describe a time when he was surprised by a ‘foreignism’ Eric produced, Klein 3 said that Eric [at least once] asked a client only for the amount of money he thought the project was worth, without even trying for a higher price.

Each informant was also asked to evaluate Eric’s ability to perform work-related tasks in Chinese.

- Klein 1 said that Eric is able to successfully complete work tasks in Chinese, but that he requires help for written work because he cannot complete them alone. Sometimes, she says, he can understand 60-70% of something he reads, but needs someone else to confirm his understanding of the remaining 30-40%.

Klein 1 said that Eric is poor at translating English to Chinese, but very good at negotiating.

She said that his excellent Chinese ability has allowed him to set up his SME Global Development Center96; his ability makes him trusted by foreigners who believe he understands the Chinese market.

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96 An organization Alan was setting up with some other foreigners to help SME’s work across borders.
Klein 2 gave Eric 3 out of 5 for work-related Chinese, citing differences in culture, approaches to problems, and values.

She says that Eric can basically complete all of his work-related tasks in Chinese because his Chinese language ability is high, he is good at harmonizing people’s positions, and he is good at drawing out people’s strengths. When, occasionally, he is not successful at something, it is not because of his Chinese ability, it is because of a multitude of other reasons, e.g., personal relations at work, insufficient human resources, etc.

Klein 2 said that the value Eric brings to his organization is that he has no obstacles in communicating with Chinese people and is able to win more customers for his company.

Klein 3 gave Eric 5 out of 5 for professional Chinese ability. This informant believes Eric “knows pretty much how to do anything in Chinese,” and that he is too senior to do some translation work.

Klein 3 said that Eric’s Chinese ability allows him to bring projects to the firm and increase revenue.

4.1.3 Observing Eric at work

Eric used relatively little English during the three-day observation period; use tended to be based the identity of the interlocutors/listeners rather than on the content of the message. Eric used English to:

- *Start* (but not conducting) an internal meeting with subordinates
- Read the English agenda he wrote for this meeting
- Converse & meet with Chinese professionals educated in the US (these were not always in English, nor were they necessarily only in one language)
- Make very brief comments at a large meeting of mostly Chinese PR professionals, of whom *most* were fluent English speakers.
Speak to other foreigners when no listeners are monolingual Chinese-speakers (he caught himself speaking English to a Frenchman in the presence of a monolingual Chinese person once and asked the bilingual Frenchman to reply in Chinese)

Eric spoke English only when contextually appropriate, but he writes almost exclusively in English. He said that his computer’s Chinese input software was acting up, and so he was unable to write email in characters. Because much of his interaction is by telephone and face-to-face, this did not seem to affect his professional activities at all, though it did prevent him from using MSN to communicate with Chinese-only speakers in D&S, where most employees used the instant messaging (IM) service to communicate rather than using the telephone. It could be argued that Eric’s character input software problem prevented him from participating in his company’s communication stream, but IM has not yet supplanted oral communication, so Eric’s reliance on the spoken word probably had little, if any, negative influence on his professional identity. No instances were observed in which Eric conducted an interaction in English because of an inability to express or interpret an intention accurately in Chinese.

Because so many people in Eric’s social orbit are bilingual, he can code switch without any apparent negative effects. Many Chinese people with whom Eric works were educated in the West or have experience working with monolingual English speakers, so they are comfortable interacting in either Chinese or English. Eric believes that he shifts

97 Rapid and seemingly indiscriminate alternating between two or more languages.
from English to Chinese without pattern, but there did seem to be at least two circumstances under which he would mix the two: to make brief comments at the end of a thought (his own or someone else’s); to match the last language used in a conversation. In the linguistically-mixed company of a presentation rehearsal with outside partners, Eric interjected with short English sentences such as “you did a lot of work”; with the client with whom he and his Duke intern was working, he would sometimes say “OK” to mean ‘I heard you’. During one meeting with his intern, Eric spoke in Chinese until he asked, “do you understand what I’m saying?”98 Then, he continued in English until he and the intern needed to refer to a Chinese email they had received, at which time they both reverted to speaking Chinese. Eric had one phone conversation with a woman that was entirely in Chinese (the visa issue described below) until the woman closed with “thank you so much.” Having been cued to speak English, Eric responded, “I’ll do my best.” The woman’s English was not good enough to understand, so Eric was forced to translate and the conversation was over.

Performances in Chinese included:

- Greeting coworkers at D&S
- Introducing the researcher to coworkers
- Chairing a meeting with subordinates
- Scheduling and canceling meetings

98 Incidentally, Alan often finished his Chinese utterances with “ni mingbai wo de yisi ma?” (你明白我的意思吗?).
• Explaining/defending his training program content to a client
• Managing expectations between a Chinese PR service provider and a foreign client
• Negotiating how he can or cannot help a Chinese person obtain a visa to the US
• Giving feedback on a sales pitch to be made to a major automaker.
• Chairing a lengthy meeting with a client he was advising
• Apologizing to an old friend for being late to lunch
• Trying to convince that friend to become a business partner
• Chastising subordinates for being unreachable during lunch
• Chairing a meeting with D&S client International Bamboo and Rattan Association and trying to manage their expectations regarding what they can get for the amount of money they want to pay

Eric was a full participant in all the activities in which he chose to participate – he was one of, if not the, primary actor in most performances. At an internal meeting at D&S, his Chinese second-in-command seemed to chair the meeting, but this is understandable considering that everyone in attendance knew that Eric would soon be leaving to focus on his own company. At an evening meeting to practice the auto promotion pitch, Eric stayed mostly in the background because he anticipated that his self-appointed rival in D&S could use missteps in that project against him, even if the missteps were not Eric’s fault.
As Eric pointed out in his interview, the contribution his Chinese skill makes is being able to bridge cultures, particularly when this means managing expectations that are out of sync. Two of Eric’s performances on day one fell into this category: handling discomfort on the part of one of D&S’s foreign clients, and handling a request from the wife of D&S’s CEO.

D&S had given a project budget to a foreign kitchen appliance maker. The client thought the budget was too high and so called Eric to mediate the discussion. Eric reassured the client that there was probably a reasonable explanation for the high budget and also said that Chinese budgets often start high so that there is room for negotiation and kickbacks for both sides. Eric then called the D&S employee that wrote the budget and learned from her that she had given a high estimate because many items in the project were still unknown and so she built in cushion space. Eric called the foreign client back, explained the situation and began to set up a meeting for all parties to discuss the budget.

Also on Day 1, the wife of D&S’ CEO called to ask Eric to help a friend of hers get a visa to the US. Eric likes the CEO and his wife, and so felt obligated to help as much as he could, but he also knows that there is very little an American can do to affect the decisions of US State Department. Rather than saying “no”, Eric explained to both the wife and the friend how difficult it is to ask about visa issues and then said he would do what he could. He knew that he is powerless in this situation, but was fortunate in that he
is close enough to the CEO and his wife that he could tell her directly that obtaining access to visa officials at the US embassy and getting a question answered or a visa issued is not as easy as the wife’s friend imagines it to be. Eric told the wife that he has a friend who is a travel agent who might have a connection at the embassy who can help out. What he did not say was that he plays basketball with a visa official at the US embassy who has told everyone that informal inquiries about a Chinese friend’s visa status are not welcome. When the visa-needing friend herself called Alan, Eric explained to her that it is not that he does not want to help, but that he is essentially powerless to help. In the end, Eric agreed to visit the embassy and see what he could do. Eric knew that it was an exercise in futility to go to the embassy – he would only be admitted to American Citizen Services anyway – but he is obligated to try to help his friends. Eric says he receives a request such as this about once a year, and it is the worst call on earth to receive (”世界上最恶劣的电话”). On the morning of Day 2, the wife’s friend called to say that the embassy called her to say her visa application had been accepted (without Eric’s having to get involved).

On the morning of Day 2, Eric chaired a meeting with a PR firm that had hired him to help them apply for an international award based on work they had done for an overseas Chinese developer. All the Chinese participants in the meeting were young professionals with varying degrees of English fluency. Eric’s age and experience made him the ranking
individual in the room, but his role as service provider also meant he had to be polite to his clients. When Eric and his intern occasionally spoke at the same time, they would politely stop for the other and then Eric would continue speaking, as is his right as boss. Eric would occasionally cut off his intern by saying the ‘xu’ of ‘xuyao’ (需要), but he never cut off the clients.

At 11am, Eric received a cell phone call from a former coworker he was to meet for lunch. Eric politely excused himself and walked to a far corner of the meeting room to take the call. By this time, the meeting had gone on for an hour and a half, and Eric used the phone call interruption to tell everyone that he may not need to stay for the entire meeting (since it was the intern’s project to begin with). However, he ended up staying another 20 minutes, with the interaction continuing all the way to the elevator.

Eric left that meeting on the west Third Ring Road at 11:20am and took a taxi to his office on the east Second Ring Road. During the 55-minute taxi ride, Eric made several calls to his lunch guest, Ms. Pan, to tell her where he was. He also tried unsuccessfully to call his employees to have them let her in the office to wait for him. After a couple phone calls, Ms. Pan told Eric that he shouldn’t feel bad – she would be late, too – but Eric was sure she was just trying to make him feel better. He was doubly embarrassed because the last time she asked a favor of him, he was too busy to oblige. When we arrived at his office, Eric quickly introduced the researcher to Ms. Pan, again apologized for being late,
and the three of them went to lunch downstairs at a sushi buffet, Eric’s treat. On his way out, Eric criticized his subordinates for being unreachable during lunch by saying “neither of you brought your cell phones with you to lunch. At least one of you should bring your cell phone. This is already the second or third time. At least one person should bring it downstairs, OK? [turning away] Otherwise, it’s no good (不行)” The #2 woman laughed [presumably in embarrassment] and said “all right.” The #3 man did not say anything.

Ms. Pan had worked with Eric at D&S and was now working for herself. She and Eric had kept in touch after her departure and now he hoped she would agree to become his company’s partner for press release and media relations work. In addition to creating a positive discussion environment by treating Ms. Pan to lunch, Eric was able to negotiate their meandering conversation in order to increase the likelihood of Ms. Pan agreeing to become a business partner. First, Eric did not begin the conversation by talking about the proposed partnership; he began by chatting about their old company and getting Ms. Pan up to date on the people still working there that she knew. During this phase of the meal, Ms. Pan told Eric that he needs to learn how to refuse things in Chinese (jujue 拒绝), otherwise he would never be able to leave D&S.

Once small talk was over, Eric explained that he needed someone to take care of Chinese media relations for him, saying that he needed the expertise that she or someone
like her has. She responded by saying that whoever he finds must be capable and able to guarantee the quality of the work. Eric agreed, and by the end of the conversation, Ms. Pan had agreed to work with him. Unfortunately, it was not appropriate to videotape this lunch conversation, so it is not possible to obtain evaluations of Eric’s performance or his tendency to cut off Ms. Pan’s remarks with “I understand what you’re saying” (我明白你的意思).

After another 55-minute taxi ride, Eric arrived at the International Bamboo and Rattan Association (INBAR) with his D&S subordinate Mr. Wu to discuss their upcoming 10th anniversary celebration. INBAR was represented by an older gentleman (in whose tremendous office the meeting took place) and a pregnant woman in her 30’s who is head of public relations there. Because of INBAR’s political connections and the INBAR representatives’ unfamiliarity with my project, I was not able to film this meeting for Eric’s portfolio.

In a previous phone conversation, Eric told Mr. Wu that Mr. Wu would chair this meeting; in practice, Mr. Wu introduced PowerPoint slides on his laptop and Eric would interject or liberally supplement Mr. Wu’s remarks. Again, though Eric would pre-empt his subordinate, he respected his client’s positions, never cutting them off and never directly contradicting their statements. When the client brought up the issue of cost, Eric would shift the discussion to establishing the goal or theme for the anniversary
celebration. When the older gentleman’s personal secretary brought tea for everyone, Eric gave his to the pregnant woman, a respected fusion of Eastern and Western culture. After sipping the tea, the INBAR representatives again brought up the issue of cost and Eric dodged by saying it takes time to collect all the information needed for an accurate budget.

Throughout the meeting, the INBAR side continued to bring up costs and how work would be calculated (i.e. man-hours versus project-basis) and Eric tried to direct the conversation to what will make the celebration a success (e.g., a newsworthy theme). When he could dodge no more, Eric agreed to talk to the CEO of D&S about costs and where the project members would physically be located (at D&S or INBAR).

Toward the end of the meeting, Eric was less successful in managing the conversation, possibly an indicator that the clients were still interested in achieving some concrete answers regarding costs. At 3:10, after 25 minutes of meeting, Eric asked Mr. Wu to summarize the meeting (总结), normally a signal that a meeting is over. The summary did not take place, and the general discussion continued. Eric tried to end the meeting again by reconfirming which follow-up tasks were to be performed by D&S and then saying, “then, let’s…” (那，咱们…), meaning, ‘let’s wrap up and part company’. A few minutes after that failed, Eric said, “let’s go back and work on this plan” (那，咱们回去搞这个方案), to which the two other men at the meeting responded by agreeing to finish
going over the proposed activities for the celebration. A few minutes and another conversation topic later (a conversation guided by the INBAR representatives and Mr. Wu), Eric said that D&S can help with all their needs but that the number one concern is maintaining quality. At 3:45, Eric straightened his posture, said thank you again, and reconfirmed D&S’s task (to write a plan). Everyone stood up. The INBAR executive told Eric how much money they had in the budget for the celebration PR and to write the plan based on that. Eric responded by saying he would tell the CEO.

During one of the conversations in the last 40 minutes of the meeting, Eric asked what INBAR’s role in the industry is because he is worried about huai xinwen (坏新闻)\(^99\). Upon use of the phrase huai xinwen, all the Chinese faces in the room fell and he explained that he wanted to know if INBAR tries to control the bamboo and rattan markets through strong-arm tactics by setting world prices and giving discounts to members. The answer was no.

On the way home in Mr. Wu’s car, Eric explained that the reason he kept trying to close the meeting (with no help from Mr. Wu) was that the longer you talk in these kinds of meetings, the more activities and services the client tries to slide in without changing the budget. As soon as the PR people know what needs to be accomplished next (in this case, a proposal), they need to maintain control of the project conversation by exciting.

\[^99\] Presumably, Alan meant “bad press”, but huai xinwen seems to be closer to “horrible news” than ‘negative media coverage’.

261
Eric explained that this is the case in China and in the rest of the world. Day 2 ended with Eric catching up on email and phone calls.

Eric began day 3 at a western-style café-bakery on the outskirts of Beijing. During breakfast, Eric called a Chinese woman who had wanted to do a training program on emotional intelligence (EQ) in Europe. Eric averred, saying that he cannot do EQ trainings due to copyright issues. He added that it was not the case that he doesn’t want to do the training with her, but that the situation “has changed” [presumably since last they talked about training together]. At the end, he thanked he for her understanding (谢谢你)．

After breakfast, Eric had a private meeting with an American at a nearby foreign-owned hospital followed by a meeting with a Chinese woman and an Englishman to talk about how they can attract more Chinese patients. At first, the meeting was conducted mostly in English but with liberal references to Chinese terms and cultural phenomena. Eric applied his familiarity with Chinese culture to discuss the meaning of “service” in the Chinese market and how it relates to the health care industry. As Eric says, most Chinese people think of good service as being many cheongsam-wearing women pouring tea for you. The challenge is to help Chinese patients-to-be understand that service in health care is differentiated by bedside manner, good planning, and so on. Eric was familiar with the Chinese health care industry because his own wife had given

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100 He referred to the traditional Chinese silk dress by its mandarin name, qipao.
birth in a Chinese hospital in Beijing. He said that Chinese people see hospitals as concrete boxes with doctors inside, rather than an organic service system. Even in English, this conversation would probably only have been possible between full participants in Chinese culture.

Near the end of this discussion, the participants became conscious of the videotaping and began speaking in Chinese for the benefit of Eric’s portfolio creation. The Chinese woman, who was fluent in English, spoke even faster in Chinese. Alan, who had been speaking very quickly in English, was marginally slowed down by the shift to Chinese.

After lunch at a nearby Tex-Mex restaurant, Eric went to a leading Beijing PR firm for a dry-run of an auto promotion pitch that D&S, the meeting host firm, and three other PR firms had teamed up to give. Each organization had someone give their part of the pitch, and the other organizations made comments or suggestions. Eric periodically spoke up to comment on the presentation in Chinese, sometimes initiated by saying “but…” (其实…) and stopping short to wait for an audience.

After the dry-run, the group of ten people broke into small groups, where Eric spoke mostly in English with Chinese counterparts who are fluent in English. In one small group, Eric tried to convince another team member to do something differently; before he finished his point, a D&S colleague finished Eric’s point for him. It is unclear why the colleague felt compelled to do so, and it could be completely unrelated to language (some
people simply like to finish others’ thoughts). Near the end of this meeting, Eric politely put his head down and made a cell phone call to make plans for a meeting the next day.

Eric and his colleagues indicated in their interviews that there was nothing unusual about his professional performances during the three days of observation. As Eric himself said, much of his work involves managing information flow between people. Sometimes the people involved are from different cultures and prefer to have a bicultural mediator, other times, the people involved are all Chinese and they want someone with Eric’s professional experience and foreign connections to assist. Eric’s daily work appeared to consist of a series of meetings punctuated by cell phone calls; most meetings and calls were in Chinese, and those performances that were in English were often strongly informed by the interlocutors’ familiarity with China and the Chinese language.

4.1.4 Klein’s portfolio evaluations

A total of five individuals evaluated Eric’s 14 video clips and one email composition: Eric himself, one of Eric’s colleagues\textsuperscript{101}, and three native Chinese language instructors at Ohio State. Of the 14 videos, 13 were conversation clips and 1 was an “occasional/spontaneous” event. Each sample produced a set of criterion scores from each evaluator as well as evaluator comments. Raw evaluation data for each subject’s portfolio can be found in the appendices.

\textsuperscript{101} Two of the interviewed colleagues chose not to participate in the portfolio evaluation.
4.1.4.1 Performance sample highlights

Mixing Chinese and English – very common in professional communication among young people in major Chinese cities – was found problematic by Chinese instructor evaluators. As Eric points out in his comments, sometimes the use of English is strategic and perhaps should be assessed positively for the criterion such as ‘cultural appropriateness’. Ben Coltrane (section 4.5), must speak English with his employees periodically in order to satisfy their need to work in a foreign language environment after joining a foreign-owned firm. One of Coltrane’s employees quit because he was unable to practice English as much as he had expected. Depending on the context, a foreigner in China using English can produce a more positive impression than if s/he were to speak only Chinese, and this context can be difficult if not impossible to identify in an ALPPS portfolio unless the research subject him/herself has fully described the context him/herself.

Evaluator were highly impressed by Eric’s appropriately in engaging in small talk before asking what a friend’s call was about, and then responding to the friend’s request with a positive but vague answer that left open the possibility of being unable to fulfill the request but still affirmed the friendship.

Evaluator were also impressed by Eric’s familiarity with Chinese geography and
Chinese government policy, what Hector Hammerly calls Informational Culture. In one performance, Eric referred to China’s “Opening of the West” policy and to cities in Yunnan with which he is familiar. He is familiar with those places because his wife is Yunnanese, highlighting one of the benefits of marrying into a Chinese family.

One particularly rich performance sample shows Eric arriving late for lunch with old friend and former coworker Ms. Pan. The evaluators were satisfied with Eric’s apologies and apparently paid no attention to Eric’s criticizing his subordinates for not answering their phones during the lunch hour (to let Ms. Pan into the office while she waited), but they were unnerved by Eric’s hugging his old friend. Eric may have reverted to American culture and used a hug to compensate for being late, but using American or foreign behavior seems to be risky, as the next highlight reveals.

Eric indicated that he punctuates his utterances with “do you know what I mean” (你知道我的意思吗 or 你明白我的意思吗) when he is unsure his audience has understood him and also that he finds it to be effective in establishing communication. Evaluator comments from two recorded instances suggest that, while the phrase may elicit the confirmation that Eric seeks, there may be a more socially appropriate way of checking comprehension. Chinese evaluators found Eric’s use of this phrase and Zachary Ireland’s use of “OK?” (section 4.4) arrogant, as if the foreign speaker were implying the Chinese listener were too dim to understand what was just said.
4.1.4.2 Aggregate portfolio ratings by evaluator and criterion

The table below shows the average score each evaluator gave for all samples in Eric Klein’s portfolio:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alan</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average score</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>across all samples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Aggregate portfolio scores, Eric Klein

Based on the data above, the domain outsider language instructors consistently awarded higher scores to Eric’s performance samples then did either of the two domain professionals (Eric and his colleague). Of these two domain professionals, Eric’s colleague gave the lowest rating. Readers are cautioned to keep in mind that this lowest average score of 4.38 given by Eric’s colleague still represents “strong competence” and is an excellent score.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alan</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of ideas</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain reference</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Fields with an X had an n value of less than 3 and were not counted

Table 4.2 Average portfolio scores by criterion, Eric Klein

According to this table, Eric’s evaluators believe his strengths lie in:

- Delivery
- Domain reference
- Question and answer

Comparing criteria and the evaluators from which they came, it appears that there was general agreement on Eric’s strengths and weaknesses. Except for ‘delivery’, in which Eric’s average score was 0.71 points below the average Chinese instructor score, other criterion averages were close between rater types.
Dividing the evaluators by their familiarity with Eric’s professional domain, we find that some criteria tend to be rated higher by domain outsiders, others are rated more highly by domain insiders, and yet others are rated just about the same. Because of the paucity of colleague ratings for Eric’s portfolio, Eric’s self-ratings have been counted here as domain-familiar evaluations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domain Average</th>
<th>Non-domain Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of ideas</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain reference</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 Eric Klein criterion ratings by evaluator’s domain familiarity

4.2 Blake MacDonald

Blake MacDonald was a single 25-year old editor at a company that publishes guidebooks and maps for foreign residents of Beijing. He had been working at the company for 2.5 years when he was observed for this study. He has a bachelor’s degree in
political science and international relations from the University of California at San Diego (UCSD). Blake also speaks Spanish at a self-rated level of 2 out of 5.

4.2.1 Interview with Blake MacDonald

4.2.1.1 Chinese learning background

Blake began learning Chinese in 2001, when he took an intensive summer program at the University of California at Berkeley. Blake took Chinese “on a whim”: he had decided to spend the summer of 2001 in San Francisco and Berkeley had two summer programs he could attend, one in Greek mythology and one in Chinese. The greatest motivation he had for pursuing Chinese was the support of his family and friends and the fact that it would set him apart from his highly successful sister.

Blake said that he “didn’t learn a thing” at the Berkeley program and just put his head down on the desk every day. He failed that program and enrolled in Chinese 101 when he returned to UCSD. However, because he had taken the summer Chinese program, he was placed in Chinese 101 for heritage speakers. In order to get out of that class, he transferred to the second-year Chinese class, which was a huge challenge but “just what [he] needed.”

In addition to taking Chinese at UCSD, Blake also spent roughly an academic year at Beijing Normal University in ‘02/03. He says that during that period, the American-born
Chinese did not appear to work as hard as the *laowai* (foreigners), who were in competition with one another to improve their Chinese.

At the time he was interviewed, Blake had nearly 4 years’ work experience in Chinese language environments. During the summer SARS hit China, the UCSD program in China for which he had signed up was cancelled, so he went to work at a Taiwanese bubble tea shop for two months. There, he picked up the Taiwanese accent that still appears in his Mandarin from time to time. After graduating from college, Blake went to Beijing and had a series of temporary jobs before joining the guidebook company. Among these temporary jobs Blake had held were working at English corners\(^{102}\) for money and doing English voice-overs.

Blake attributes his Chinese ability to school, the bubble tea work experience, and friends. Asked if he has any close Chinese friends, he said he has four, and that he is “not happy with the smallness of that number.” Three out of these four speak perfect English and lead international lifestyles.

Blake said he knows many Americans that use Chinese for work, and listed a graduate of the Hopkins Nanjing program now doing environmental energy research in Beijing, a man working at an NGO related to AIDS issues, a woman writer, and John Gordon, co-founder of New Oriental (新东方).\(^{103}\)

\(^{102}\) English corners are scheduled meetings of people who would like to converse in English. These events often consist of many English learners conversing with few – if any – native English speakers.

\(^{103}\) New Oriental is a famous and tremendously successful test preparation company. Their primary business is helping
4.2.1.2 Blake MacDonald on the nature of his professional Chinese use

Though Blake said that English-speaking Chinese people are primarily responsible for crossing the language barrier at his company, he still adds value as a Chinese speaker himself. In Blake’s section, there is an American manager, two bilingual American staff and a Chinese staff member; if the Chinese man were called upon to do all the tasks involving Chinese, Blake said that it would be “very inefficient and ridiculous”. More importantly, Blake’s Chinese ability gives him access to Chinese society that is invaluable at a guidebook company. He can do research on his own, work with monolingual Chinese freelancers, and have a depth of understanding regarding the content of his guidebooks that would be difficult for a non-Chinese speaker.

At the guidebook company, Blake uses English and Chinese for many similar tasks, and the choice of language depends primarily on with/for whom the task is being done. He uses English for writing, editing, conducting research and interoffice communication with the many foreigners in his company. In his estimation, about 30% of his work is in Chinese, of which 40% is speaking, 30% listening, 20% reading and 10% writing. He uses Chinese for general administration tasks, interoffice communication with Chinese nationals, research, and some writing. His most common Chinese writing tasks include writing addresses, using the in-company instant messenger (IM) software Jabber, and, learners prepare for the TOEFL, GRE and GMAT.
just before this study, writing thank-you notes to people involved in a major book project. Blake indicated that he wished his writing skill were better, especially formal writing.

Asked if he ever uses Chinese outside of the office, Blake said he does so with freelance writers/photographers, clients, advertisers, and doing research for the guidebooks. This research includes “trawling” hotspots such as bars and clubs before they are included in the publications. Blake also speaks Chinese at events held by the company off-site. Blake’s work has not yet required him to attend banquets.

4.2.1.3 MacDonald’s interview-based self-assessment

Blake modestly rated his own Chinese 3 on a scale of 0 to 5, though he had difficulty thinking of a specific instance in which communication between him and a Chinese native broke down for linguistic reasons. He mentioned two people at work with whom communication does not go smoothly, but explained that their lack of cooperation seems to derive from personality rather than cultural conflict. For instance, sometimes people seem to “faze out” and “do their own thing” when Blake talks to them and another coworker will simply refuse to perform tasks where there is room for confusion.

Blake was able to describe three skills that he believes need improvement: engaging in small talk, accepting gifts, and polite speech in socially sensitive situations. Blake said that with small talk (“schmoozing”, in his words), you want to make people feel welcome,
to get them to “continue to like you,” and his ability to do this in Chinese is well below his ability to do so in English. The other two skills he would like to do better both involve mastering formal phrases, or 客套话: accepting gifts and making apologies. Blake once got into trouble with the law when the Public Security Bureau discovered that he had not registered his residence with their local office. With both him and his landlord in trouble, all Blake could say was “sorry,” which he believes was insufficient for the situation.

Like Alan, Blake said that sometimes people on the phone do not realize that he is a foreigner. Also like Eric’s experience, some callers think that Blake is an overseas Chinese with an accent. Asked if Chinese people around him express surprise, delight or pride in his Chinese, Blake said usually he gets no reaction at all, which may be the highest compliment one can get. Always modest, Blake believes his Chinese colleagues would rate his Chinese a 3 or 4 out of 5 and “better than most foreigners in Beijing, but not perfect.” As he said, “on day-to-day stuff, I’m fine, but if they try to take me beyond, I’m ‘Mr. Nod’” (meaning he just smiles and nods instead of participating in the conversation).
4.2.2 Interviews with Blake’s Chinese colleagues

4.2.2.1 Colleague backgrounds

MacDonald 1 was a young man from Beijing who was also an editor at the guidebook company; he has been at the company for four years and has known and worked with Blake for two years. He rated his own English as 4 out of 5 and Spanish at 1 out of 5.

MacDonald 2 was a young woman from Beijing who does computer design work at the company. Like MacDonald 1, she had worked at the company for four years and known/worked with Blake for two. She speaks some English and rates her skill as only 1.5 out of 5.

4.2.2.2 MacDonald’s colleagues on foreigners and Chinese use

MacDonald 1 knows 40-50 foreigners – mostly Americans – of whom 80% speak some Chinese and half of whom speak Chinese fluently. The top Chinese speakers he knows are Blake and three other Americans at the guidebook company, about whom he had this to say:

Adam [a manager at the company]: 做事有主见，有绅士风度，非常热爱家人。
*Is strong-minded at work, is a gentleman, loves his family very much (2.5-3 out of 5)*

Blake: 爱说话，善于表达自己的观点，对于中国人不愿争论的问题愿意一直争

275
论到底，非常令人钦佩，在生活上不拘小节，很容易相处。
Loves to talk, is good at expressing his views, is willing to debate to the bitter end topics Chinese people are unwilling to discuss, people admire him, does not get hung up on trifling matters, easy to get along with (4 out of 5)

Gabriel [an American staff member at the company]: 非常热心，乐于助人，爱吃辣椒，曾参加一个吃辣椒比赛，还获奖。擅长中国式幽默，在台湾和北京呆了很长时间。
Very enthusiastic, likes to help people, likes to eat hot peppers, has competed in a hot pepper-eating contest and won a prize. Is good at Chinese-style humor, has spent a lot of time in Taiwan and Beijing (4 out of 5)

Michael [General manager of the company]: 越来越会做生意，与中国人合作如鱼得水，头脑非常清晰，逻辑性很强，所以公司越办越红火
Is getting better and better at doing business, when working with Chinese people is like a fish in water, has a clear head, very logical, as a result, the company is doing better and better (4 out of 5)

MacDonald 2 knows about 30 foreigners, most of whom speak Chinese. They are primarily teachers and editors by trade. Of the three Chinese-speakers with whom she interacts the most, she said:

Blake: 爱交流，挺随和，容易交往，做事的时候有点固执。
Loves to talk, very easygoing, easy to talk to, is a little stubborn when working (4 out of 5)

Gabriel: 挺幽默，挺随和，热情，挺特别，挺有意思。
Very humorous, very easygoing, passionate, special, “interesting” (4.5 out of 5)

Adam: 有礼貌，工作认真，非常仔细。
Polite, earnest worker, very detail-oriented (3 out of 5)

Asked if they think it is difficult for foreigners to learn Chinese, both MacDonald 1
and 2 said that, based on the foreigners they know, it must not be too difficult. They learn
to speak and listen quickly and though their reading and writing is not as good, they
improve quickly because they are earnestly learning every minute of the day.

Both colleagues believe that it is possible for foreigners to learn to speak like a
Chinese person, citing their coworkers as examples of just such a thing. MacDonald 2
went on to say that she believes that the key factor in achieving native-like ability is the
language environment – these foreigners’ living in China provides more opportunities to
practice.

Asked if they hope more foreigners learn Chinese, the two colleagues said: 104

MacDonald 1

我当然希望更多外国人学中文。如果外国人学好了中文的话，他们就能理解我们中华文化的博大精深，而且他们在中国的就业渠道就更广阔，所有中国人能做的工作
他们都能做。

Of course I hope more foreigners learn Chinese. If foreigners learn Chinese well, then
they will be able to understand the richness and depth of Chinese culture and the scope of
their employment opportunities in China will be much wider, that is, any job a Chinese
person can do, they can do, too.

MacDonald 2

我当然希望更多外国人学中文。如果外国人学好了中文的话，他们就更能了解我们中国文化的一些底蕴。他们学会了中文能做所有的工作，不过更适合做文化传播方
面的工作。

Of course I hope more foreigners learn Chinese. If foreigners learn Chinese well, then

104 It is possible that the researcher’s assistant reused her transcription files and changed only as many words as
necessary to record the interviewee’s intention, thus resulting in identical phrasing across interviews.
they will be more able to understand the inner workings of Chinese culture. Once they have learned Chinese well, they will be able to do any job, however they will be better suited to work involving cultural transmission…

From their responses, it is apparent that these informants see increased Chinese ability among foreigners as a win-win situation: for the Chinese, it would mean more outsiders understanding China and its greatness, and for the foreigners, it would mean increased job opportunities.

The Chinese informants were also asked if they believed mastering the Chinese language automatically trains foreigners to act like Chinese people. Neither MacDonald 1 nor MacDonald 2 believed this is the case, though to differing degrees. MacDonald 1 said that because foreigners’ lifeways are ingrained from childhood, their ways of thinking and acting cannot be changed and their approaches to problems are different, as well. MacDonald 2 believed that some foreigners could conceivably acquire Chinese behavioral knowledge along with linguistic knowledge, but that most foreigners will keep their original customs.

The informants were asked to describe a time when a foreigner acted in a way that was surprisingly similar to a Chinese person. MacDonald 1 described a behavior of Blake’s, saying that unlike most Chinese-speaking foreigners, when Blake makes a phone call in Chinese, his voice is loud and self-confident. Also like a Chinese person, when he is on the phone, Blake tells people, “我姓白，白色的白” (my Chinese surname is ‘White’,
as in the color). MacDonald 2 also thought of Blake for her example of a foreigner acting like a Chinese person, saying he eats fried pancakes (煎饼 jiānbīng) for breakfast and is skilled at taking advantage of a situation.

To learn what behaviors may be most likely to unnerve Chinese observers, Chinese informants were also asked to describe a time they observed a foreigner do something completely unlike a Chinese person.

**MacDonald 1 –**

When Chinese people invite others to dinner, they like to have some food left on the table at the end, but there was one time when some coworkers went to an Indian restaurant for a party that left a deep impression on me. When we had finished all the dishes, Blake used an Indian pancake [probably 'naan'] and wiped all the plates completely clean; it made him appear very frugal. However, now that I have known him for a while, I have gotten used to it and think this is a good way of doing things.

**MacDonald 2 –**

Gabriel 骑自行车时，头上顶个柚子皮挡太阳，中国人绝对不会这样做。Adam 切菜的时候，还要用尺子量。很新鲜。

*When Gabriel rides his bicycle, he puts pomelo skin on his handlebars to dry.*

*When Adam cuts vegetables, he uses a ruler to measure them. It's very novel.*
The responses Blake’s colleagues gave appear to be behaviors that would not adversely affect a foreigner’s ability to make friends in China and might not even need to be addressed in a formal program of instruction.

4.2.2.3 MacDonald’s colleagues assess his Chinese

Both Chinese colleagues rated Blake’s Chinese 4 out of 5 points in their interviews, and both indicated that this rating does not include culturally-appropriate behavior. Adding behavior, MacDonald 2 said that her rating would not change, but MacDonald 1 implied that it would be hard to say because Blake’s behavior is a mixture of Chinese and American behavior. The obviously American behavior MacDonald 1 noted was that Blake always has a jar of peanut butter on his desk, a food item that Chinese people do not normally eat. The “Chinese” behavior MacDonald 1 noted is a little more complex, however – he said that Blake rides a bicycle wearing sandals, like a Northern Chinese would. It is truly difficult to say if Blake’s sandal-wearing is an instance of his acculturation to Beijing life, or if this is an example of a behavior that can be found among certain segments of both Chinese and American culture.

Blake’s colleagues also agreed that he is very successful at the tasks he does in Chinese at work. MacDonald 2 said that Blake generally uses only Chinese when he works with the layout department and is always successful at it; she rated his professional
use of Chinese 4 out of 5 (she had also given him 4 out of 5 for overall Chinese ability). When problems arise, he is able to use Chinese to express his meaning and resolve the problems effectively. MacDonald 1 explains that because there are some Chinese colleagues at work who cannot speak English, even the English-speaking Chinese people there prefer to speak Chinese in the office. As a result, many tasks are conducted in Chinese and Blake successfully completes them. In his interview MacDonald 1 gave Blake 4 out of 5 for overall Chinese ability, but 5 out of 5 for professional Chinese use, citing his having successfully sued his previous landlord in the Beijing court system.

Each informant was asked to describe a time when Blake surprised them with his Chinese ability as well as a time he surprised them with a ‘foreignism’. MacDonald 1 reiterated Blake’s ability to make good phone calls in Chinese and MacDonald 2 related a story about how Blake once used the colloquial Beijing expression 老家儿 (lǎojiā’ér) to refer to someone from an older generation (长辈 zhǎngbèi); his listeners were very impressed. On the other hand, one informant felt that Blake expresses his foreignness when he is being stubborn, explaining that sometimes he is unwilling to listen to alternative points of view and requires people to do things his way. The other informant had a similar impression, referring to Blake having taken his former landlord to court over a “small disagreement”, something a Chinese person would not do.
Both informants also agreed that Blake’s written skills could use improvement, describing letters he wrote that should have been formal, but that Blake could only write in a casual style or with mistakes of word choice and grammar. Blake himself also noted his need to improve his formal composition skills. The informants did say that Blake has made good progress since he started at the company.

Finally, when asked how Blake’s Chinese adds value to the company, his colleagues said simply that he is able to use Chinese to get work done.

4.2.3 Observing MacDonald at work

Blake’s company was located in a brand-new office-apartment-hotel complex on Jianguomen Waidajie (Jianguomen Avenue). There were about 40 people in the company, about 1/3 of whom were foreigners from various English-speaking nations. Blake’s department is responsible for one particular publication that his company produces, and is managed by an American. During the observation period, that man was on vacation and Blake was left in charge of the regular team of two other bilingual young Americans (one Caucasian male and one American-born Chinese female) and one bilingual Chinese young man. In the summer, this office hires interns from American university Chinese programs, and during the observation there were three such interns: two American-born Chinese girls from Stanford and one Caucasian girl from Yale. This group of seven
(excluding the absent manager) all worked in an office about the size of an American living room, their tables pushed against each other in a H-shape to make room.

When the researcher arrived, Blake was editing an English document on his computer. He said that he had spoken more Chinese the week before because his team had been working on a new book made up of photos taken by many freelance photographers. This project required him to work with Chinese photographers, as well as foreign photographers’ translators and drivers. The week during which observation took place, however, would be less Chinese-intense. Many of Blake’s interactions during day one were in English including editing an English article and working with foreign coworkers and freelancers.

In this office with six bilingual Americans and one bilingual Chinese, language was often selected on the fly and for humorous effect. For instance, the Americans often sprinkled phrases such as 马上 (immediately), 不错 (not bad), and 太多了 (too much!) in their English utterances. In one instance when Blake went to the kitchen for water, a Chinese colleague playfully made a sarcastic remark to him in English, to which he playfully replied, 去你的 (roughly, “up yours”). Probably a result of the youthfulness of the staff, most of the Chinese were comfortable with English words, if not with English speaking in general, so it was possible for Chinese and foreigners to use Chinglish with each other, as well as amongst themselves. When a Chinese woman came
to see Blake at 4:50, he showed her some errors in the copy and asked, “请问一下，这个地方有个 break” (excuse me, there is a break in this part).

During the first day, Blake’s Chinese interactions were limited to small talk in the kitchen, and chatting with the receptionist, and a few phone calls. The weather was very hot during the observation period and Blake frequently went to the kitchen to refill his cup of water. He often ran into Chinese coworkers there and would make casual comments such as 怎么样? (what’s up?) and 太热了! (it’s too hot!). Around 4:45 on day one, Blake visited the front desk to drop off a book. When he got there, he said, “我们屋里有个 tízi” (Our room has a ‘tizi’). The receptionist replied, “what?” (in English). After explaining what he was trying to say, the receptionist corrected him, saying that 梯子 (ladder) is pronounced “tīzi”, not tízi. As Blake indicated before, his Chinese is not perfect, but it is excellent, and his colleagues help him to improve it.

Late in the afternoon, Blake made two calls to Chinese businesses to confirm their business hours for a publication. On the second call, the listener did not understand when he asked, 请问，您的营业时间是什么？(excuse me, what are your business hours?), so he rephrased the question, asking 请问，你们几点开门，几点关门？, which was understood. On one interoffice phone call, Blake used very fluent Chinese to discuss a problem with a business listing (that is, an advertisement) on one of their maps. Apparently, the customer complained that their map had an inaccuracy, to which Blake
replied, 为什么呢？他们是怎么说的？。。。肯定不是我们的错（…why?  What did they say about it?... it certainly wasn’t our fault). After the call, Blake explained to the researcher that many advertisers nitpick in order to have their charge waived. Later, Blake received a phone call from his landlord, just back from vacation in Hong Kong. Blake asked the landlord if s/he had gone to an amusement park or to the sea and asked if s/he were free to meet at 10pm that night to collect the rent.

After the landlord called at 5:15, the rest of the work day was conducted almost entirely in English. Blake received another foreign photographer, had a meeting with an American intern, and spoke with the other American man in the office about article errors. At 6:40pm, the layout woman returned to ask (in Chinese) for files from the company server, and Blake explained how to retrieve them. Observation ended at 6:55pm, when Blake indicated that the remainder of his work that day would be in English.

Written observation on day two was limited due to the amount of silent computer work done as well as the necessity of putting down the observation notebook in order to record Chinese use. During his first couple hours at work (again beginning at 10am), Blake wrote email in English, and wrote and edited article content in English. In the afternoon, Blake continued with more computer work in English as well as sending IM messages in Chinese to coworkers. At one point, a colleague entered the office to ask in Chinese why all the photos for the new book needed to be 横的 (horizontal) in format.
Blake smiled and explained to her that the book itself would be in landscape format and thus its photos need to be, as well.

On day three, Blake arrived at work and called his former landlord. He had filed and won lawsuit against this landlord for recovery of a ¥2300 deposit but had yet to receive the money. He asked her when they could meet because the court advised that the money ordered the money be returned within 7 days of judgment. The woman suggested that he “appeal” to the court to have them collect on his behalf… and then said she would ‘call him later’. Throughout this phone call, Blake was stern yet cordial. In fact, to the casual listener, it would not have been apparent that Blake was talking with someone who was balking at repaying a large sum of money.

Thus began a day with considerably more Chinese use than the previous ones. On this day, Blake did the following in Chinese:

- received a phone call from a restaurant asking to be in the guidebook (they already were)
- Chatted with the receptionist when he picked up his just-returned work visa
- Thanked and chatted with a Chinese woman who came to collect some books she had lent to Blake
- Worked with the woman in the layout department to review pages for the next guidebook
• Reviewed photos for the new book with the local photographer who submitted them, including telling him which photos were good and which would not be appealing to the target foreign audience

• Conversed at length with a Japanese photographer about her submissions for the new book, including when/how her film photos would be developed and submitted, how much it will cost, planning the timing of her submissions and making sure that one of his American colleagues will be able to work with the photographer while Blake is visiting his family in the US

• Called the local court to inform them that his former landlord is dragging her feet in returning his deposit

• Gave a speech thanking the summer interns for their hard work, as this was the last day of their internships

• Told the receptionist how he wants a copy made

Even with so much activity in Chinese, English was still used often on this day. Blake met with an American photographer, worked with his American colleagues to select a cover photo for the new book, and spent most of the afternoon editing English articles on the computer.
Because Blake works at a company that makes publications for foreign audiences and because his coworkers – Chinese and foreign – are nearly all bilingual, his work environment is English-dominant. As Eric pointed out, however, Chinese-speaking foreigners add value by connecting the English-speaking world with the Chinese-speaking one, which Blake did throughout the observation period.

4.2.4 MacDonald’s portfolio evaluations

Blake’s portfolio contained one email and 13 video clips. Of the video clips, two represented composition samples (an email and an IM conversation), seven were ‘occasional/spontaneous events’, and four were ‘conversation’ samples. These samples were evaluated by Blake himself, by two of his colleagues and by the three Ohio State University Chinese language instructors.

4.2.4.1 Performance sample highlights

Blake often wrote Chinese instant messages and emails in the course of his work and so had more composition samples than did Eric, Ben or Isaac. The evaluation scores and comments for these samples were often at odds with one another: high scoring compositions had critical comments attached and lower-scoring compositions often received positive comments. What is clear, however, is that Chinese native readers have
certain expectations regarding letter format and notice when they are not adhered to. These formatting errors do not affect the clarity of message, but do affect readers’ general impressions.

Video sample 3 in Blake’s portfolio demonstrates the importance of having multiple raters involved in assessment. The ALPPS evaluations for this sample ranged from 2.14 points to 4 – from “needs improvement” to “strong performance”; there was little agreement between those extremes, as well. Assessment of actual performance is, by nature, subjective. Just as some people found George Carlin funny while others found him offensive, foreign language learners will impress some people more than others. A multiple rater system helps minimize the effect of one rater’s opinion.

Like Eric Klein, Blake’s evaluators were impressed by his ability to handle phone calls politely and clearly. The keys to his phone skills were following Chinese etiquette in asking for and giving names, being patient and never sounding overbearing. As categories, these are universal phone skills, but in actual practice in a foreign language environment, there can be different expectations regarding how these tasks are completed. For instance, Blake explained his surname by saying it is “White, as in the color” (我姓白，白色的白).

The next highlight from Blake’s portfolio is worth describing in detail; it demonstrates the difficulty of being humorous in a foreign language as well as the importance of understanding Chinese rhetorical tools. In this performance (video sample
7), Blake walks to the reception desk and says, “it came, the passport, right?” She replies affirmatively and he asks if he can have an envelope (有信封吗？). The receptionist shows him his passport and opens it to his new visa. Upon seeing it, Blake exclaims, “what a coincidence!” (好巧！) His visa is valid until August 8th, 2008, a special date for Chinese people because it is the day of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. Blake laughingly says he is an Olympic Treasure (我是奥运宝贝儿!) and gets a chuckle from the people around.

The receptionist says there is another thing, that when she picked up the passport, the Chinese official told her Blake does not have enough empty pages in his passport for stamps and that he should add pages. Blake says he will do it when he comes back from the US. The receptionist, having had her advice refused, says she does not know much about this kind of thing, which causes Blake to reconsider the advice, asking her what the official said to her. She says the official thought Blake should go straight to the embassy and add pages to his passport because he is afraid he will not have space for the stamps he needs to cross the borders. Blake still does not think it will be a major issue, and that he does not have enough time before he goes back to the US on vacation to add more pages. The conversation wraps up with Blake asking for the envelope again (那，那个信封呢？). He gets it, thanks her, and leaves.
Table 4.4 Blake MacDonald video sample 7 ALPPS scores

Blake’s colleagues in Beijing appear to have been less impressed by his reference to the Olympics than were the Chinese instructors in Ohio. It is possible that Beijing people have been so bombarded by Olympics mania that Blake’s joke was just a drop in the ocean, but it is also possible that his ‘Olympics Treasure’ joke simply does not work for a Beijing audience. In addition, the sample received a low score for ‘rhetorical effectiveness,’ probably because Blake – at first – ignored his receptionist’s politely-worded advice regarding the importance of adding empty visa pages to his passport. This clip is a good example of an initial failure to recognize and react appropriately to advice and then the repair work that followed. If Blake had politely thanked the receptionist for her suggestion and silently decided to delay adding pages to his passport, the receptionist would have been happy and Blake could only come out ahead. If Blake was right, the receptionist would not be put in the position of appearing to have provided inaccurate information; if the receptionist were right and Blake encounters trouble at the border, Blake would look bad for having refused the advice. The lesson in
this sample is that Americans may need more practice *not* promoting their point of view in order to protect the face of everyone involved.

The same principle may be at work in the evaluations for Video Sample 12. The instructors seemed to be more impressed by Blake’s ability to discuss a court case with a court official than his colleagues were; indeed, in their interviews, the colleagues named this court proceeding as an example of something ‘foreign’ that Blake had done. The colleagues’ attitude is probably reflected in the ‘cultural appropriateness’ score being 1 point lower than the instructor’s rating of the same criterion. The colleagues were not too upset by Blake’s suing his landlord, however, as 4 points is a very good rating. Whether or not the colleagues agree with the lawsuit, everyone was impressed that Blake was able to do it and tenaciously follow up on it.

Blake’s portfolio scores were most affected by hesitancy in speech and word choice issues. In several clips, evaluators commented that he had to hunt for the appropriate words and sometimes ended up having to circumlocute in order to express an idea that evaluators felt should have been part of his domain knowledge. On the other hand, his familiarity with Beijing, and his always positive demeanor often compensated for lower scores in linguistic-focused criteria.

Finally, Blake’s portfolio demonstrated that Chinese natives are impressed by smooth performances in often-encountered contexts. In one sample, Blake welcomed a visitor,
offered her a chair and asked if she wanted to drink hot tea or cold water. First impressions are often made in contexts in which there are host and guest roles and being able to play these roles accurately reflects well upon foreign learners. The performance in question, video sample 9, received the highest score of any in Blake’s portfolio, 4.59 points.

4.2.4.2 Aggregate portfolio ratings by evaluator and criterion

Based on the data below, it seems that the more familiar someone is with Blake’s Chinese daily use, the stricter they are in their evaluation of his performance, including Blake himself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blake</th>
<th>Mac1</th>
<th>Mac2</th>
<th>Colleague Average</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Instructor Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td><strong>3.10</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.26</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.63</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.02</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.25</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.97</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Aggregate portfolio scores, Blake MacDonald
Blake, his colleagues and the Ohio State instructors agreed that, overall, his portfolio represents “competent” performance, with some evaluators believing it represents “strong competence”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blake</th>
<th>Mac1</th>
<th>Mac2</th>
<th>Colleague average</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Instructor average</th>
<th>Coll.-TA Difference</th>
<th>Overall average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of idea</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>3.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>X^</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>X^</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>-0.81</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain reference</td>
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<td>4.14</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>X^</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>X^</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^ Fields with an “X” in them had an n of less than 3, and were not included

Table 4.6 Average portfolio scores by criterion, Blake MacDonald

The chart above reveals that the Ohio State Chinese instructors, on average, gave higher scores than Blake’s colleagues for six criteria out of 9. The three criteria in which Blake’s colleagues gave higher ratings were ‘organization of idea’, ‘domain reference’
and ‘question and answer’. In other portfolios, it appeared as if the instructors were more impressed by domain knowledge than the colleagues were, but in this portfolio, the opposite was true. However, the differences between the two groups’ evaluations in ‘domain reference’ and ‘question and answer’ were the two smallest differences, indicating there was actually near-agreement between them.

The criterion with the greatest difference between colleague evaluations and instructor evaluations was “cultural reference.” On average, the instructors scored Blake’s cultural reference ability 0.81 points higher than his colleagues did. Perhaps contemporary Beijingers have higher standards for foreigners’ cultural reference because they live there and take it for granted that people living in the same environment will know what they know. Blake’s assessment of his own ability to make cultural references was higher than either of the other groups. The next greatest difference was in composition ‘genre’, where the Instructors gave an average score of 0.5 points greater than the colleagues did. This is somewhat misleading, however, as the there was a range of 2 full points between the two colleagues’ genre evaluations, meaning one was thoroughly impressed while the other had a lukewarm reaction.
4.3 Isaac Chatham

Isaac Chatham was a 29-year old entrepreneur from California who was running an architectural rendering firm in Shanghai when observed for this research. Isaac had just started the company with his American partner and had about 10 employees, mostly graphic designers and tech staff. The work consisted of making multimedia representations of real estate projects for mostly American developers. Architectural models were also made for clients, but this work was outsourced to local vendors. In addition to Chinese, Isaac speaks the following languages (self-rating on a scale of 0-5): Spanish (2.5-3), Taiwanese (1.5), Shanghainese (1.5), Hebrew (1.5). Isaac graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) in 2000 with a BA in global studies with an East Asia socio-economic emphasis. He was single at the time of observation, but did have a Chinese girlfriend.\textsuperscript{105}

4.3.1 Interview with Isaac Chatham

4.3.1.1 Chinese learning background

Isaac began learning Chinese in the summer of 1997 at the suggestion of a former classmate who was taking Chinese at MIT. Isaac says “it was kind of out of the blue,” but at that time, China was “just beginning to get on the radar,” and he recognized that it

\textsuperscript{105} Noted because it has been said that advanced foreign speakers of Chinese often have Chinese significant others, and this research also found this to be the case. Though the advanced speakers all learned Chinese prior to meeting their significant others, future research may reveal the ways in which having a native speaker for a romantic partner contributes to language learning.
presented future business opportunities. After the summer program, Isaac took three quarters of Chinese at UCSB and then “put Chinese down for a couple of years” while he continued school and worked as an outside sales representative.

After six months of backpacking, Isaac arrived in Taiwan in June of 2002 and decided to live there. In September, he began two quarters of Chinese coursework at Taiwan Normal University, but, he says, he was not conscientious about his studying. With the demands of work as a salesman for a Taiwanese magazine, work teaching GRE test preparation to Taiwanese students and the demands of a social life, classes at school were de-prioritized. Though his reading, writing and formal Chinese language did not see much improvement during this time, Isaac did make many Taiwanese friends and his spoken Chinese improved greatly.

By the summer of 2003, Isaac had dropped out of Taiwan Normal, was taking a couple classes in 补习班 (tutor/cram schools), and had transitioned into mostly teaching jobs because of a paucity of work in business/sales for foreigners in his position. Faced with few meaningful job opportunities, Isaac identified a 1-year Chinese language program at Taiwan University and enrolled in the fall of 2003. In the Taiwan University program, Isaac took 5-8 hours of class every day and he studied harder than he ever did in college, he said. He made time to sit down and listen to tapes, and to practice characters. While studying at Taiwan University, Isaac remade their website and continued to sell
advertising for the Taiwanese magazine.

After his year at Taiwan University, Isaac made a trip back to the US. While Isaac was chatting in Chinese with a Chinese flight attendant at a party, another guest overhead him and, upon hearing that Isaac had sales experience, invited Isaac to interview for a job at his microchip distribution company. The combination of a generous offer and the chance to get into a high-tech industry induced Isaac to join the firm. After 5 months’ training in southern California, Isaac was sent to Shanghai in April, 2005.

Consisting of about 12 Chinese employees, Isaac’s company in Shanghai had an all-Chinese language office environment. The Asian operations were headed by an Iranian-American based in Hong Kong who did not like to visit Shanghai, did not speak Mandarin and did not understand the Mainland business environment. When Isaac arrived in Shanghai, the US management saw him as a potential replacement for the Iranian-American, the Iranian-American saw him as an assistant for expanding the Shanghai operations, and the Chinese manager of the Shanghai office saw him as a potential threat.

Before Isaac left the company in November 2005, Isaac spent much of each day on the phone in Chinese: “you really had to have your act together in order to field questions [and] overcome objections in Chinese.” Not only was Isaac learning how to handle difficult phone calls, but he was learning simplified characters for the first time, and
picking up the language of his new domain. As he said,

“I never knew what diànróng (电容 capacity) was, or a diànliú (电流 current) or diànyā (电压 voltage). There were things I was learning in Chinese that I didn’t really know in English. I learned a lot at Taida [Taiwan University], but nothing ever prepares you for going into the business world and having to try to sell something or to convince someone to do something or answer a complicated question.”

After leaving the microchip company, Isaac was hired by another small American company as head of sales, Asia-Pacific. He remained with that firm until November 2006, when he and his partner took their nights-and-weekends architectural rendering business full-time.

4.3.1.2 Chatham on friendships with Chinese people

Alan Klein indicated that he had several close Chinese friends; Blake MacDonald said he wished he had more Chinese friends he could call “close”; Isaac fell somewhere in between, saying he has close Chinese friends… but not as close as his American friends. Part of the issue was logistical, another part cultural.

Logistically, it can be difficult getting close to Chinese friends because when groups of mixed nationalities socialize, there will often be monolingual foreigners and monolingual Chinese present. When Isaac converses in English with the English speakers, he feels like the Chinese-only speakers are left alone, and when he chats in Chinese, the English-only foreigners are isolated. Presumably, with limited time for socializing, Isaac
has to prioritize the groups with which he becomes close rather than uncomfortably trying to be an interpreter.

Isaac also described a cultural reason for why it seems difficult to make Chinese friends that are as close as American ones – he just does not feel that he has much in common with the average Chinese man. Isaac has found that his closer Chinese friends tend to be outliers in the local society – artists and aggressive entrepreneurs. These people have unorthodox ideas that intrigue Isaac, ideas that he can respect. He recognizes that it is a gross generalization, but he often does not feel interested in what the average Chinese man seems to care about. This feeling speaks to the importance of culture in building relationships – mainstream Americans are brought up to respect diversity while mainstream Chinese are socialized to seek conformity. Referring to the normal distribution curve model of cultural comparison in chapter two, as an American, Isaac has more in common with Chinese people at the edge of the bell curve in Chinese society – people that express and act on unorthodox ideas.

4.3.1.3 Foreigners using Chinese for work that Chatham knows

Isaac knows many Americans using Chinese for work and so he was asked to describe the four best Chinese-speakers he knows. One is the head of a service that will, for an annual fee of tens of thousands of US dollars, answer any question a member has about
China. For instance, if a member needs to know about new WOFE (wholly owned foreign enterprise) laws, this service will find the answer and respond within 24 hours. This individual has lived in China for eight years and speaks, reads and writes Chinese very well.

Another American, Jamie, works for an angel investor who provides seed money for start-ups. Jamie uses his business experience to help the start-ups get going, making business decisions for them. This individual also founded a shopping channel in China that went public in 2006. Jamie’s American boss is also a Chinese speaker that went to Taiwan University, one year after Isaac.106

Isaac also described another friend, Johnny, who had not had much formal Chinese training, but whose Chinese has improved greatly during his time in China. Originally working in sourcing, this individual eventually went to work for one of his clients (neither the client nor Johnny were satisfied with the sourcing company). This friend now runs his own production management company.

4.3.1.4 Chatham on his own professional Chinese use

Isaac’s and his American partner speak Chinese more than their employees speak English and this is the heart of the value that Isaac’s Chinese ability brings to the

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106 During the observation period with Isaac, it appeared that Americans with Taiwan experience had their own social circle separate from, though perhaps not exclusive of, Americans with entirely Mainland experience.
company. Isaac said, “Our business model is focused on us being able to communicate and manage creative projects across geographical distances, so it requires a lot of language and communication and translation.”

Isaac generally speaks Chinese with his employees in China and English with his sales staff in the United States. He also works with a Chinese tax consultant who lived in the United States for 20 years. Though he mostly speaks Chinese with the consultant, Isaac appreciates the security of being able to speak English for subjects that he would otherwise have difficulty with in Chinese. Isaac also speaks Chinese outside the office as he works with Chinese vendors that supply services such as architectural model building. Isaac participates in identifying, qualifying and interacting with vendors and periodically has dinner with them. Due to the young age of the people with whom he does business, Isaac has not yet had to participate in formal banquets and the Chinese with whom he eats do not adhere to (nor perhaps know) formal banquet etiquette. In any case, Isaac is comfortable enough with his Chinese working environment that he could not think of any tasks he would like to be able to perform in Chinese but cannot.

Isaac uses the “four skills” in the traditional order of volume: listening, speaking, reading and writing and rates his overall Mandarin ability 4.5 points out of 5. He feels most capable at making phone calls and having face-to-face discussions with Chinese people. He also feels comfortable reading and negotiating contracts, but would prefer to
have a lawyer write one, as he would in the US. Nonetheless, Isaac admits that his speaking and reading skills are superior to his writing ability:

“I can write emails, but I’m no Shakespeare of Chinese writing. My emails are pretty simple and to the point, I don’t write flowery compositions in Chinese. There are just so many employees in my office that can write Chinese better than I can, I just don’t find the need to [do that].”

When asked to describe a time a Chinese interlocutor forgot or did not know he is a foreigner, Isaac indicated that this only happens on the phone, as his foreign appearance makes it difficult to eliminate the foreign factor. He said that he sometimes can get through a good minute on the phone before the Chinese person on the other end begins to think that maybe he is not local Chinese but in fact ethnically Chinese: “They know there’s something wrong, but… they don’t figure it’s a foreigner, and then they’ll meet me and go, ‘I thought you were a Xianggang ren [Hong Kong person]’ or ‘I thought you were a huaqiao [overseas Chinese]’! I take it as a compliment.”

Isaac was unable to recall an experience in which a Chinese person misunderstood what he was trying to say, explaining that though he might momentarily confuse someone with a missed tone, this only happens during casual conversation, and that language-caused miscommunication does not usually happen during work-related interactions.

Asked to describe a time when he felt unsure about how to act in a culturally-appropriate manner, Isaac said that since coming to China, he has developed a
habit of stopping himself before he voices an opinion so that he can consider the possible ramifications. Isaac related one experience that helped build this habit:

I’m usually pretty direct, like in the US. I’m not like direct to the point of being nasty or untactful, but here, there’s an extra level that I try to go through that before I just blurt something out. I try to be pretty concerned about face issues and stuff.

…I got promoted up to sales manager at [the] electronics job. I had to fire one of my salespeople [because] she was acting crazy. I went to the local office manager in Shanghai and told him I was going to fire her – because I was operating kind of independently from him – and he said, “no, no, no! We have to be harmonious…,” and I said, “it’s clear that she needs to be fired. She is playing video games in the office. I caught her, she lied about it, and she’s saying outrageous stuff. She just has to go. Now.”

I didn’t so much go to them and ask them if I could fire her, I just went to tell them. She was on my team. I actually hired her – she was a good salesperson. They said, “she’s a good salesperson”. I said, yeah, she’s good, but she’s not making a killing, and this is totally unacceptable – she’s playing video games in front of all the other employees and she’s lying about it. She’s writing crazy emails and all kinds of unacceptable behavior, so I said, look, I gotta fire her.

They wanted to wait, they weren’t sure, they wanted to get approval from someone else, they wanted to think about it. I was like, she’s gotta go, now. [Then they said,] ok, we’ll do it. The office manager wanted to make sure that he was the one that fired her because he was concerned about his face.

So we go downstairs [out of the office] and we sit across the table from her and he says, thank you very much for all you’ve done, and he goes through this whole rigmarole with her and he’s says we want to maintain this very good relationship with her, you know, “保持很好的关系，以后还是可以当好朋友” (keep in touch, we can stay good friends), which I thought was a little over the top, but what it kind of did was to take her out of the office, out of the way to a café, and at the time, I thought this was more than what needs to go on, but afterwards, I realized that there was something to it – it gave her a little bit of face that he took her out of the office, he didn’t let anyone else see what was going on, he complimented her about all this stuff that she had done and really pumped up her tires before he… let her go.
It went more smoothly than it probably would have went had I done it myself, because I would have just said, ‘look, your behavior is unacceptable, thank you for everything you’ve done to this point, but we don’t require your services here… get out.’ I’m just kidding. I was kind of angry at her at the time, and he handled her in a much more consensus-building, harmonious Chinese way.

It was just one of the many lessons that I’ve had in that, where I think, maybe I need to tone it down over here. It’s not necessarily something that I always agree with, but you have to take the local culture into consideration. I can understand the need to save face for people and that it comes down to the idea, also, never… I was raised Jewish, and there’s a big idea in Judaism about never trying to humiliate anyone, never embarrass someone. Supposedly, in that tradition, you’re supposed to go to great lengths to avoid ever doing that to anyone. And it kind of fits in with face, you’re always supposed to give someone a way out, to give someone “台阶” (steps) to “下台” (come down from the platform). It’s ‘don’t push them into a corner’. I think that thing probably comes up most when I’m ready to say something but I’m not sure how to… it’s just one extra level that goes into the thought process.

Isaac has spent a good amount of time improving his Chinese and would like to see it improve more, but with his new responsibilities and the extra effort required to reach the next level of ability, further language study does not make business sense:

“I was too sloppy in my early Chinese in terms of my tones and my pronunciation for me to ever be where I’m like Đá Shān [Canadian Mark Rowswell, famous in China], where I could totally be mistaken as a Chinese person. I would love to get to that point. I worked on my tones in Taiwan. I think my fàyīn [pronunciation] is pretty solid, but there are still a couple words I have trouble with. But the amount of work that I would have to put into it, if I am at a 96 right now and want to be a 99.5, that last 2 percent [sic] is probably as hard as going from 85% to 95. With all the work I have to do right now with the new business, I just can’t reconcile spending that kind of time on it, because I don’t see how that would benefit me that much.”

Isaac feels that he has gotten positive reactions to his language ability from his Chinese peers, though he has probably gotten a mixture of surprise, pride and no reaction
at all. The only times he can think of having met with a visible negative reaction to his
Chinese is when is speaking Chinese with someone who would prefer to practice their
English with him. In the past, he said, he would refuse to accommodate them and
continue speaking in Chinese, but he has learned that if he does accommodate them and
speak English, his naturally fast pace usually causes the interlocutor to revert to Chinese,
and voluntarily.

4.3.2 Interviews with Isaac’s Chinese colleagues

Chatham 1 was a young male from East China that had known Isaac for over a year.
He speaks his hometown dialect with ease (self-rated 5 points out of 5) as well as English
and Shanghainese (2 points). Chatham 1 knew about 10 foreigners from work, parties and
playing in sports; they hailed from the US, Canada, Ecuador and Russia.

Chatham 2 was a young female who had known Isaac for a couple months at the time
of observation. She speaks English (self-rated 4 points out of 5) and Japanese (2 points).
Chatham 2 knew about 20 foreigners that came from Denmark, England, Greece, Sweden,
the US, Korea and Germany. Some of these foreigners she knew from a previous job,
while others she met socially and at sporting events.
4.3.2.1 Isaac’s colleagues on Chinese-speaking foreigners

Most of the foreigners Chatham 1 knows speak Chinese. They are engaged in cartooning, investment, foreign trade, modeling, sales and photography. Of the four Chinese-speaking foreigners with whom he interacts most, he indicated that Isaac’s Chinese was the best, giving him an overall rating of 3.5 out of 5. Chatham gave Isaac’s business partner a 3 out of 5, and two foreigners not in the company each 2 out of 5. Because the Chinese-speaking foreigners he knows speak the language so well, Chatham 1 believes Chinese must not be too hard to study. Asked if he believes a foreigner could conceivably learn to speak Chinese like a Chinese person, he referred to Isaac and said yes: Isaac’s Chinese is already excellent – and he speaks Shanghainese – and as his environment continues to have an effect on him, he will be able to speak just like a Chinese person.

Unlike Chatham 1’s experience, only about 1/4 of the foreigners Chatham 2 knows speak Chinese. She described an English employee at her former company whose Chinese she rated 3.5 out of 5 and who she felt got along well with everyone because he was open, easy to talk to and often took the side of his [presumably Chinese] coworkers. She added that he was also willing to pick up the check when going out. When answering whether or not she thinks Chinese is a difficult language for foreigners to learn, Chatham
differentiated between pronunciation and usage: “如果单纯学发音, 不难。但要研究中国文化和词义, 就比较难。有些谚语和笑话, 他们听不懂” (if you are only talking about pronunciation, it’s not difficult. However, if you’re talking about understanding Chinese culture and meaning, that’s relatively difficult. There are some aphorisms and jokes they don’t understand). With this in mind, she believes it would be difficult for a foreigner to speak Chinese like a Chinese person: “中国文化历史悠久, 他们很难体会, 古文对他们而言就更难了” (Chinese culture and history is so ancient, it is difficult for foreigners to understand. For them, classical Chinese would be even harder).

Chatham 2’s skepticism regarding foreigners’ chances of mastering Chinese seemed to translate into ambivalence toward more foreigners studying Mandarin, saying, “不很支持也不反对” (I do not support it, nor do I oppose it). However, she recognized that it would be in foreigners’ favor to learn Chinese. Chatham 1, on the other hand, was decidedly in favor of more foreigners learning Chinese. To him, learning Chinese is a way for foreigners to access China’s ancient history and interact with Chinese people without obstacles. Furthermore, he believes that any job would be open to foreigners who master Chinese.

Both colleagues believed that mastering the Chinese language bring with it an ability to act like a Chinese person… but only because mastery is achieved by living in China, where it is actually the social environment that changes behavior. Asked to describe...
situations in which foreigners acted surprisingly Chinese, Chatham 1 referred to Isaac liking Chinese food while Chatham 2 described foreigners that run red lights, spit on the ground and rush to empty seats on public transportation.

Asked to point out a clear “foreignism” they had seen performed, Chatham 1 simply said that some foreigners force themselves to give up eating meat in order to protect animals. Chatham 2 said that foreigners are more open, more simple/innocent (返朴归真) and they like to sunbathe. Regarding work style, Chatham 2 said that foreigners are very detail-oriented and that a foreign manager is more likely to point out and report problems while a Chinese manager is more likely to try to cover them up as well as consider how an issue would effect the interpersonal relations of the people involved.

4.3.2.2 Chatham’s colleagues assess his Chinese use

Based on their general impressions, Isaac’s colleagues said his Chinese was very good, with Chatham 1 giving him 3 out of 5 and Chatham 2 giving him 3.5-4 out of 5. Chatham 1 indicated that Isaac’s writing is a little slower and has slightly more mistakes than his speaking, and Chatham 2 said that Isaac occasionally makes pronunciation errors, but both of them were impressed by his Chinese.

Both informants indicated they have seen Isaac perform every work-related task in the office in Chinese and be successful at it, specifically, negotiating with vendors and
managing the graphic designers. Asked to quantify Isaac’s Chinese performance of work related tasks, Chatham 2 still believed Isaac earns 4 points; Chatham 1, however, divided Isaac’s Chinese work performance into ‘process’ and ‘results’, giving him 4 points for process and 5 points for results.

Asked to describe a time Isaac’s Chinese performance impressed them, the informants described an experience from when they first met. Chatham 1 said that the first time he and Isaac spoke on the phone, he thought Isaac was an American-born Chinese; it was only when they met that he realized Isaac was a foreigner (白人, lit., ‘white person’). Chatham 2 said she was impressed by Isaac’s Chinese she heard him converse during lunch on her first day of work.

The only foreignism Chatham 2 could recall was an occasional grammatical or word choice error. Chatham 1 echoed this point but added that Isaac also holds many American beliefs. For example, he expects people to arrive on time for appointments and does not allow tardiness. If, for some reason, someone is going to be late for an appointment, he expects them to call ahead to because it is impolite to make someone wait.

Asked if there are any tasks that Isaac cannot perform in Chinese, Chatham 1 had an alternate interpretation of the question and said that Isaac cannot use Chinese with many of their clients because they do not speak Chinese. Chatham 2 replied that Isaac always writes in English and only writes in Chinese when the recipient cannot understand
Finally, both informants said that Isaac’s Chinese ability adds value to the company because it allows him to facilitate communication between their American clients and the Chinese employees and vendors.

4.3.3 Observing Chatham at work

Isaac was observed at his company for three days, during which notes were taken on the first day. During the second two days, Isaac’s Chinese performances were video recorded for his portfolio and written notes were not taken. Though most of Isaac’s emailing was conducted in English, most of his oral communication was in Chinese. A great deal of the Chinese discussions included vocabulary specific to the graphic design domain.

Because Isaac’s business is employing Chinese skill to produce graphic designs for mostly Western clients, Isaac has opportunities to speak both English and Chinese at work. Isaac uses English to communicate with his American business partner, his sales staff in the United States, his clients, and occasional foreign service providers such as a photographer. This communication is largely via email and Skype telephone calls, but he sits across from his business partner, so they speak face-to-face on a daily basis.

Isaac uses Chinese for most day-to-day work. He often worked closely with his
Chinese employees to review and adjust the appearance of the graphic products they make for foreign clients. These conversations are both highly technical and highly aesthetic-driven, requiring mastery of architectural, computer graphic design, and artistic terms. Many times during the observation period, the researcher was forced to ask the meaning of both Chinese and English terminology, including 平面图 (floor plan), 立面图 (building elevation), 贴图 (clip art), RPC (rich photorealistic content) and MDF (medium density fiberboard).

Isaac rarely seemed at a loss for words and appeared comfortable with the language of his business domain. One conversation he had with his general manager regarding the look and feel of a particular graphic demonstrated Isaac’s Chinese communication strengths as well as revealed what seemed to be a minor weakness. Discussing a graphic’s combination of font and background image, Isaac tried to induce his general manager (GM) to agree that it was unattractive, asking (in Chinese), “Do you think this looks good?” When the GM did not respond, Isaac asked, “do you think it looks messy, unclear?” Perhaps the GM did not want to make a pronouncement, so Isaac turned to his partner and asked the same questions in English. When his American partner did not seem to agree, Isaac switched to a more direct rhetorical style to express his opinion, saying, “I don’t really agree with that.” At one point in his conversation with the GM, Isaac wanted to say that the image was too “busy”, but he was unsure how to express this
in Chinese. He tried the word 忙 (lit. busy) to see if it would work, but the GM replied, 你说的忙是什么意思? (what do you mean by “busy”? ). In the end, Isaac said 太强 (too strong), for lack of a better term.

When he received an email from the local tax bureau, Isaac related a story that also demonstrated his ability to work within a Chinese framework to achieve his business goals. Chinese tax law requires that a certain piece of information be on the copy of a business’ lease that is kept on file with the local tax bureau. Isaac’s landlord demanded a bribe to produce the appropriate paperwork immediately; otherwise it would take three months. Isaac explained the situation to the local tax bureau and they helped him create documentation to satisfy the regulation and avoid paying the landlord’s bribe. By being cooperative and sensitive to his interlocutor’s position, Isaac found that even government officials can help reduce bureaucracy and graft.

During observation, there did not seem to be any Chinese language tasks that caused Isaac difficulty. He discussed projects with employees, handled staffing issues, delegated work tasks, expressed his condolences to an employee whose grandmother had passed away (“葬礼是什么时候？你跟你的奶奶关系很近吗？” When is the funeral? Were you close?), interviewed a potential employee, and called Chinese sales leads that he had met while socializing on the weekend (“喂你好。优[女士]? 我们是在[某某地方]认

107 “Fabricate” may be more accurate
108 The author is not qualified to judge the appropriateness of expressing sympathy for a lost loved one in this way.
识的，不知道你记不记得。’ Hello. Ms. You? We met at such-and-such, I don’t know if you remember…).

4.3.4 Chatham’s portfolio evaluations

Isaac Chatham’s portfolio consisted of 1 email and 15 video clips. Of the video clips, 11 were “conversation” performances and 4 were “occasional/spontaneous” performances. Due to time constraints, Isaac was unable to evaluate his own portfolio. In addition, his Chinese colleagues only evaluated his conversation samples, thus the composition and occasional/spontaneous samples were only evaluated by Ohio State Chinese language instructors. As a result, only conversation samples will be discussed in the final section on aggregate scores.

4.3.4.1 Performance sample highlights

Evaluators again felt that the foreigner’s writing was good but had room for improvement, particularly in terms of formatting and typos. As one evaluator pointed out, when a composition is written to develop a sales lead, it should be error-free before it is sent. One of Blake MacDonald’s evaluators indicated that his writing was good but obviously written by a non-native; referring back to Eric Klein’s comment, there is a difference between writing and writing well. Isaac’s writing sample demonstrated that he
is able to write to a sales lead, but that he had probably not been trained how to do so.

One interesting finding from Isaac Chatham’s portfolio was that there were several samples in which comments that appeared to have been written by subordinates indicated that they liked his management style and felt that he was polite with them; on the other hand, one or two Chinese instructors frequently found his behavior to be arrogant or aloof. This may be a function of the subordinates’ daily interaction with Isaac, allowing them to create a more holistic interpretation of his behaviors than outside evaluators can make. For instance, one evaluator seemed to appreciate it when Isaac asked a job interviewee’s “permission” to eat during the interview while three evaluators felt that he should not have asked to begin with.

There was example in Isaac Chatham’s portfolio of using an American English custom in Chinese but without any negative consequences. In video sample 7, Isaac explains a piece of work to an employee and then thanks her when she understands and returns to her desk to carry out her task. One evaluator pointed out that though this would not be customary in China, it is not inappropriate, either.

Telephone skills were again evaluated in this portfolio, and again, favorably. In video sample 12, Isaac calls an old acquaintance, engages him briefly in chit-chat and then asks for a favor. All evaluators were impressed by this performance, calling it “professional” and “very good”. In fact, Isaac’s evaluators generally found him to be professionally
capable, especially his subordinates.

4.3.4.2 Aggregate portfolio ratings by evaluator and criterion

Across 11 conversation samples, Isaac’s performances earned an overall average of 3.9 points out of 5 – very nearly “strong competence.” On average, the Chinese instructors awarded higher scores than Isaac’s domain insider colleagues, though not by much: the average instructor evaluation was 4 points and the average colleague evaluation was 3.79 points, a difference of only 0.21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chatham1</th>
<th>Chatham2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average domain insider</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td></td>
<td>Average domain outsider</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Aggregate portfolio scores, Isaac Chatham

The table above also shows that Chatham 2 evaluated samples more strictly than any of the other four evaluators, but again, it must be kept in mind that the lowest average score – Chatham 2’s 3.58 – is still “competent” performance, meaning Isaac is competent
in a Chinese language-dominant workplace.

The aggregate statistics for individual criterion evaluation in the table below is also informative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chatham1</th>
<th>Chatham2</th>
<th>Domain average</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Non-Domain average</th>
<th>Domain Difference</th>
<th>Overall average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td><strong>4.23</strong></td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td><strong>3.57</strong></td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td><strong>3.90</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of idea</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td><strong>3.88</strong></td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td><strong>4.02</strong></td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td><strong>3.95</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td><strong>3.58</strong></td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td><strong>3.86</strong></td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td><strong>3.72</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td><strong>3.75</strong></td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td><strong>3.91</strong></td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td><strong>3.83</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td><strong>3.58</strong></td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td><strong>3.75</strong></td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td><strong>3.53</strong></td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td><strong>3.64</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain reference</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td><strong>3.71</strong></td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td><strong>4.36</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td><strong>3.88</strong></td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td><strong>4.39</strong></td>
<td>-0.51</td>
<td><strong>4.13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 Average portfolio scores by criterion, Isaac Chatham

Isaac’s performances scored highest overall in ‘domain reference’ and ‘question and answer’, indicating that he does well in professional situations as well as maintaining a conversation. His lowest scores – which were really on the high side of “competent” –
were in ‘cultural reference’ and ‘cultural appropriateness,’ possibly indicating that there is some room for improvement in terms of cultural knowledge and sensitivity, but that he is already skilled enough in these criteria to be effective.

Based on the chart, it appears that domain familiarity has an important effect on how evaluators rate different criteria. The greatest difference between domain insider evaluations and domain outsider evaluations was about 0.65 points for two criteria: ‘delivery’ and ‘domain reference’. The instructors rated the performances’ delivery an average of 0.65 points higher than Isaac’s colleagues did, while his colleagues rated his domain reference an average of 0.66 points lower than the instructors. The instructors’ training as Chinese language teachers may make them more sensitive to the linguistic accuracy of performance, e.g., tones, pronunciation, grammar, hesitation, etc, thus making them more sensitive to delivery. Isaac’s colleagues, on the other hand, seemed to be more sensitive to his domain expertise. Whereas domain outsiders may be impressed by anything a foreigner can do in Chinese that is domain-specific, Chinese professionals actually working in that domain may – like teachers in a classroom – hold the foreigners to a different standard.

The chart also shows that two of the top three overall high-scoring criteria also represent two criteria in which the domain insiders and outsiders disagree the most: ‘domain reference’ and ‘question and answer’. In both cases, the domain insider
evaluators gave lower average scores than did the Chinese instructors. The average domain insider scores for these two criteria were still relatively high, even by domain insider score standards, but not the clear leaders they were on the domain outsider side, indicating that, of all the criteria, these two criteria seemed to be more impressive to the Chinese instructors than they were to Isaac’s colleagues.

We can see from the chart that neither female instructor gave scores for ‘rhetorical effectiveness’ for any of the conversation samples and the male instructor gave a very low average score of 2.82. This was also the lowest-scoring criterion among the domain insiders, but the definition of this criterion may be too vague to count. The Chinese instructors often abstained from scoring this criterion in all five portfolios, and there were widely varying interpretations of this criterion among evaluators that did use it.

4.4 Zachary Ireland

When he was observed for this project, Zachary Ireland was 28 years old and overseeing an American-owned factory in Wuxi. He lived in Shanghai with his American-born Taiwanese wife and visited the factory on a regular basis. Zachary has a bachelor’s degree in Group Science with a minor in Asian Studies from Calvin College in Michigan, and an MBA from Grand Valley State University, also in Michigan. Zachary took two and a half years of Spanish in high school; he gives his Spanish ability 1.5
4.4.1 Chinese learning background

Before he could speak Chinese, Zachary visited China during high school. When he began college, his father suggested he try learning the language, so he did and said it “was the easiest A I ever got.” He continued taking Chinese through four years of Calvin College, graduating in 2001. Zachary noted that his Chinese teacher at Calvin College believed tones were too difficult for foreigners to master and told his students not to worry about them.

Zachary’s language learning experiences also include one semester at the Beijing Institute of Technology and dating a Chinese woman during the two years of business school. Zachary believes the relationship had a “very significant” effect on his speaking and listening skills. Zachary moved to China in 2003 and had not moved back to the US since then.

4.4.2 Interview with Zachary Ireland

4.4.2.1 Relationships with Chinese people

Zachary counted eight Chinese friends, mostly people from outside of Shanghai who will visit him and stay in his apartment when they are in the city. Like Eric Klein, Isaac
Chatham and Blake MacDonald, Zachary said that his Chinese friends do not seem as close as his foreign friends are.

4.4.2.2 Foreigners Ireland knows who use Chinese for work

Zachary described the top four foreigners he knows using Chinese for work as:

1) His wife, an admissions counselor at the Shanghai American School
2) A Belgian logistics manager that had majored in Chinese and logistics
3) An American in western Michigan that works with Chinese suppliers
4) A man in software development who had lived in Beijing, but who had since moved to Australia

4.4.2.3 Ireland on his experience using Chinese for work

Once he completed his MBA, Zachary first used Chinese for work during an internship in Beijing through Pacific Resources International. In that position, he worked as marketing and finance manager for a holding company that published Christian books in China. Following that position, he did translation and gave presentations to American and Chinese audiences as an employee of a Chinese auto parts manufacturer in Ningbo. After that job, he taught Chinese to employees at “a fraudulent company.” He discretely chose not to elaborate.
In his current job, he is “export manager” as far as the plant is concerned, but “China country manager” in the eyes of the American company that owns the factory. Zachary is the only person who crosses the language barrier at his company – the owners in the US do not speak Chinese and the employees in Wuxi do not speak English. Zachary sees this bridge role as a major value he brings to the company. In addition to transmitting information between China and the US, he also manages expectations on both sides. Finally, his Chinese allows him to work on instituting modern business management principles and practices in his factory.

Tasks that Zachary performs in Chinese include:

- All communication with Chinese coworkers
- Writing financial reports
- Reviewing contracts
- Engaging in negotiations with suppliers
- Conducting employee reviews
- Writing emails
- Production planning

Tasks that Zachary performs in English are:

- Writing plant reports for the owners
- Writing and submitting financial reports
Reading/writing contracts

Zachary estimated that about 60% of his work is conducted in Chinese, with speaking and listening comprising most of that. Reading Chinese came in second, with writing placing third in terms of volume of use.

Asked if there were any professional tasks that he would like to be able to perform in Chinese but cannot, Zachary said that he has never felt like there was something he could not do at all. Just after giving that response, he said that he could not write a Chinese contract. He then added that he wished he could understand non-standard accents. The ability to communicate accurately is also affected by Zachary’s tones – he said that sometimes it is difficult to get an idea across when his tones are off and there is insufficient context to help the interlocutor figure out the meaning.

Asked if he ever uses Chinese professionally outside of the office, Zachary said “all the time.” He said that he attends banquets with suppliers and government officials two to three times a month, what he calls “professional socializing.” Zachary showed his understanding of Chinese culture when he said that he does not like to “请” (invite) suppliers to banquets, but sometimes he must do it in order to encourage a company to finish their work faster.

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109 The general manager (GM) of Zachary’s factory speaks very thickly accented Mandarin, something that could conceivably affect the efficiency of communication and therefore the completion of work tasks.
110 Normally, it is the party selling goods/services that invites the buyer.
Zachary was very modest about his own language skills, as he said, “the more I learn, the harder I rate myself compared to other Americans.” In the interview, he rated his own Chinese as 2 to 3 out of 5 because he is not satisfied with his tones, his handwriting or his mastery of idiomatic expressions (成语). However, he does feel confident about his ability to express himself, particularly when it comes to communicating goals for the factory: “minor or major, people understand what I expect.” Zachary also feels that he writes financial reports in Chinese well and interprets well.

Asked to describe a time a Chinese person forgot or did not realize he is a foreigner, he said that it happens on the phone sometimes. He uses this phenomenon sometimes when he is researching other companies: he will call the company and pretend to be a Chinese secretary in order to learn something about the firm. When asked to describe a time he was misunderstood by a native speaker, he said when it happens, it is because of his poor tones, “Every time.”

Zachary had two very good examples of when he was faced with situations in which he might have been able to say whatever he wanted to say in Chinese, but did not know what would be culturally appropriate to do or say. In one instance, an employee quit the factory but returned with a gang of friends and struck one of the vice general managers. Zachary understandably was not sure how to react to the situation, saying he wanted to be
nice to the vice GM, but he also understood there must have been a reason for the employee to hit him. Another time, a high-ranking employee at the plant asked to borrow Y100,000 from the company to buy a car. Zachary denied the request. Later, he discovered that this employee borrowed Y20,000 from the company anyway. Zachary knew it was for the car, and so was unsure of how to handle the situation. He knew the car would often be used for company business and did not want to make the employee lose face by bringing up the issue. The company could afford to lend the employee the money, and the employee was absolutely key to the operation, but it is not good to set a precedent in which employees borrow money from the company without permission. In the end, Zachary had a chat with the employee about how this cannot become a habit.

Zachary said that Chinese people rarely react to his being able to speak Chinese anymore. New suppliers will express surprise, but everyone quickly gets used to it. Occasionally, Chinese people will correct his Chinese, but in ways calculated to save face for him. For example, they might tell his wife something he needs to do/say differently, or, like his GM, wait for a private moment to give him advice. In one example, Zachary had been telling the employees that they “must” (必须) do certain things. Back in the office, the GM told Zachary that it is acceptable for a general manager to say “must”, but “should” sounds better (‘应该’更好听) because it leaves the employees room to suggest alternatives to the stated plan.
Asked how he thinks his Chinese colleagues rate his Chinese, Zachary said they would be “satisfied” but not “impressed.”

4.4.3 Interviews with Zachary Ireland’s colleagues

Initially, two of Zachary’s colleagues were selected to participate in the research study. Ireland 1, a high ranking employee at the plant, was interviewed on site. Because Zachary and the researcher needed to catch a train back to Shanghai, Ireland 2 answered the interview questions via email. Months later, the Ireland 1 informed the researcher that he did not have time to complete the online evaluations, so he named Ireland 3 to be his proxy. This individual answered the interview questions via email and completed the ALPPS evaluation. Ireland 2 completed the interview questions, but never began the online evaluations.

The Chinese colleagues working with Eric Klein, Blake MacDonald and Isaac Chatham were interviewed by the Chinese research assistant; because of the logistical difficulties presented by observing Zachary Ireland in Wuxi as he traveled from factory to factory, the assistant did not conduct the interviews with Zachary’s colleagues. Instead, the researcher began by interviewing the senior employee in his office while videotaping for later transcription. Unfortunately, the researcher’s own Chinese skill was not good enough to understand much of what Ireland 1 said, even with the ability to rewind and
re-listen to the interview as many times as necessary. It was not practical to enlist a native
speaker to transcribe the entire video, nor would it necessarily have been useful, as much
of it was post-banquet drunken rambling. In any case, this situation proved the necessity
of engaging a native speaker to assist with Chinese interviews when the lead researcher
him/herself does not have native-level ability.

4.4.3.1 Colleague backgrounds

Ireland 1 was a senior manager in Zachary’s plant. His background is geographically
complicated because his father was in the army and his family moved frequently as he
grew up. His ancestral home is Sichuan, but over the course of 50+ years, he had lived in
Sichuan, Jiangsu, Henan and Hebei. He speaks thickly-accented Mandarin, Shanghainese,
and other unnamed dialects. He described Zachary as someone sent by the American
owners to keep an eye on the operations, but who “does not disrupt my day-to-day work.”
Ireland 1 had been with the company since its inception in 2004 and had led its initial
planning and growth. He met Zachary when Zachary joined the company in September
2005. Ireland did not say it explicitly, but he appeared to think of the plant as ‘his’, even
though it was owned by an American company.
Ireland 2 was a young man from Jiangsu who held a vice-general manager position in the company. He speaks his hometown dialect in addition to Mandarin, but only rates his ability as 3 out of 5. He had been with the company for only five months at the time of the interview, and had known Zachary for a couple months more than that. He sees his relationship with Zachary as one of “colleagues” (同事).

Ireland 3 was also a young man from Jiangsu who handles “technical” duties at the company and had worked there for three years. He speaks a little English, but rates his ability as 2 out of 5. He had known Zachary for three years and considers himself Zachary’s subordinate.

4.4.3.2 Ireland’s colleagues on Chinese-speaking foreigners

Ireland 1 indicated that he knew many foreigners, but did not elaborate on who they were or what they did for a living. He also indicated that he knew some foreigners who spoke Chinese, but rather than describe them, he spent a few minutes describing the wide variety of dialects in China, and how one Chinese character can represent many meanings. When asked if he knew any foreigners who speak Chinese well, Ireland 1 gave reasons why it would be difficult for a foreigner to speak Chinese, perhaps avoiding the question to save face for himself or the for Chinese-speaking foreign researcher. Indeed, when

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111 In Chinese, he said he 负责技术方面 (‘responsible for technology things’), which often means IT, but at a factory, it is difficult to say.
asked directly if he thought learning Chinese is difficult for foreigners, he said, “it probably is” (“应该是”) and explained how he tried to learn English once and he figures learning Chinese for foreigners is harder than learning English was for him. When asked if he thought foreigners could learn to speak Chinese like a Chinese person, Ireland 1 again gave a rambling non-answer, which may legitimize the previous inference that he believes foreigners do not and cannot speak Chinese at high levels of skill.

Ireland 2 said he knows about four or five foreigners, all of whom he met through work; they come from the US, England and Australia. Two of these people speak Chinese: an American translator/interpreter and an Australian who has opened his own company in China. Ireland 2 described their Chinese ability as being 4 out of 5… and then went on to say that their ability is comparable to a Chinese person with a middle school education. Ireland 2 believes it is possible for a foreigner to learn to speak Chinese like a native, but that it poses a certain level of difficulty. He believes that a foreigner living in a Chinese-speaking environment can become functional in spoken Chinese without great difficulty, but it would be hard for a foreigner to study Chinese literature112 because the meanings are complex and context-based.

Ireland 3 knows five foreigners, all of whom are American but only one of whom – Zachary – speaks Chinese. Ireland 3 believes that Chinese is not difficult for foreigners to

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112 Presumably, reading and understanding “Chinese literature” is Ireland 2’s standard for advanced skills, a belief shared by many Chinese teachers in the US.
learn, saying that English gets harder the more you study it while Chinese becomes easier the more you learn it. He believes that *Da Shan* is proof that foreigners can learn to speak Chinese like a native, but he also believes that it is very difficult for a foreigner to learn to *think* like a Chinese person.

Ireland 2 and 3 both hope that more foreigners learn to speak Chinese. Ireland 2 says that being able to communicate across borders is essential as the world shrinks; Ireland 3 echoed many other respondents by saying that the number of foreigners that learn Chinese is a reflection of China’s stature in the world, so the more the better. Both informants believed that foreigners who master Chinese will have a wide variety of jobs available to them, including – but not limited to – trade, tourism, medicine, and education.

Both Ireland 2 and 3 agreed that learning to speak Chinese is not equivalent to learning to act in a culturally-recognized manner. Ireland 2 said that a person’s behavior is a result of how they were taught and the environment in which they grew up and simply speaking a language does automatically mean behaving like native speakers of that language. Ireland 3 was a little terser, saying, “It’s impossible… or at least very difficult. Westerners’ work ethic is ‘detail-conscious’; Chinese people’s work ethic is ‘good enough’” (不可能，或者说很难。因为欧美人做事要求很“详细”，而中国人可以容忍“差不多”).

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113 Ireland 1 was not asked this question.
Perhaps because Irelands 2 and 3 grew up and worked in areas without significant foreign populations, they did not have much to say when asked to describe a time when a foreigner surprised them with their “Chineseness”. Ireland 2 said he is surprised by foreigners using chopsticks well and Ireland 3 said he has never seen a foreigner do something the same way a Chinese person did. Ireland 3’s lack of experience with foreigners may have been a contributing factor in his generous ALPPS evaluation scores.

Irelands 2 and 3 had no difficulty thinking of behaviors they have seen foreigners do that appear strange to Chinese eyes. Ireland 2 pointed out that he had seen a foreigner drink cold water and eat ice cream in the winter and Ireland 3 said that the first time he met Zachary, Zachary showed him a photo of his wife. Ireland 3 added, “Chinese people would absolutely never do something like this” (中国人绝对不会这[样]做).

4.4.3.3 Ireland’s colleagues assess his Chinese use

Ireland 1 assessed Zachary’s overall Chinese ability as 3 out of 5, Ireland 2 gave him 4 out of 5 and Ireland 3 gave him 3 out of 5. When asked if the rating included culturally-appropriate behavior, Ireland 1 said he had not included it and that if he did, the rating would rise to 4 points; Ireland 2 actually reduced his rating to 3.5 when he considered behavior; Ireland 3 did not re-rate to include behavior, but implied that he had not already done so when he added that sometimes Zachary only pays attention to
“principles” and not to “feelings” (遇事只说道理而不讲情). This focus on standards reflects Americans’ universalist culture, described in section 2.1.1.1.

When Ireland 2 and 3 were asked to evaluate Zachary’s professional Chinese ability, Ireland 2 again said 4 points out of 5 while Ireland 3 raised his rating to 5 out of 5. Both informants justified their scores by saying that Zachary is able to complete his business tasks and therefore is worthy of a high rating. Ireland 3 said, “language is just a tool; as long as Chinese people can understand, it’s good enough” (语言只是工具中国人能听懂意思就好), demonstrating that, as far as he is concerned, ‘delivery’ is not as important as results. Both have observed Zachary perform work tasks that they described as “interacting with employees” and both said that he is completely successful in his tasks.

Asked to describe a time when Zachary impressed them with his Chinese ability, Ireland 2 and 3 told somewhat different types of stories. Ireland 2 said that he once saw Zachary skillfully and clearly express himself to government officials and was even able to make jokes (“说了一些诙谐语言”). He called the performance “excellent” (很优秀). Ireland 3, on the other hand, said that he likes how Zachary complements his employees in Chinese even though their local managers would not do such a thing in front of others. Here, we see an excellent example of a foreigner using Chinese to do something that is both unusual in Chinese culture and appreciated by Chinese natives. Ireland 3’s response reminds us that just because something is rarely found in a culture does not mean that it
would be unacceptable.

Asked to describe a time when Zachary had acted in a surprisingly foreign way, two informants described linguistic difficulties Zachary had encountered. Ireland 1 indicated that when Zachary first arrived, he was a blank slate as far as domain knowledge was concerned and that technical terminology made for some communication difficulties. Ireland 2 said that Zachary once meant to say he “envied” someone, but instead said he “admired” him/her. Ireland 3 related a little story in which Zachary made a joke that seemed to shock the informant:

一次公司会计闻到他身上有香水味，就问他“美国男人是不是都要喷香水”?他说“是的，不喷香水身上会很臭”。(天哪)

Once, the company accountant smelled a perfume-like scent on Zachary and so asked him, “Is it the case that all American men have to put on perfume?” He said, “yes; if they don’t put on perfume, they will stink.” (Goodness!)

Reiterating the idea that Zachary’s linguistic weaknesses do not necessarily interfere with his professional effectiveness, the informants all said that the only professional tasks that give Zachary difficulty are the occasional technical term that he does not know.

The three informants also agreed on the value that Zachary brings to their company, saying that he is a bridge between the company and the American owners as well as overseas customers. The vice general manager, Ireland 2, saw Zachary primarily as a connection to customers, but the higher-placed Ireland 1 saw Zachary as someone who
could manage how the American owners understand what is going on in China. He said, when the US side asks, “how on earth can the Chinese have done this?” Zachary can explain to them how things work in China. Zachary himself described this role he plays, but described it as being a little more bidirectional, saying he also explains American behavior to the Chinese, as well.

4.4.4 Observing Ireland at work

Zachary Ireland usually works from home in Shanghai, keeping in touch with Wuxi and the US by phone, fax and email, so observing him speaking Chinese for extended periods of time required accompanying him on one of his one-day visits to the plant. The following is a description of the people and places Zachary saw over the course of about 6 hours on-site. During the entire period, Zachary only spoke Chinese and only interacted with people of limited English ability, making it unnecessary to have notes recording what tasks were completed in Chinese and which were performed in English.

On the day of observation, Zachary took an express train to Wuxi and then took a taxi to his factory. Because the factory is located in an industrial zone, the driver did not know where it was, but Zachary was able to talk him through the directions. Upon alighting from the taxi, Zachary smilingly upbraided the gate guard for allowing trash to be strewn about the entrance area, something that Zachary had apparently pointed out
during his previous visit.

Before entering the separate office building, Zachary went on the shop floor and visited each work station. He asked each worker how he and his family were doing and asked how work was. The workers had no news to report, but they appeared to appreciate being asked. At one station, Zachary discovered two new workers apprenticed to a vertical lathe operator. After asking all their names, Zachary told them that it may not make sense to have three operators for one machine, saying that in Australia, they have three machines for one operator. As he went around the shop, Zachary repeated the importance of “efficiency” (效率). On his way out of the factory building, he noticed an empty mineral water bottle lying around and called out the worker responsible for that space. He told him that the space is to be kept clean and the worker sheepishly acknowledged Zachary’s order.

Inside the two-story office building, Zachary checked in with the kitchen staff on the first floor and then the accounting department on the second. In another department, he reviewed a notebook of English vocabulary words that Zachary encouraged an employee to keep.

Finally, Zachary visited the large office of the general manager to go over the work plans. With the GM seated behind his desk and Zachary in a simple chair he pulled away from the wall, they went over orders in progress and the timing of shipments. They also
discussed their plans regarding a factory tour upon which they would shortly embark. Zachary’s company was doing well and needed additional space for expanded production.

A nearby half-empty factory was looking for a tenant and the local government economic development office connected them with Zachary’s company.

Zachary, the GM and the researcher took a van and headed to the economic development office and picked up two officials who would accompany them to the factory. In the van, everyone engaged in light chit-chat. Upon arriving at the other factory, a representative of the owner came out to greet the van as the owner was in a meeting. While everyone waited for the doors to the factory space to be unlocked, the owner appeared. He described the dimensions of the factory and Zachary explained what they would like to do with the space, were they to move there. With the factory owner keeping Zachary company, a walk through was conducted. After the shop floor, the tour continued to a separate office building where the managers work and live.

With the tour complete, the assemblage moved to the meeting/guest room located next to the general manager’s office. A minute or two was spent figuring out who would sit where; in the end, the owner of the factory space sat in a light chair pulled out from the wall so that he could face everyone from the center of the room; Zachary sat in one of the large leather seats against the wall on the owner’s left, next to the ranking government official present; the GM sat on a couch with the other government representative and a
factory employee, all facing the factory owner.

Zachary and the researcher refused the offer of cigarettes and then the Chinese people began conversing in Wuxi dialect. After a couple minutes, Zachary’s GM shifted to Mandarin, opening the door to Zachary’s participation. Zachary talked about the volume of business he expects to bring to their future factory space and asked about when they would be able to move in and for how long, if a deal were made. The owner responded and Zachary shifted the discussion to the topics of signage and the effect of adding a new address on official documents such as receipts. The talk soon moved to rent, with most of the discussion being conducted by the Chinese. Zachary never revealed his side’s position and closed by saying that he would share the information provided that day with his boss and wait for a response.

At this point, the negotiation moved to a restaurant, to be continued over lunch. Seating was assigned, liquor was chosen, toasting began and small talk was made. Periodically, the factory owner made a comment to Zachary related to renting the factory space such as “I’ve turned away many others who wanted to rent this space because I didn’t think they would make good tenants.” For most of the first hour and twenty minutes of lunch, talk was limited to general topics such as Chinese literature, history and politics. Finally, the government official talked to Zachary about what a reasonable price would be and Zachary returned by saying that reducing expenses is reasonable. The
factory owner had a private chat at the table with Zachary and Zachary said he would do what he can, again committing to nothing.

Lunch concluded with a final toast and Zachary drove the officials back to their office before taking his GM and the researcher back to their own factory. In the van, Zachary asked his GM to describe the factory rental situation as he saw it. The GM explained that the factory owner was asking for a price that is still a little high, but that he is under pressure to rent the space out quickly.

After just over an hour of interviewing Ireland 1, it was time for Zachary to drive the researcher, the GM and their accountant to the train station. On the way, the four chatted about the highly alcoholic banquet just attended, the price of cars in the US, and about Zachary’s favorite Chinese serial TV show. The Chinese were impressed by Zachary’s ability to sing the show’s theme song. Then, he and his GM sang a Chinese revolutionary song together. Upon arriving at the station, the GM took the driver’s seat to take the accountant home while Zachary and the researcher ran to catch the last convenient train to Shanghai.

4.4.5 Ireland’s portfolio evaluations

Zachary’s portfolio consisted of three email composition samples, two “occasional/spontaneous event” video clips and 13 “conversation” category videos. Of
the two Chinese colleagues invited to evaluate the portfolio, one found a replacement evaluator and the other encountered technical difficulties logging on. After two failed attempts, Ireland 2 gave up and ceased responding to email inquiries (he did not often respond to emails to begin with). Ireland 3, Ireland 1’s proxy, evaluated all of the video clips, but apparently did not notice the composition samples. Though he was asked to complete the three remaining portfolio items, he did not reply and had not evaluated these compositions by the time of writing.

4.4.5.1 Performance sample highlights

Made from only one day’s worth of material, Zachary’s portfolio contains a highly diverse set of performance samples: he was filmed greeting his employees, catching up with his factory’s general manager, visiting a potential factory rental site, participating in rent negotiation before and during a lunch banquet, chatting with government officials, and engaging in casual conversation with close colleagues.

Zachary’s three composition samples were found by evaluators to exhibit strong command of his domain but in need of improvement in grammar, word choice, format, punctuation and tone of voice. Based on evaluator comments, the key issue seems to be that Zachary’s letters appear to be literal translations of English. Zachary’s employee would particularly like to see increased clarity in Zachary’s compositions.
Several samples and the interview data already presented indicate that Zachary can also work on improving how his attitude is perceived. Samples 2, 3, 4, 11 and 13 show Zachary in performances in which evaluators – and sometimes the participants – are discomfited by his tone. Zachary’s use of “OK?” to punctuate commands, his bringing up the issue of China’s workforce lacking in efficiency, and tone of voice prompted lower scores and comments from evaluators in and outside of his organization. One evaluator (possibly TA ZYX) wrote,

“He uses many OKs. When someone uses OK like that, it always makes me feel uncomfortable. I feel that this person is either mad or impatient. It’s like that he is saying, OK, did you get it or not, in a very impatient way. So I, as the listener, feel that he thinks I am stupid or something. So in this video, he is using it in a Chinese context, so it seems even worse. But maybe he is just trying to get his point crossed. Maybe those workers are not doing a good job and he had enough of it. His face is still nice though. So I didn’t grade his cultural appropriateness too low. P.S. the video is behind the audio.”

In samples 4 and 11, Zachary asserts that the Chinese are very hard working, but are not as efficient as Americans. In the first sample, he makes this point to his GM; in the second sample, he makes the point at the lunch banquet. In both samples, most evaluators had no problem with the comment, but each time, one evaluator (and not necessarily the same one) felt uncomfortable with the topic. One evaluator admitted that Zachary may actually be right, but it is still not appropriate to say in these circumstances: “本片和中方老板的谈话内容不可以有这样的场合说，道理没错，可中国人会觉得没有面子。The subject of the conversation with the Chinese boss in this clip cannot be discussed in this
kind of context. The reasoning is accurate, but Chinese people will think it makes them lose face.”

The evaluators’ comments for video sample 3, in which Zachary tries to convince employees to put self-introductions on a wall in the cafeteria are even more pointed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The foreigner has organized his thoughts better but he needs to find a response other than the playful angry response.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whether what he meant is good or bad, he should use a better way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虽然表达了自己的要求, 但态度很不客气, 员工可能很容易产生抵触心理, 不利于工作效率的提高。Even though he expresses his request, his attitude is very impolite. It may make the employees start feeling resentful, which would not contribute to increasing work efficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不可以在说话时用手指着对方（除非双方在吵架）It is unacceptable to point at an interlocutor when speaking with them, unless the two people are arguing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The foreigner did well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s funny that I often hear people who work in China with Chinese people complain that Chinese people &quot;don’t listen&quot;. They just ignore your demands and act innocent. Haha...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Zachary Ireland performance video sample 3 evaluator comments

In his interview, Ireland1 indicated that he has counseled Zachary on his use of the phrase “you must” when giving commands, so the video samples are representative of typical performances. Ireland1 also said he thinks of Zachary as a boy, which may explain some employees’ lenience with Zachary’s potentially-overbearing behavior. If
Zachary’s aggressiveness is perceived as simply a sign of inexperience rather than maliciousness, he may find himself marginalized, but at least as an innocent rather than as a threat.

Zachary’s other weak spots were listening comprehension (brought up in samples 4 and 5), fluency, tones and rank-appropriate behavior (samples 7 and 9). Zachary admits that his listening comprehension and tones could be improved and the evaluators agree; the difficult point may be acting his rank according to Chinese custom. In sample 7, Zachary is unsure where to sit when negotiation over factory space rental begins in an office. After he takes his seat, he crosses his legs, which apparently is not acceptable in formal Chinese contexts. Sample 9 describes in detail what happened when everyone took their seats at the lunch banquet that followed the initial factory space negotiations. Some people point to a seat for Zachary to take, and after a moment of hesitation, he sits there. Because the seat in question would have been the host’s seat, someone said “today, Zachary is treating!” and the others laughed. The host of the banquet – the owner of the empty factory space – walked to the seat on Zachary’s right and is standing at it when the clip ends (table on following page).
The foreigner did not fight much over the main banquet seat. Perhaps he should have.

Nearly no talk. Guests are not supposed to sit down until the host sits down.

不知政府官员是否同行，如果有位置比较高的政府官员在场，让官员先坐可能更得体。I don’t know if the government official is in the same industry. If there is an official of relatively high rank in attendance, it would be more appropriate to let him sit first.

So-so

Although the foreigner did not treat everyone to the meal, he was the main guest because his decision was the most important in determining the rental of the new facility. It was not needed for him to sit in a lower ranked seat. This could be argued.

Am I supposed to evaluation their seating arrangement? I don’t have much knowledge on that. So I just gave him two medium score on cultural appropriateness and reference.

Table 4.10 Zachary Ireland performance video sample 9 evaluator comments

Judging from the comments, Zachary did not necessarily sit in an inappropriate seat, but could have waited longer to take his seat. It might have helped evaluators identify the seating arrangement if a panning shot of the room had been spliced into the beginning of the scene, showing the relationship of the table to the door of the room (shown in the table below).
As shown in the illustration above, there were three organizations represented at the banquet: the factory that wants to rent space out, the factory that wants to rent space, and the government office that wants to see the transaction take place. When Zachary took the seat that was pointed out to him and someone joked, “Zachary’s the host”, it indicated that in Wuxi, the seat facing the door is the host’s seat, as it is in northern China. With a
guest sitting in what would otherwise be the host seat, the actual host shifted the seating counterclockwise and sat to Zachary’s right. Using Shandong banquet seating standards, Zachary’s general manager, was then in the #1 guest seat on the host’s right and Zachary was now in the #2 guest seat, on the host’s left. It should be noted that it would have been difficult for the host to walk behind Zachary to sit in a seat that would make Zachary a #1 guest (i.e., on the host’s right), so there were physical limitations to how seating could have been arranged once Zachary took a seat.

Also, it is unknown if this particular seating arrangement in Wuxi can be interpreted using North China standards, but if they are approximate, then the Wuxi people in attendance would have perceived Zachary’s general manager as the power player in this situation. The GM’s obvious age advantage over Zachary would also suggest showing him more respect in the seating arrangement. Finally, if Zachary’s title in this context is “export manager”, then as far as everyone in attendance is concerned, Zachary really is subordinate to the GM.

In the spirit of identifying contexts for which American learners could benefit from more institutional training, video sample 7 is educational. In this performance, Zachary and his general manager are initiating negotiation over the rental price of empty factory space. As the comments reveal, Zachary did not contribute as much to the discussion as might have been possible. In order to have participated in this event, Zachary would have
had to been comfortable either understanding Wuxi dialect or, even better, comfortable politely guiding the conversation from Wuxi dialect to Mandarin. Training in how to participate appropriately in negotiation while protecting one’s interests and image would have been useful. An added challenge Zachary faced in this context was that even one of the government officials who was playing the role of matchmaker belittled Zachary and the researcher for not smoking, with the implication that real mean smoke. Without practice for such an experience, it would be difficult to create an appropriate spontaneous response.

There were no samples in Zachary’s portfolio with an average score of less than three, so the above-mentioned skills are merely areas in which Zachary – and other Chinese learners – could use further training. Zachary’s performances scored over 3.75 points in eight samples and 4 points and above in four, indicating that there were several areas in which evaluators felt he did quite well.

Zachary’s best performances had high scores for ‘question and answer’ and ‘domain reference’, indicating that he is able to interact with professionals in his field. He spoke with new vertical lathe operators about improving efficiency; he communicated business reporting requirements to company staff; he described to the potential factory space landlord what, exactly, his company intended to do in the new space. Unlike Blake MacDonald, there were rarely situations in which Zachary did not have the vocabulary to
discuss his business.

In terms of culturally-appropriate behavior, Zachary scored high points for waiting until after the factory space negotiation, after the banquet and after dropping off the matchmaking officials before asking his general manager what he thought of the deal (video 13). Zachary’s ability to humbly ask about things about which he is unsure of probably offsets the haughty attitude that the outside evaluators sometimes perceived in Zachary’s performances (video 5, video 13).

Zachary also scored well for giving compliments to his colleagues (video 14). The evaluators felt that his style was distinctly foreign but very effective at making his colleagues feel good. Two evaluators said:

在夸奖别人时，虽然用词不是最好的，但很有助于拉近和别人的关系。When he compliments other people, even though his word choice isn’t the best, it is very helpful in drawing the relationships closer.

抓住时机赞扬别人，是美国人的特点 Taking advantage of an opportunity to compliment others, that is a specialty of Americans.

Zachary’s highest-scoring performance was for a casual conversation with his general manager and accountant while on the way to the train station (video 15). Earning 4.32 points out of five, Zachary was able to discuss a popular television serial, sing its theme song, sing a revolutionary song with the general manager and even politely deflect
an uncomfortable question from his accountant regarding which actress in the serial he thinks is the most beautiful. Zachary’s friendliness in casual situations is probably another significant contributing factor to his colleagues’ overlooking unintentionally aggressive words and behavior.

4.4.5.2 Aggregate portfolio ratings by evaluator and criterion

In only one day, Zachary Ireland was observed in at least five distinct contexts: checking in on factory workers; discussing work with a colleague; negotiating rent; banqueting; casual conversation. Of these five, only two contexts produced performances rated at 4 points or above (discussing work with a colleague and casual conversation) and only one – casual conversation – produced only average scores of over 4 points.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zachary</th>
<th>Ireland 1</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>(n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Calculated by averaging all criterion ratings, not by averaging the three category averages for each rater.

Table 4.11 Aggregate portfolio scores, Zachary Ireland

If we take all the scores together, some of the old patterns return. First, the range of
scores among the evaluators was a sizeable 1.28 points, with the high and low points being Zachary’s subordinate and the male Chinese instructor, respectively. After Zachary’s subordinate, TA ZYX was still statistically the most generous evaluator. The difference between insider evaluators (Zachary himself and his subordinate) and the Chinese instructors was a middling 0.44 points. Like Eric Klein but unlike Isaac Chatham, the Chinese instructors were, on average, more strict with Zachary’s performance evaluations than was Zachary or his subordinate, giving 3.6 points between the three of them across all performance categories.

There seemed to be little difference in the evaluations across different performance categories in Zachary’s portfolio. With a range of 0.42 points, Zachary’s best scores were in “conversation” performances, while his “occasional” performances lagged slightly behind. The fact that the different performance types elicited very similar evaluations suggests that Zachary’s skills are evenly distributed (table on following page).
Table 4.12 Average portfolio scores by criterion, Zachary Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zachary</th>
<th>Ireland 1</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>TA average</th>
<th>Colleague minus average TA</th>
<th>Overall average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain reference</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of idea</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question &amp; answer</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* X indicates an n value of 2 or less

The highest-scoring criterion in Zachary’s portfolio was ‘question and answer’, followed closely by ‘organization of idea’, both earning “strong competence” ratings of 4 points or above. ‘Domain reference’ came in third. ‘Rhetorical effectiveness’ came in last, but its validity is suspect. The next lowest criterion score was in cultural appropriateness, earning 3.62 points – still “competent”, according to the ALPPS scoring rubric.
The preceding table shows that the domain insider and domain outsider evaluations did not differ by much, on average, but the Chinese instructors were stricter in every criterion. Ignoring ‘rhetorical effectiveness,’ the greatest differences between domain insider and outsider evaluations were in ‘adjustment to audience’ and ‘organization of idea’. Perhaps Zachary’s subordinate is accustomed to Zachary’s work style and is less influenced by it than were the outside evaluators.

4.5 Ben Coltrane

Ben Coltrane responded to an email sent to the Foreign Correspondents Club in Shanghai asking for volunteer research subjects and became the only non-American participant in this study. The fact that Ben is English does not affect the comparability of data because this study is about how Chinese perceive people trying to operate in a Chinese environment. Regardless of the culture from which a research subject comes, the standard against which they are being judged would be the same.114

When Ben was interviewed for this study, he was a 38-year old owner of his own property consulting business. He attended Leeds University and majored in Chinese and geography; at Leeds, Chinese majors had a choice of majoring in Chinese and geography, history or political science. Ben is married to a Chinese woman, has children, and had

114 Unless the subject were ethnically Chinese, which could potentially affect the comparability of the data because they are generally held to higher standards than are “foreigners”. The fact that they would be held to different standards is evident in the fact that overseas Chinese are not categorized as “foreigners”, regardless of how long their family has lived outside of China.
lived in Shanghai for the past 13 years. He has learned some French and German, rating his ability in each as 0 and 1, respectively.

4.5.1 Chinese learning background

Ben began learning Chinese in 1988, when he entered college. He had given up trying to learn foreign languages when he was 16, but when he reached college at 18, he realized that learning a foreign language could “open many new doors”. Ben said that Chinese and Japanese were the only two languages that a student could begin learning from 0 as a freshman at Leeds, and he chose Chinese because he could tell that it would be important in the future, because so many people were already taking Japanese, and because the Chinese major included a year in China (Taiwan) while the Japanese major included only three months in Japan. After a year of Chinese in Leeds, Ben spent sophomore year in Taiwan taking classes and engaged in a language exchange with a Taiwanese family. Sometime after graduation, Ben moved to Shanghai and has been there practically ever since. Other than living in a Chinese language environment for over 10 years, Ben credits his Chinese ability to listening to tapes during school.

Ben has used Chinese for much of his working life. He first went to China with a property company operating in Shanghai; following that job, he spent four years as China research director for an international property firm. He then moved up to become general
manager of that firm for two years, after which he started a property consulting business, which he had owned for five years at the time of the interview. His company had about 25 employees, all of whom are Chinese, and only some of whom speak English.

4.5.2 Interview with Ben Coltrane

4.5.2.1 Relationships with Chinese people

Ben said he does have close Chinese friends and then named his wife. He did not elaborate on who he considers to be “close”.

4.5.2.2 Foreigners Coltrane knows who use Chinese for work

The foreigners using Chinese for work that Ben knows are mostly in real estate and manufacturing and have middle and general management positions. He said he does not know any foreigners using Chinese for work in the applied or pure sciences. Ben indicated that the foreigners he knows who use Chinese for work “tend to be… independent spirits,” and “they all tend to deviate [sic] toward being the fixers in the company, managing high-level relationships.”
4.5.2.3 Coltrane on how he uses Chinese for work

Ben primarily uses Chinese at work. He tries to speak English sometimes so that his employees can improve their own language skills – one of the reasons they join a foreign-owned firm to begin with – but he finds that he is often understood better when he speaks in Chinese than in English, so it is more efficient to use Chinese.

Ben’s professional Chinese use consists 70-80% of speaking and listening, followed by reading and lastly, writing. He uses Chinese speaking and listening skills for meetings, site visits and general management; reading for research reports his staff produce as well as emails he receives and Chinese for writing emails to his accountant who does not speak English. Ben does not feel a need to take the time to improve his writing ability because he has employees who can write documents for him that he will read and edit before using. He said that it would take him a long time if he were to try to write many documents in Chinese himself. The only skill that Ben could think of that he wishes he could do better was reading.

Ben uses his Chinese outside of the office for site visits, but, as he said, “basically any Chinese social function seems to have a strong business link of some kind,” so any time he attends a social function and speaks Chinese, it is ‘professional’. He has hosted formal banquets with up to 12 guests and participates in banquets about once a month.

At first, Ben said it was difficult to isolate the value that his Chinese ability brings to
his company from the value that his 10 years’ experience brings to the business, but when he described what his Chinese ability does for his work, the central theme was trust. In his own words:

“[My Chinese] enables us to do a lot of work for government organizations or government-owned companies because they feel a lot more comfortable being able to look the boss in the eye and speak to them and be understood and hear a coherent answer.

…just as important I think is learning how to behave at some of the formal banquets and functions that I attend, and again, speaking Chinese is all part of that. Chinese people like doing business with others that have been around, they feel comfortable with, feel familiar with, it’s no different from anywhere else. You’re one of the boys, part of the team, you’re trusted, and part of that is being able to speak the language, having taken the trouble to do that.

A lot of people I do business with speak pretty good English, but we always communicate in their language. [Speaking only English,] you could have a business relationship, but you’ll never build a rapport. Things go wrong from time to time, and there are misunderstandings, so you need to be able to fall back on a bit of trust and rapport. It helps a lot. It doesn’t guarantee anything, but it helps.

4.5.2.4 Coltrane assesses his Chinese language ability

Acknowledging that he would be more modest in other contexts, Ben rates his Chinese skill 4 to 4.5 points out of 5 and says he is most comfortable with his ability to chair a business meeting with an outside party (e.g., a potential client). The situation in which Chinese people are most likely to not notice that he is a foreigner is when they call him from a list of sales leads and do not know who he is: “They get my name from a list, get my phone number, and they babble away, buying a golf course membership or
insurance. It happens a lot, people talk to me as if I could actually keep up with everything.”

Asked to describe a time when a Chinese person misunderstood what he was trying to say, Ben said it usually happens when he is thinking too much in English and is trying to translate as he thinks and word order or words themselves come out wrong. He also noted that “tones and I have never got along very well… Still, to this day, I can’t tell you what tone I’m using when.” He said that when he was learning, he believed that he could not possibly learn all the tones, so he concentrated on learning pronunciation and ignored tones. The researcher found during the observation period that Ben’s tones were, indeed, frequently inaccurate and his vowels often had a heavy British accent (e.g. 放 pronounced ‘fayng’). The portfolio assessment reveals, however, that these linguistic errors barely registered with the four Chinese evaluators.

Ben was also asked to describe an instance in which he was unsure of what he should do in a particular Chinese context. He described a recent experience of meeting the new party secretary of Shanghai\(^{115}\) twice in one week and each time being unable to recognize an appropriate time to give his business card. Ben also said that he has been to banquets in which he did not think to take his drink to the host’s table and thank him for his hospitality. He knows that it is customary in China to do so and that it is a good opportunity to make one’s acquaintance with the host, but he continues to be held back by

\(^{115}\) At the time, this was Xi Jinping, who had just replaced disgraced Jiang Zemin crony Chen Liangyu.
his Western upbringing that tells us dinnertime is for eating and it is during post-dinner
chit-chat that people socialize.

Ben thinks that his Chinese peers would think his Chinese language skills are “pretty
good” and that they would be proud of the fact that he can speak some of their language.
Ben is a very modest man and said that even though he can joke around with his peers in
Chinese he tries not inflict too many karaoke songs upon them. Ben has found that his
Chinese peers rarely correct his Chinese outright and instead ask for clarification if he has
said something incomprehensible.

4.5.3 Interviews with Ben Coltrane’s colleagues

4.5.3.1 Colleague backgrounds

Two of Ben’s employees participated in this study, and they will be referred to as
Coltrane 1 and Coltrane 2.

Coltrane 1 was a 40-something man who had been born in Jiangsu but moved to
Shanghai when he was a teen. He speaks Mandarin and his hometown dialect, but does
not speak any foreign languages. In the interest of protecting his anonymity, details of
Coltrane 1’s role in the company will not be published, but he has been with the company
for years and is very familiar with Ben and his daily activities. Coltrane 1 does not have
any foreign friends and the foreigners he knows are limited to Ben and his foreign clients.
Coltrane 2 was a young woman from east-central China who had also been at the company for some years and is also well-acquainted with Ben’s activities. She speaks Mandarin, her hometown dialect, some Japanese, some Shanghainese and English, with English being the foreign language in which she is most fluent. Unlike Coltrane 1, Coltrane 2 knows many foreigners from school and from work. In addition to Ben, the foreigners with whom she interacts the most include another Englishman with whom she used to work, an American-born Chinese who taught at her school, and an Italian that is in real estate and owns an Italian restaurant.

4.5.3.2 Coltrane’s colleagues on foreigners in Chinese language environments

Coltrane 1 said he knows “very few” foreigners who can speak Chinese and could not think of any names (“If you give me an English name, I have a hard time remembering it” 你给我英文名字，我记得不是很清楚116). The researcher interprets this to mean Coltrane 1 does not know any foreigners that speak Chinese. Coltrane 1 believes that it is difficult for foreigners to learn Chinese, just as he found it difficult to learn English. He added that Chinese poses particular difficulty because of its long history and unique orthography.

116 Good justification for giving foreign learners Chinese names that are actual Chinese names and therefore easy to remember.
Coltrane 1 believes it is possible for foreigners to learn to speak Chinese like a Chinese person, but also believes it is very difficult. Using Ben to demonstrate where difficulties lie, Coltrane 1 said that Ben has to pause and think about what he wants to say, a pause that Coltrane 1 interprets to be Ben engaging in mental translation. Coltrane went on to say that foreigners like Ben need the context of a situation spelled out for them while Chinese listeners can understand an issue without much background information being repeated for them.

Coltrane 2 said that of the many foreigners she knows, few that can speak Chinese. Of those that can, Ben’s is the best. Of the remainder, only one of Ben’s clients can speak Chinese relatively well and she gives him 3 points out of 5. Coltrane 2 also believes it is difficult for foreigners to learn Chinese, but if a foreigner were to study in China, learning would be much easier. Coltrane 2 believed firmly that foreigners can learn to speak Chinese as well as Chinese people.

Coltrane 1 and Coltrane 2 both hope more foreigners learn to speak Chinese; both said “of course” they hope more study the language! Coltrane 2 said that Chinese – like any language – is a tool, and once learned, will open up new job opportunities to foreigners. Coltrane 1 took the patriotic view, saying he hopes more foreigners learn Chinese so that more foreigners know about China’s long history and culture. He also believes that the more foreigners learn Chinese, the more opportunities Chinese people
will have to learn from them, including learning why the Chinese could have been invaded and bullied by foreign powers.

Coltrane 1 believes that foreigners that have learned Chinese can bridge China and the world, helping to promote China and let more people understand China. Coltrane 1 continued his learn-Chinese-for-China’s sake line of thought by adding that foreigners can also engage in lines of business in which they have strengths, thus bringing knowledge and experience to China from which the Chinese can learn. He added that there are many projects in China that require foreign experts. Taking this reasoning to its conclusion, the researcher asked what roles Chinese-speaking foreigners could play in China once China has learned all it needs from the outside world. Coltrane 1 replied that, because Westerners are always coming up with new and creative ideas, China will continue to lag behind for a few decades (这不是说中国一日两日能赶超的。因为你们是不断的有新的东西，远远超过我们，几十年).

4.5.3.3 Coltrane’s colleagues assess his Chinese use

Coltrane 1 and 2 were in complete agreement regarding their impressions of Ben’s overall Chinese skill, giving him 4.5 points out of 5. Furthermore, both said that this score includes culturally appropriate behavior, with Coltrane 2 adding, “he is very

\[117\] The researcher’s Chinese assistant had returned to work by this time, so Coltranes 1 and 2 were interviewed by the researcher himself.
Asked to rate Ben’s professional Chinese, both colleagues dropped their evaluation half a point to 4. Coltrane 1 explained the difference by saying Ben is less expressive in Chinese than in English, and that if Ben needs to give a report in Chinese, he needs his employees to gather information for him first, and if he is not already familiar with the content they provide, he may leave some things out. Coltrane 2 said that the only Chinese people Ben cannot understand are old government officials with thick accents.

Asked to describe a time she was surprised by a foreignism exhibited by a foreigner, Coltrane 2 said there was something “really minor” that she noticed about Ben’s work style. She said that Chinese people would usually wait until they have something to talk about before checking in on clients, but Ben’s style is to always push (“一直 push”), to have his employees continually call them on the phone. Coltrane 2 feels uncomfortable calling a client without having anything in particular to say, but she and the others do it anyway.

Coltrane 2 said that Ben can do anything professional that he wants to do in Chinese, and with half of his clients and all of his employees being Chinese, he must do many things in the language. She said his speaking is excellent, there is almost nothing he cannot listen to and understand and he can read fairly well, but he does not seem to write well. She explained that Ben can write by typing pinyin (the official Mainland
Romanization system) and selecting characters but often selects the wrong character. In the western world, this would be similar to a typo, but typos appear to be more confusing to Chinese readers than to American readers of English. Coltrane 1 also mentioned Ben’s typos, saying that there had been more incorrect characters in Ben’s emails a few years ago, but that he has improved greatly since then.

When Coltrane 1 was asked to describe a way in which Ben exhibits foreign behavior, he said that Ben always wants to know about outcomes. Chinese people tend to describe processes, but Ben does not want to hear the process, he wants to hear the results. Coltrane 1 said that Chinese people like to describe processes because it can be used to shift responsibility or to highlight one’s own accomplishments in achieving a goal. Coltrane 1 is not upset or annoyed by this focus on results, but he does feel that some useful information can be overlooked when processes are not described. Coltrane 1 believes there is nothing Ben cannot do in Chinese that he should be able to do, adding that Ben is an upper level manager, so he has people who can do for him those things which he himself may not be able to do in Chinese.

Even though Ben’s Chinese colleagues had no difficulty thinking of ways in which Ben’s language and behavior differ from their own, they were still very impressed by his Chinese ability and also had no difficulty describing how he operates successfully in a Chinese environment. Coltrane 1 said Ben has already become accustomed to following
Chinese etiquette and behavior (入乡随俗), including toasting at banquets with clients and lowering his glass when clinking for the toast. Coltrane 1 also mentioned that Ben is good at making jokes based on Chinese words that sound the same but have different tones.

Coltrane 2 was impressed by how Ben can interpret Chinese and English. She described a time when Ben introduced representatives from an American wood product company to government officials. Neither side could speak the other’s language nor could Ben’s English-speaking assistant interpret as quickly as Ben could, so Ben acting as interpreter. Coltrane 2 added that the government officials did not think any less of Ben for serving as interpreter\textsuperscript{118}, and on the contrary, were impressed by his ability. The key skill that set Ben apart from ordinary interpreters was that Ben had domain knowledge that allowed him to participate in the conversation he was interpreting.

Ben’s colleagues were explicit about how Ben’s mix of language and domain skills benefits their company. In their words:

Coltrane 1

It increases face time with clients which leads to many opportunities. …Chinese clients… are surprised to find a foreigner that speaks Chinese so well and who is so good at expressing himself, so it often leaves a better impression. After leaving a good impression, there are many opportunities.

\textsuperscript{118} Though paid well, interpreters in China are fairly low in the professional hierarchy, often just above secretary.
Coltrane 2

It is relatively easy for him to get close to Chinese people and then everyone really trusts him. The longer he stays in China, the better his Chinese gets, which shows that he has more and more experience in this industry. As a result, he has many people who rely on him.

他比较容易拉近中国人的关系，然后大家都蛮信任他。他来中国的时间越长，他中文水平越好，表明他在这个市场越有经验。所以他有很多信赖他的人。

Based on these comments, it is clear that the Ben’s Chinese colleagues believe the core value of his Chinese ability is that it allows him to establish trusting relationships with people in China who rely on his expertise to get things done.

4.5.4 Observing Coltrane at work

Ben Coltrane’s business was engaged in three areas: property brokerage, real estate consultancy and investment deals. In addition to owning his own company, Ben also helped an investment fund purchase real estate and was Chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai. His company had nearly 20 employees at the time of observation. Ben formerly also operated three real estate offices in Shanghai, but after he discovered that the employees were engaged in kickbacks landlords, he closed all three.

Ben was observed over the course of three days in the last week of August, 2007. He spoke English infrequently, using it during two meetings with foreigners and occasionally during internal meetings with English-speaking staff who appreciate the opportunity
practice. Ben did use English for his emailing and online reading, however. During the observation period, he engaged in the following activities using Chinese:

- Many phone calls to/from business contacts
- Several internal meetings with employees regarding projects in process
- External meetings with clients foreign and Chinese
- External meetings with potential landlords on behalf of Chinese and foreign clients

Ben’s Chinese use included listening, speaking and some reading, but little or no writing. Ben said it is inefficient for him to write in Chinese, so he has his employees draft documents for him and then he edits them before sending them out.

The ALPPS evaluators below sometimes commented that they could not see any ‘adjustment to audience’ in the video clips, perhaps because the portfolio consists only of video shot when Ben was the ranking person in the event and could unilaterally allow filming to take place. Therefore, in nearly all of the portfolio samples, Ben’s interlocutors are subordinates in his company. Based on observing Ben working with a variety of people, in person, the researcher can say that he did adjust his speech and behavior for different audiences.

In a meeting with the owners of a building that Ben’s client wanted to rent for a WOFE international school, Ben listened quietly as the potential landlords explained the characteristics of the property. For most of the meeting, the landlords mostly made eye
contact with the only Chinese person on Ben’s side of the table (his #3 subordinate). Near
the end of the meeting, however, Ben laid out his client’s position and what Ben
perceived to be the potential sticking points in a deal. At that point, the landlords began
talking to Ben directly. Finally, they named a price X and a contract length they would be
comfortable with; Ben said that his client would think it too expensive, but he’ll work on
it. The landlords reiterated that the price was fair for the location. On the way back to the
office, Ben instructed his subordinate to tell the client that the landlords want a rental
price of (X+0.25X), and to then tell them that Ben’s company can get the price down to X.
Ben’s understanding of the situation was thorough: his client wanted a particular building
and so he would try to get it, but as he said after the meeting that he didn’t “feel good
about” the deal. The men on the other side of the table represented the building owners,
but they were from two companies whose relationship was unclear. Ben described them
as “low-level people who would sell their grandmothers if they could.” Furthermore,
the building was located near a government office, which, as the landlords pointed out,
would require “跟公安局搞好关系” (making good with the Public Security Bureau) in
order for a foreign tenant to be allowed in.

At the above meeting, Ben was respectful and reserved, never letting on what he
really thought of the players involved. At another meeting, Ben was calculatedly less
respectful in order to demonstrate that he was the superior person present. That time,
someone who had met Ben two years earlier called him and asked for a meeting. The man, “William”, had left Century 21 and was going to open a real estate business with other former coworkers by poaching former clients. William asked Ben to meet him at a Starbucks on Nanjing Road, but when Ben met him there, William said the coffee shop was too crowded and noisy so they walked across a large park to Shanghai Square; Ben was not amused that William did not call ahead to say that the Starbucks was too crowded and to meet elsewhere. At Shanghai Square, William allowed the researcher to buy Dairy Queen ice cream for everyone (the researcher owed Ben a return-treat for lunch) and then proceeded to try to sell property in marginally-successful Shanghai Square to Ben. Ben listened but did not face or make eye contact with William very often.

When William was finished, Ben told him that he is interested in buying unfinished entire buildings, but not pieces of existing ones, leaving the door open to future meetings but not accepting the offer made in this meeting. William gave Ben his business card and Ben asked how William got his name; William said he got it from a list [probably at Century 21] that listed only Ben’s Chinese name and a phone number. Not having eagerly produced a business card when William did, Ben finally pulled out a card for William… except it was a card for Ben’s own business, rather than the fund for which he finds buildings to buy. The meeting ended, William made a couple overtures to shake hands with Ben which were eventually accepted. On the way back to the car, Ben said to the
researcher that as a source of market information, “William might be a useful person to have around, but I’m not sure if I would want him in my office.”

At meeting with subordinates in his office, Ben pointed out mistakes in an English PowerPoint that one of his employees was supposed to have edited already but had done so only perfunctorily. In his reserved way, he let his disappointment show so that the next job would be done better. These three meetings – and others – demonstrated at least part of the range of performances that Ben is capable of. Unlike many Americans who say “I am who I am – people need to take me as I am”, Ben deftly plays different roles when interacting with different people.

4.5.5 Coltrane’s portfolio evaluations

There were 11 samples in Ben Coltrane’s portfolio, fewer than the others because he did not engage in as many different performances as the other subjects did during the observation period. Nine of the samples are in the “conversation” category and two are in “occasional/spontaneous”. There were no composition samples in Ben’s portfolio. As he indicated in his interview, he does not usually take time to write in Chinese and instead has people write in Chinese for him and then he edits those documents.
4.5.5.1 Performance sample highlights

Ben Coltrane’s ALPPS portfolio was the second-highest-scoring portfolio in the study, mostly because Ben’s self-rating was so modest. No sample had an average score of less than 4 points, and the comments were generally positive. Ben was surprised to discover that outside evaluators perceived many of his performances very differently from the colleagues who know him.

First, the Chinese instructors sometimes pointed out Ben’s mixture of English and Chinese, as in sample 2. Probably because they are trained to disallow code-switching in class, the instructors may feel uncomfortable seeing a foreigner switch back and forth between languages. On the other hand, Ben explained in his interview that his employees would prefer that he speak English with them, so there is some *quid pro quo* at work when Ben chooses to speak one language or another.

Ben’s portfolio, like Zachary’s, also reflected the fact that conversation sample scores in ALPPS do not reflect tones and pronunciation errors. Both of these subjects admitted that they had ignored tones during the learning process and that their Chinese today reflects that. The researcher noticed many tone and pronunciation errors during observation and filming, but none were commented in Ben’s portfolio as they were in Zachary’s.

Ben was most surprised that some evaluators perceived performances as arrogant or
rude (video samples 5, 6, 7, 8). Ben is, by habit, a man of few words and a flat tone of voice; it is possible that his reticence and coolness are interpreted in a way that he had not imagined. Though his colleagues did not seem to feel the same as the Chinese instructors, it does indicate that Ben could give strangers the impression that he feels superior to them. Tone of voice is difficult to train, but through performance-based instruction and feedback, it can be modified.

Considering Ben’s high scores, there are many areas in which he performs very well. His evaluators were particularly impressed by his ability to handle ‘question and answer’ (videos 1, 9, 10, 11), handle multiple inputs at once, ‘domain reference’ and ‘organization of ideas’ (videos 3, 5). Ben had indicated in his interview that his industry experience, supplemented by his Chinese ability, are what make him valuable to his company; the ALPPS evaluations supported this by demonstrating that Ben appears to colleagues and outsiders as someone who knows his business well. He is familiar with properties on the market and with how to deal with people in the business. The last sample, video 11, shows Ben viewing a potential investment property and asking informed questions about the heating and cooling system and the business plan. Except for one or two outlying evaluator comments, the evaluators were always confident that Ben was an expert in his field.
4.5.5.2 Aggregate portfolio ratings by evaluator and criterion

The chart below shows the average score each evaluator and evaluator type gave to Ben’s entire portfolio (table on following page):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coltrane</th>
<th>Coltrane1</th>
<th>Coltrane2</th>
<th>Colleague Average</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Instructor Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Average</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 Aggregate portfolio scores, Ben Coltrane

The numbers reflect the pattern observed in reviewing the individual samples: Ben’s colleagues were the most impressed by his performance, giving him near perfect scores; second were the instructors, though TA YCS stands out for the strictness with which he rated the two “occasional/spontaneous event” category clips. If TA YCS’s single lowest 2.75 score is removed, Ben’s overall portfolio average rises from 4.13 points to 4.30 points.

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119 Sam’s portfolio contains only two ‘occasional’ type samples, and their scores were unreliable. Therefore, they are not included in this table.
Table 4.14 Average portfolio scores by criterion, Ben Coltrane

The lowest-scoring criterion in Ben’s portfolio was ‘cultural reference’, though this was largely due to Ben’s low self-evaluation score of 2.82; the other evaluators, on average, gave it over 4 points. The highest-scoring criterion was ‘question and answer’, at 4.63 points, indicating that Ben is skilled at interacting with Chinese people – hearing what they are saying and responding appropriately.
Mirroring the overall evaluation averages, each criterion in Ben’s portfolio was scored most highly by Ben’s colleagues, therefore differences between domain-insider colleague evaluations and domain-outsider Chinese instructor evaluations are a matter of degree rather than direction. The smallest difference between these two groups was in the criterion ‘organization of idea’, with an average difference of only 0.17 points. The greatest difference was in ‘domain reference’, with the colleagues giving Ben an average of 0.83 more points per performance than did the instructors.

4.6 Aggregate portfolio evaluations

4.6.1 Aggregate data by evaluator

First, a recap of average ratings from each category of evaluator:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Combined Portfolio Average</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Difference Average-Self</th>
<th>Colleague(s)</th>
<th>Difference Average-colleague</th>
<th>Instructors</th>
<th>Difference Average-Instructors</th>
<th>Difference colleague-TA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>-0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coltrane</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>-0.51</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Because there was only one composition sample, Isaac Chatham’s figures are for conversation samples only.

Table 4.15 Performance evaluations by rater type
The table above shows the average portfolio evaluation scores of each category of rater (self, colleague and instructor), as well as the combined average of all raters of a portfolio. Also included are calculations showing how far from the average each category of evaluator fell. One clear result of the data is that all of the foreign learners – on average – rated their own performances lower than the Chinese evaluators did. The subject with the greatest difference between the overall average and his self-evaluation was Blake MacDonald, whose overall portfolio score was also the lowest of the five subjects. The last column on the right also shows that the range between high and low evaluator category scores in Blake’s portfolio was relatively high, indicating that there was greater disagreement between evaluator groups than in other portfolios.

The subject whose self evaluation was closest to the portfolio average was Zachary Ireland, with a difference of only 0.11 points. The range between high and low evaluator-type scores in his portfolio was about the average, at 0.44, meaning that Zachary had the most accurate self-evaluation.

The table also shows that the instructors, on average, gave higher evaluations than did the subjects’ colleagues in three of the five portfolios, but lower evaluations in two of the portfolios (Ireland and Coltrane). The only connection between these two portfolios that is immediately apparent is that the instructors found both Ireland and Coltrane to
appear arrogant. If this is the reason for the difference, then it is possible that colleagues are less sensitive to visible demonstrations of authority than are outsiders who are in academia.

4.6.2 Aggregate data by criterion

The eight criteria for “conversation” category portfolio samples appeared in all portfolios, and thus could be used for a cross-portfolio comparison. The criteria for “composition” and “occasional/spontaneous” samples are largely subsets of conversation’s eight criteria. Composition samples have a criterion not found in conversation and occasional samples, ‘genre’, but not all portfolios had composition samples, and of those that did, there were very few, so genre is not included in this discussion. ‘Rhetorical effectiveness’ is not included in these calculations because it has been determined that the data in this study for this criterion is suspect.

The table upon which the numbers discussed in this section are based can be found in appendix L. This table shows the differences between rater groups’ evaluations for individual criteria. For instance, “Average Self-TA” is calculated by subtracting the average instructor rater score from the average self-evaluation for all samples in the subject’s portfolio.
### Table 4.16 Multi-portfolio average evaluation differences between rater types, by criterion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Self-Colleague Rating Difference</th>
<th>Average Self-TA Rating Difference</th>
<th>Average Colleague-TA Rating Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>-0.74</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
<td>-0.81</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Reference (^a)</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of ideas</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.69</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.35</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Data only from samples in which at least 2 Instructors gave scores for ‘domain reference’, indicating that these samples were, indeed, domain-referring samples.

The shaded cells in the table above represent high and low values for each column; these are the criteria in which there was the greatest agreement and disagreement between evaluator types.

The table shows that the category in which the foreign learners and their colleagues were in greatest agreement was ‘domain reference’, while their greatest disagreement was in ‘organization of ideas’. This implies that the foreign learners and their colleagues are “on the same page” as far as the learners’ professional knowledge, but that the foreign
learners may be organizing their thoughts much better than they think.

Subjects’ evaluations were most different from the instructors’ in ‘cultural reference’, with the instructors giving an average of 0.81 more points per sample than the subjects did themselves. The criterion in which the subjects’ evaluations were closest to the outside Chinese instructor raters was actually ‘domain reference’, with the subjects just barely thinking they know more about their profession than the instructors did. Keeping in mind that the foreign learners consistently rated their abilities lower than the other evaluators did, the fact that there was little difference between the foreigners’ and the instructors’ scores for this criterion may only mean that the instructors were equally underestimating the learners’ professionalism.

The smallest difference between colleague and instructor evaluations was, reasonably, in ‘cultural appropriateness’. Both evaluator types are Chinese natives, equally qualified to assess cultural appropriateness. The largest difference between colleague and instructor evaluations was not ‘domain reference’, but delivery: on average, the subjects’ Chinese colleagues scored this criterion 0.49 points higher than did the instructors. This was the largest average difference in criterion scoring between any two evaluator types. The second largest difference between colleague and instructor ratings was ‘domain reference’, with the colleagues giving scores an average of 0.28 higher than the instructors did.
Finally, the average difference between foreign subjects’ scores and the scores produced by people of Chinese origin was compared to see in what areas foreigners’ self-image differ most greatly from their Chinese observers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Average self – Chinese native rating difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>-0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>-0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Reference</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of ideas</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.66</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.17  Average self – Chinese native rating difference, by criterion

Because, on average, the foreigners always rated their performances lower than the Chinese evaluators, the average difference between foreign/Chinese ratings (-0.66) will be taken as a baseline. The greatest differences from this baseline were in ‘organization of ideas’, ‘delivery’ and ‘question & answer’. In the first two criteria, the foreigners tended to score themselves much lower than the Chinese did, indicating that the
foreigners expressed themselves better than they thought they did. On the other hand, the foreigners were a little more confident in their ability to engage in back-and-forth with Chinese people. If we take -0.66 as the number that reflects an accurate self-judgment, then it may be the case that the foreigners are not as good at Q&A as they think they are.

4.7 Comparison of interview-based evaluation & ALPPS evaluations

Under the circumstances, it was difficult to create a control group for the subjects and their Chinese colleagues’ ALPPS data. Instead, these evaluators were asked to judge the foreigners’ Chinese ability on a scale of 1 to 5 before ever seeing the portfolios. It was hoped that these scores would reflect the colleagues’ impressions that they carry in their minds on a daily basis – the concept that ALPPS tries to recreate through portfolio sample evaluations. The colleagues were asked to assign a number to the foreign coworker’s general skill and domain skill; these numbers were averaged and compared to the ALPPS ratings, which are also averages of domain and non-domain samples.

The interview ratings were based on the individual’s overall impressions of the foreigner’s performance. These are unscientifically but realistically affected by the evaluator’s modesty (for self-ratings), like/dislike of the subject, professional relationship to the subject (superior/subordinate), recent interactions with the subject (“recency effect”) and the evaluator’s internal framework of standards (their own set of performance
The ALPPS evaluations were based on performance samples that were recorded during 1-3 days with the subject, that were only recorded when the subject thought that all present would not or could not object to being taped, that were reduced to 11-19 in number and chosen by the researcher in an attempt to produce a representative portfolio, and that were edited by the researcher to lengths that could be conveniently viewed. The final product portfolios appear to newcomers as whole objects, but they are the result of many editorial decisions that, even if they average each other out, may not be able to substitute for personal daily knowledge of the subjects’ performances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self Interview</th>
<th>Self ALPPS</th>
<th>Δ</th>
<th>Colleague1 Interview</th>
<th>Colleague1 ALPPS</th>
<th>Δ</th>
<th>Colleague2 Interview</th>
<th>Colleague2 ALPPS</th>
<th>Δ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coltrane</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Average Δ  Self Interview - ALPPS | -0.19        | Average Δ Colleague Interview – ALPPS | 0.03
| Average variance from 0 Δ | 0.44          | Average variance from 0 Δ | 0.42

Table 4.18 Interview evaluations vs. ALPPS evaluations

380
The table above shows that:

- Two out of four foreigners gave higher self-ratings in their interviews than they did in their ALPPS evaluations
- Five out of eight Chinese colleagues gave higher ratings in their interviews than they did in their ALPPS evaluations
- Of the remaining three Chinese colleagues, two were rating the same foreigner, Ben Coltrane, meaning their general impression of his abilities may be lower than the impression the samples created
- The two foreigners whose Chinese colleagues gave higher scores in ALPPS than in their interview-time ratings – Ireland and Coltrane – were the same two foreigners whose portfolios were rated more highly by the colleagues than by the instructors.
- On average, individuals’ interview evaluations and ALPPS evaluations were about 0.4 points apart from each other, positive or negative, regardless of whether the individual was rating himself or rating someone else.

Even though a majority of Chinese evaluators gave higher ratings in their interviews than in ALPPS, 5 out of 8 is very close to the 50% figure found amongst the foreigners themselves. If evaluators of both kinds are just as likely to overestimate their skills as underestimate them vis-à-vis ALPPS, which may indicate that the ALPPS portfolios are
representative samples. The only portfolio that consistently produced higher scores in ALPPS than in the interviews (Ireland) – implying the portfolio was not representative – only had two domain insider evaluators: Zachary and his subordinate. As mentioned above, two data points is difficult to base a strong theory upon.

Averages provide a great amount of useful information, but there is a point at which averaged data hides as much as it reveals. One of the powerful attributes of ALPPS is that it allows employers to analyze the individual skills they want a candidate to exhibit. A candidate with an overall portfolio rating of 4.5 points out of 5 is probably a very qualified candidate for most jobs, but if there were a job opening for a disposable chopstick salesperson and the samples in this portfolio always receive scores of 2.5 for ‘rhetorical effectiveness’, then the candidate is probably not ideal for this job. The HSK, OPI and DLPT 5 each produce numbers that are supposed to describe a test-taker’s overall ability, but they cannot describe ability to the level of detail needed by potential employers screening candidates for domain-specific jobs.

4.8 Western and Chinese definitions of “good communication”

Conscious and unconscious theories of language can inform how an individual interacts socially: people who believe communication is the sending and decoding of linguistic code may be likely to discount the importance of culture; those who believe
that communication is essentially self-expression may pay insufficient attention to the reactions of their audiences. To see if the foreign and Chinese research participants believe in a common theory of language, they were asked to define the top three attributes of “good communication”. The table below summarizes their responses. For ease of interpretation, Western responses and Chinese responses are highlighted in different shades (table on following page).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Control &amp; Delivery</th>
<th>Engagement/listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Klein</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein 2</td>
<td><strong>Listen first, then give an opinion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein 3</td>
<td>Fluent speech</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>Ability to read/write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald 1</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald 2</td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Chatham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham 1</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham 2</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Ireland</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>paying attention</td>
<td>succinctness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland 2</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
<td>being actively friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland 3</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coltrane</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coltrane 1</td>
<td>Have the gift of gab</td>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coltrane 2</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Body language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.19 Comparison of Western and Chinese definitions of “good communication”
Three out of the five foreigners (60%) and 7 out of the 10 Chinese (70%) said “listening” were important for good communication, demonstrating that more Chinese place importance on the ability to listen to others speak, as opposed to being able to “express oneself”. There were many other factors involved in their ALPPS scores\(^{120}\), but the two subjects above that did not list “listening” were also the two subjects with the lowest overall portfolio ratings.

Note that Ben Coltrane, who appeared to demonstrate the most Chinese behavior, *only* said “listening”. The Chinese interviewees stressed the importance of listening before speaking and acting, ostensibly because speech and action should be undertaken with full cognizance of their potential effects on the audience, something that can only be done if one already understands the audience’s perspectives. As Sunzi wrote, 知己知彼，百战不殆 (*If you know yourself and know your opponent, you will not lose 100 battles*).

Blake MacDonald did not list ‘listening’ as one of his hallmarks of good communication, but in explaining his views, he demonstrated a deep understanding of Chinese communication. He said, “I don’t buy into that whole mystique about face, [that] you can only say things that are positive to a superior, etc. It’s important, yes, always followed? No.” At first, it seemed as if Blake ascribes to the so-called American proclivity for bluntness. However, he immediately followed with, “As long as both parties “get it”, it’s ok to say something nice that means something bad,” demonstrating

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\(^{120}\) Including time in-country, fluency, and perceived attitude.
that Blake may, in fact, “buy into” the importance of face. Dishonesty is willful intent to 
mislead, but when both parties understand context and intertextual cues, a statement does 
not need to be literally true in order for two interlocutors to understand the true meaning. 
Though Blake may not believe he believes in face, he clearly understands its role in 
Chinese communication and may practice it, as well.
CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The combination of interviews, field observation and portfolio evaluations has produced strong data that contributes to understanding how Americans do and should operate at advanced levels of Chinese ability. This chapter uses the collected data to answer two of the research questions posed in chapter three: 1) What are foreigners doing with advanced Chinese skill and 2) What speech and behavior is effective with Chinese interlocutors. Following the section on the research questions is a discussion of how ALPPS use can be improved. A fourth section discusses implications for Chinese language pedagogy suggested by the research results and a final fourth section outlines possible future research directions. The third research question, how advanced foreign language ability is best assessed, is discussed in chapter six.

5.1 What are foreigners doing with advanced Chinese skill?

The interviews and observations revealed that foreigners are performing a wide variety of jobs and tasks using advanced Chinese skills. They can be found in the US
embassy and consulates, in law firms, in consulting and market research companies, publishing, health care, public relations, real estate, journalism and in manufacturing. Where they do not seem to be found in numbers is in the hard sciences or in large, established organizations. The recruiting process and interviews produced one surprising piece of data: few Chinese-speaking foreigners were found in large organizations.

Possible reasons for this include:

1. Staffing decision-makers at large multinationals feel more comfortable hiring English-speaking, Western-trained Chinese to cross the culture barrier because they are a known commodity

2. Chinese-speaking foreigners possess interpersonal and language skills appropriate to China but are short on the technical skills that companies need

3. The kind of person that achieves advanced Chinese skills is not happy in a large corporate environment

4. Established organizations do not know how to take advantage of technically-skilled advanced speakers of Chinese when they actually have them.121

121 One of the author’s expatriate cultural training clients was sent to China for three years by an auto parts manufacturer. He learned Chinese well while he was there; when he returned to the US, his employer could not find a position that used his new skills so he quit and started his own consulting company.
The jobs in which advanced Chinese speakers are found tend to be communication-intensive jobs. The tasks that Chinese-speaking foreigners in China seemed to do most often were:

a) negotiating
b) managing staff
c) holding internal and external meetings
d) establishing/maintaining relationships
e) bridging cultures

Interviews with subjects’ Chinese colleagues revealed that the Chinese can conceive of foreigners holding any kind of job they want once their Chinese reaches an advanced level. These interviewees could imagine Chinese ability as being useful to the foreigners themselves because it opens up tremendous economic opportunity to them. The interviews also found that about half of the Chinese colleagues imagine Chinese-speaking foreigners as serving China’s interests. These interviewees mainly thought of Chinese-speaking foreigners as cultural bridges that would bring advanced technology and practices to China and help China export its [superior] culture to the rest of the world, so that the whole world can understand and become friendlier with China.
5.1.1 What advanced Chinese speakers currently do well

The observations and ALPPS data demonstrated that there are certain tasks and skills that advanced foreign speakers of Chinese are doing well; the ALPPS data also demonstrated that different types of evaluators pay more attention to different skills.

The observations, interviews and ALPPS portfolio data indicate that foreign speakers of Chinese tend to perform the following oft-rehearsed tasks well:

f) greeting

g) leave-taking

h) making/answering phone calls

i) starting meetings

j) casual conversation with friends

The ALPPS evaluations also produced data that demonstrates what functions the foreign subjects perform well (table on following page):
Figure 5.1 Average criterion ratings given by all Chinese evaluators across all portfolios

The illustration above shows that the Chinese portfolio evaluators found the subjects’ ‘question and answer’ and ‘organization of ideas’ skills to be the best, meaning that they were able to express themselves fluently and intelligibly.

5.1.2 What Chinese speaking foreigners can do better

Keeping in mind that all of the columns in the preceding chart represent average skill levels of over 4 points (“strong competence”), areas in which the foreigners were less strong were ‘cultural appropriateness’ and ‘cultural reference’. The research subjects
were better at expressing themselves – what many teachers and non-practitioners still call “communicating” – than they were at integrating culturally. Eric Klein specifically mentioned that he wished he were able to use Chinese idioms and classicisms in his speech and writing because it would improve Chinese people’s perception of him. Considering the respect and pride Chinese people feel toward their culture, if foreign learners can further improve their cultural skills, they would probably be even more effective communicators.

Observation, interviews and ALPPS evaluations revealed several tasks that the Chinese-speaking foreigners could do better:

1) Writing – The foreign participants usually only write in Chinese to send emails and text messages, but even these were found by Chinese evaluators to have many genre, typographical, format and punctuation errors. Eric Klein recognized that, as a PR man, he would be treated with more authority if he were able to draft his own press releases in Chinese but he and Ben Coltrane no longer have time to acquire writing ability comparable to their other skills.

2) Reading – The subjects seemed to be able to read what they want, but some wished they could read faster.

3) Handling embarrassing situations – Embarrassing situations do not arise
often, but the impressions left by them can be deep.

4) Negotiation – People like Eric and Ben who have worked in China for at least 10 years develop good negotiating skills, but people like Zachary wish they could effectively conduct formal price negotiations sooner immediately after graduation.

5) Formal events/situations, including banquets

6) Actively directing conversation flow

7) Reading between the lines – Ben Coltrane’s colleague and Eric Klein both indicated that foreigners need to improve their ability to pick up on contextual information to anticipate what is going to be said or done

8) Being able/interested in making friends with ‘average’ Chinese people – Largely a function of cultural difference, people make friends with people they feel they can understand and who understand them. As the cultural criteria above make clear, there is still a cultural gap between Chinese-speaking foreigners and Chinese people.

9) Getting Chinese people to do what the foreigners want them to – The ALPPS criterion ‘rhetorical effectiveness’ was intended to assess this ability, but the scores revealed that there was little or no agreement among the raters what this criterion actually meant. The observations and interviews revealed that
foreign Chinese speakers are improving in this respect, but they might able to do it better. As Isaac Chatham said, they didn’t teach you how to make a sale over the phone at Taida (Taiwan University 台湾大学).

5.2 What creates a good impression in Chinese eyes?

Napoleon Hill wrote that successful people are successful because they make those around them feel good. The heart of this study is identifying how advanced foreign speakers of Chinese can leave a positive impression on the Chinese around them. The data collected produced some clear answers that have strong implications for Chinese language pedagogy, discussed in section 5.5.

5.2.1 Behaviors that produce positive impressions on Chinese evaluators

Eric Klein said that when Chinese people are surprised by his Chinese ability, it is usually not because of his language skill but because of his understanding of Chinese culture. Not only is cultural knowledge the weakest link in foreigners’ Chinese skill, it may also be the most critical. Chinese portfolio evaluators were impressed when Eric was able to demonstrate his knowledge of the Chinese regulatory environment, when Blake could recognize photos of different sites around Beijing, and when Zachary put on a good show of amity with the host during a formal banquet.
Chinese evaluators also gave kudos for avoiding conflict in a culturally appropriate way. Examples include when Eric Klein politely told his boss’ wife how difficult it is to help a Chinese person obtain a visa at the US embassy but that he would try anyway, and when Ben Coltrane was informed that he would not have access to an investment property’s business plan and instead of pressing the issue, he moved on to the next topic.

Evaluators were also impressed by foreigners’ domain expertise, with the domain insiders themselves most impressed. In a culture where superiors are traditionally expected to “have all the answers”, managerial authority in China is often based on the manager’s domain expertise in addition to his/her organizational skills. The foreigners’ ability to demonstrate expert knowledge of their fields made them respected by the Chinese with whom they worked, even when – or perhaps especially when – the foreigners were acting in a way that outside evaluators perceived to be arrogant. When Ben Coltrane interprets for foreign and Chinese clients, they do not see him as the “lowly office translator” (his words) because, as his subordinate pointed out, he is able to contribute to the conversations.

Two skills seemed to impress Chinese evaluators even though they were also described as ‘foreignisms’: giving compliments and using the Chinese court system. Zachary’s colleagues wrote that his penchant for giving compliments is un-Chinese, but that it makes them feel good. Blake’s coworkers thought that taking his former landlord
to court to recover a rental deposit was very un-Chinese – most Chinese try to avoid the court system at all costs – but were impressed that he had the courage to do so and the ability to succeed. It should be noted, however, that Blake’s method of recovering the deposit had not been successful by the time the researcher arrived – the landlord refused to return the deposit, regardless of the court order. Perhaps Blake would have been more successful going through a middleman or some other “more Chinese” method for recovering his money.

5.2.3 Foreign behaviors that make Chinese uncomfortable

Part of being able to make others feel comfortable is avoiding what makes them uncomfortable; the interviews and portfolio comments were particularly useful in obtaining this data. The most common cause of Chinese discomfort with portfolio performances was the effect that certain English phrases had on the foreigners’ speech. Eric Klein wrote that he adds “Do you know what I mean” and “Do you understand what I mean” [in Chinese] to his utterances when he is unsure if his Chinese was clear, but his outside evaluators felt this demeans the listener, as if they are not smart enough to understand what he is saying. Eric and Zachary Ireland often add “OK?” to their utterances, which also made the outside evaluators feel uncomfortable, and for the same reason. Sometimes, Chinese evaluators felt that a foreigner’s tone of voice sounded
condescending, as well.

Chinese participants also indicated that their foreign colleagues seem more ‘foreign’ when they are unable to pick up on contextual cues to understand a situation or pursue action. One of Ben’s colleagues mentioned that Ben often wants things to be explained from start to finish when a Chinese person would take certain information for granted. Eric himself said that sometimes Chinese people expect him to anticipate their needs and when he does not, they are unhappy.

Finally, some Chinese informants were sensitive to foreigners’ pickiness. Some Chinese say they have a “good enough” (差不多) work ethic, meaning that a job does not need to be done perfectly in order to move on to the next task. More than one foreigner in this study was described as being more detail-oriented than a Chinese person would be. The researcher does not suggest that foreign speakers of Chinese become more sloppy workers, but instead, find a way to package their carefulness in a way that might be less noticeable to a Chinese audience, i.e., how would a picky Chinese manager effectively achieve a high level of precision without causing discomfort?

5.3 Informed use of self-evaluated foreign language ability

Most of the foreign language assessment conducted in international business research consists of self-rating, so one of the goals of this study was to revisit the question of
self-rating validity. Mats Oskarsson (1984) found that advanced foreign language learners tend to underestimate their own skills, a finding the data in this study appears to support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Combined Portfolio Average</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Average minus Self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coltrane</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klein</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Comparison of portfolio self-ratings and portfolio average ratings

Though underestimating one’s own ability did not increase as actual skill increased, all four research subjects that evaluated their own portfolios rated themselves lower than their Chinese evaluators. Because advanced speakers of Chinese consistently underestimate their Chinese ability vis à vis their Chinese evaluators, self-rating is still useful as long as researchers understand that self-rating results are relative and not necessarily reflective of how Chinese people perceive the research subject’s ability.
5.4 How ALPPS can be improved to produce more useful results

In addition to addressing the academic research questions above, another goal of this study was to test out the ALPPS assessment tool itself. At the time of writing, ALPPS had not yet been tested for what it was designed to be: a platform on which Chinese domain insiders evaluate the Chinese ability of advanced foreign Chinese speakers in their field. Other than in this research study, ALPPS has only been used to create portfolios for students currently enrolled in the Chinese Flagship program at the Ohio State University, portfolios which only contain samples of students performing in classroom environments and which had only been evaluated by a handful of Chinese natives. This section outlines a number of suggestions regarding ALPPS design and the processes of creating and evaluating portfolios.

5.4.1 Changes to ALPPS design

The first suggestions are intended to improve the database’s user-friendliness and may even already be slated for implementation in the future iterations of the program:

1. Allow users to reach samples by selecting the portfolio subject’s name and then viewing thumbnails of the samples in that portfolio. Users currently choose a class year (relevant only to students in the Flagship program), and then a portfolio and then a performance category type (e.g., “conversation”).
If an evaluator does not know what categories contain samples, then s/he must use a drop-down menu to click into each performance category to find out. This may be why more than one evaluator missed entire categories of performance samples, despite having directions to the contrary.

2. The file description field is currently the only place where performance contexts can be described. This field is short and cannot display Chinese characters. There should be a field or fields for each sample that captures the five elements of context: place, audience, roles, time and script (PARTS). This should be filled in by the portfolio subject, as s/he would be the person most familiar with the context.

3. Make video viewing faster. Most people use the speed of YouTube and similar online video sites as their standard for how long it should take videos to download, and ALPPS videos seem to download more slowly, even in the US.

4. Create a performance review function that allows users to compare scores earned by domain performance samples and non-domain performance samples. For this function to be meaningful, a better system for identifying domain and non-domain clips would be necessary: it is currently left to each evaluator to determine if a clip is domain-relevant.
5. The criteria in ALPPS were designed for use by educators and are clearly academic in nature. Were ALPPS adapted for public/business use, it may be useful to add criteria such as, “how did this performance make you feel?” or “based on this performance, how trustworthy would you imagine the subject to be?” These criteria are not captured by any existing assessment tool but they are among the most important questions a potential employer has about any job candidate. A Likert scale with radio buttons could be added for these questions:

How did this performance make you feel?

Very uncomfortable///uncomfortable///neutral///comfortable///very comfortable

○1 ○2 ○3 ○4 ○5

6. Add the field “year born” to the account creation screen so that future users can see if portfolios are rated differently by Chinese of different ages. Young Chinese people have different attitudes regarding hierarchy, politeness, listening, etc, and foreign learners need to know if they are performing effectively in the eyes of a variety of age groups.

7. Add an “About the portfolio subject” page that evaluators can read before beginning evaluations. It is important that evaluators know the role(s) the learners play in order to make accurate judgments about ‘cultural
appropriateness’. This could be accomplished by channeling users through an uploaded resume or autobiographical sketch before beginning evaluation.

5.4.2 Changes in the portfolio creation process

As use of ALPPS expands, a set of standards for portfolio sample creation should be made that provides guidelines regarding:

a) Sample content (including audience reaction, see below)

b) Sample selection

c) Ideal audio, video quality

d) Ideal file size

e) Suggestions regarding how to effectively record/capture both sides of phone conversations

The process of portfolio creation will also need to have more input from the portfolio subjects themselves. They should be responsible for shooting, editing and uploading the videos, writing the context descriptions and categorizing each clip as “domain” or “non-domain”. If portfolio reviewers can easily see which categories of clips (“conversation”, “composition”, etc) are populated with how much content the portfolio owners will be motivated to fill gaps and shortfalls by uploading clips of their normal performance ability instead of only uploading the occasional excellent
performance. This would be more efficient than involving editors who must judge the representational quality of each sample.

5.4.3 Changes to the portfolio evaluation process

As described in chapter three, evaluators were provided with a set of instructions on how to use ALPPS to find and then evaluate samples. Missing data as well as numerous comments left by evaluators suggest that an evaluator training process is necessary in order to obtain useful data. If ALPPS becomes a commercial product with domain evaluators around the world rating portfolios belonging to people they do not know, the training program must be scalable and easy enough to use that evaluators will actually complete reading/watching it. Being compensated for evaluations is not sufficient motivation to watch a long instruction video or manual.

The most critical issue is that the rating criteria often meant different things to different raters. For some, ‘delivery’ included tones and pronunciation, while for others ‘delivery’ only represented the ability of the foreign speaker to get his point across. Many portfolio samples showed foreigners speaking with poor tonal accuracy, and yet only six samples out of 324 received a ‘delivery’ score of less than three from any rater, and five of those were from OSU Chinese instructors, who could be expected to be a little stricter regarding tones and pronunciation. If samples with poor tones could still earn 3 points or
more for ‘delivery’, then perhaps evaluators did not believe tonal accuracy fell under any of the given criteria.

Some raters were unclear on the difference between ‘cultural reference’ and ‘cultural appropriateness’. One rater, apparently an OSU Chinese instructor, wrote in the comments that she interpreted ‘cultural reference’ to be knowledge of informational culture and ‘cultural appropriateness’ to be behavioral culture, which is how the researcher interpreted it. Unfortunately, the foreign learners and their Chinese colleagues do not have access to these concepts from Hector Hammerly (1982) that are taught in the Department of East Asian Languages & Literatures at the Ohio State University, nor would it have been practical to add an explanation of the terms to an already-long instruction manual on how to use ALPPS.

Evaluators were encouraged to view the evaluation criteria in English and Chinese before evaluating samples because the translations can be helpful in understanding the academic terms used in English (e.g., rhetorical effectiveness), but even this created some confusion. The criterion translations were supposed to aid evaluators understand what each criterion assesses, but it seems that some translations, though literally accurate, may not mean the same thing. For instance, one evaluator commented that criteria with 能力 (能力 ‘delivery’ translated as ‘expression ability’ and 观点组织能力 ‘organization of idea’ translated as ‘idea organization ability’) have stronger meanings in
Chinese than in English; perhaps they refer to a person’s overall skill rather than to a specific performance. That is, a person can deliver one speech better than another, but “ability to express oneself” is a personal attribute. Alternative Chinese translations may need to be found for these terms.

The criterion ‘rhetorical effectiveness’ poses a particular challenge in terms of obtaining ratable material and obtaining a common understanding of what it means. Rhetorical effectiveness, the effect an individual’s language use has on his/her audience, is a crucial criterion in an assessment tool designed to reflect audience opinions, but it seemed to be completely unclear to ALPPS users in this study. Based on the evaluator comments, part of the problem was that the portfolio samples often showed the foreigner’s language production but not the reactions of his Chinese audience. Future sample production instructions should include guidance on how to tactfully record the results of learner performances. Because Chinese people are more likely to express their reaction to a performance *ex post facto* by talking with a friend about it or by adjusting their behavior in accordance or defiance of the performance, it is difficult to record a reaction at all. Using portfolio evaluators who know the subject and/or the audience may resolve this problem if they are instructed to rate ‘rhetorical effectiveness’ based on their personal knowledge of the sampled performance and its outcomes. Even if material for rating rhetorical effectiveness can be recorded, evaluators need to know what, exactly, it
means. Part of the evaluator instruction process should be a clear explanation – with examples – of what constitutes different levels of ‘rhetorical effectiveness’.

Evaluator training should also include instruction on how to leave comments. First, evaluators should be shown how to protect their own identity when leaving comments. One foreigner deftly referred to himself in the third person in his comments, making it more difficult to identify him (though when there is only native English speaker leaving comments, it is easy to identify the foreign subject’s own text). Some Chinese evaluators referred to their relation to the portfolio subjects, which could help subjects deduce their identities. One Chinese colleague even wrote “I am the person in this video.” This was deleted from the comments included in the appendices. Also included in comment-writing instructions would be guidance on how to write useful comments. Ideally, comments should explain why an evaluator rated the way s/he did as well as explain how s/he reacted to certain specific elements of the performance.

One of the visions for ALPPS’ future involves paying a large number of domain professionals to evaluate foreigners that they do not know working in their field. This may be more manageable than identifying and training native speaker evaluators who actually work with the subject foreigners, but there is still a compelling reason to include foreigners’ colleagues in portfolio evaluation: their ratings will be informed by daily experiences with the subject. It is difficult for video clips of language production –
especially 1-2 minute long clips – to exhibit an individual’s full range of skills, especially skills that only exist in negative, such as conscious decisions to not engage in argument or nitpicking; meeting someone through a third party introduction that took place well before video taping of the actual meeting; being a good listener. It could be that including these individuals is simply cost-prohibitive and that the data produced by strangers will be just as relevant as that produced by known colleagues.

Finally, if outside domain evaluators are hired to complete evaluations, then the pool should be large enough that evaluators can be rotated and avoid “evaluator fatigue”. ALPPS data on when each evaluation was carried out reveals that, over time, the instructor evaluations began to even out at around 4 points.
The instructors evaluated portions of different portfolios on each day, eliminating the possibility that each day’s evaluations just happens to represent one entire portfolio evaluation. This is borne out by the fact that two instructors evaluated an average of more than one portfolio/day.
5.5 Implications for Chinese language pedagogy

5.5.1 Test what the learners need to be able to do

This study found that different raters focus on different skills; for instance, language teachers focus on production skills like ‘delivery’. Assessment tools should assess what the assessment subject needs to demonstrate to users of the data. In high school, users of language assessment data are teachers trying to judge their own performance, administrators judging program performance, and parents judging everyone’s performance. At advanced levels, however, users of language assessment data are employers, potential employers and teachers who hope to prepare their students for employment. Therefore, assessment of advanced skills should reflect what employers want/need to know about a candidate more than what a language teacher may want to know.

This study found that language teachers seem to attach a different level of importance to ‘delivery’ than do native speaking domain professionals. Assessments such as the OPI and HSK reflect their linguistics/language teacher origins by focusing on learners’ general linguistic skills and in relatively culture-free environments. Domain professionals need their foreign peers to have general skills, but they also need them to know their field, as well. ALPPS assess both general and domain skills, and, since assessment often drives instruction, use of ALPPS for learner assessment promotes the
instruction of employable skills to foreign language learners.

5.5.2 Teach high-use/high-value skills

Some tasks that Chinese-speaking foreigners perform in the course of work are encountered frequently while others are infrequent but have high social stakes. These skills should be practiced in classes where learners can receive feedback and re-perform until improved because the social consequences of learning on the job can be great. These include:

1. Listening – Have students practice asking questions after long speech samples, practice lengthy conversations for which listening is crucial to participation, practice actual telephone conversations in the target language

2. Reading between the lines – Have students perform in contexts in which there is a subtext that requires appropriate reaction or appropriate non-action

3. Negotiation – Have students role-play negotiation situations, as in Chinese 750 at Ohio State, using real goals and real research to map out and practice a plan of action

4. Apologies – Practice contextualized exercises, as done in Chinese 760 at Ohio State.

5. Formal writing – Requires long-term practice, feedback and revision, but will open up a wide variety of professional endeavors to successful learners. This skill is particularly important for US-based jobs in which much Chinese communication
would take place via email and fax.

5.5.3 Accommodate un-Chinese but effective behavior

This study found that Chinese people are unaccustomed to being complimented frequently, but also it can be a powerful social bonding agent. There may be certain cultural practices that Americans engage in that, even though foreign, can be encouraged and even practiced in Chinese class so that the learners can establish and nurture relationships more successfully in a Chinese environment.

5.5.4 Treating linguistic accuracy & cultural skills

This study found that the two lowest average-scoring criteria across the five learner portfolios were ‘cultural appropriateness’ and ‘cultural reference’. Linguistic accuracy is important and necessary, but attention to tones, pronunciation and grammar should not reduce instructional energy applied to practicing culturally-appropriate behavior. This includes giving feedback on and practicing:

a) Appropriate tone of voice in order to avoid sounding “arrogant”

b) Excising use of English phrases that may sound innocent in the US, but in China sound arrogant

c) Anticipating needs and fulfilling them without being asked
d) Banquet etiquette

e) Resolving conflict without involving the authorities

All five research subjects had, at most, four years of formal Chinese instruction. Increased seat time alone would not necessarily result in more culturally-appropriate behavior, but training individuals to change their behavior in a multitude of contexts probably does take more than the four years most students spend in college. If, as the federal government believes, learning the Chinese language alone takes 4.5 years of college-level study, then learning to act and react in a culturally-appropriate manner surely takes at least as long. In our native culture, we spend at least 20 twenty years learning the basics of how to behave appropriately; with appropriate behavioral training/modification, this process can be approximated in a foreign culture during a learner’s educational career.

5.5.5 Foreigners are who the Chinese allow them to be

It came out in the interviews with Chinese professionals in China that many people imagine Chinese-speaking foreigners as conduits for importing Western knowledge for Chinese use and exporting Chinese culture for foreign appreciation. It is a difficult skill to teach, but American learners of Chinese would be well-served to have some pre-graduation practice in dealing with Chinese expectations that foreigners learn
Chinese for the China’s sake.

This issue often arises when Chinese people want American learners to perform patriotic songs or say how much they love China; Americans know they are in such a situation when they feel like “tools”, to use the common parlance. The author felt this most when he performed in Chinese holiday celebrations and the Chinese Bridge Competition, and has heard other Americans describe similar feelings. Much like rock stars who feel like they have become puppets of their agents and marketers, it is common for American learners of Chinese to experience a stage in interaction with Chinese people in which they feel like they are being used and feel a need to push back; to continue the entertainment analogy, this is the point at which the performer sighs and says, “when did it stop being about the music?”

One of the greatest lessons the author learned in competing in the Chinese Bridge Language competition is that performers must come to terms with the interests of everyone who has a stake in the performer’s success. To the performer, it may be “all about the music,” but to the people whose instruction and support will be required to put on a decent concert, it’s about many other things, including money, pride, fame, and so on. American learners of Chinese who hope to be received well in China should have opportunities like competing in Chinese Bridge so that they can begin to figure out how they will effectively satisfy the patriotic interests of their Chinese friends and tutors while
at the same time, maintaining their free will in a culturally appropriate manner.

5.6 Future research

No study is exhaustive in its analysis of data or perfect in design; there are always possibilities for future research that builds upon the original study. First, additional domain insiders who know the five subjects can be contacted and asked to complete portfolio evaluations, further strengthening the validity of that category of data. Another follow-up study would be to identify and invite 2-3 Chinese domain experts in the five subjects’ fields who do not know the subjects to evaluate the portfolios. This data can then be compared with the existing data from domain insiders who do know the subjects to see if there are any significant differences that would need to be taken into consideration in the event ALPPS is commercialized using domain expert evaluators-for-hire. Still using the data already created, portfolios can be created for Chinese natives working in the five domains covered in this study. These portfolios would then be evaluated as control samples. In addition, more could be learned about the meaning of ALPPS evaluations were the evaluators to be given follow-up interviews on the subject.

In the process of recruiting research subjects, it appeared as if advanced foreign speakers of Chinese are more commonly found in small businesses. The recruitment
process used in this study relied greatly on personal introductions, and so it is possible that multinational organizations were underrepresented simply due to a lack of connections in that community. It would be useful to conduct a survey of the kinds of jobs and organizations in which advanced speakers are found. If it is the case that advanced foreign speakers of Chinese are disproportionately found in small business, a follow up study would ask human resource and management professionals in multinationals why they think this might be the case.

Four of the five individuals that agreed to participate in the research had liberal arts backgrounds; their working in relatively non-technical domains could have made it easier for non-experts to judge their performances. Were the research subjects engaged in highly technical fields such as engineering or law, there may have been greater differences between expert and non-expert evaluations. Because of the intellectual property issues related to technical jobs, data security would be crucial when creating portfolios for individuals in such jobs. Federal employees also work in environments with significant security considerations. With $250,000-1,000,000 spent to produce a single advanced government foreign language speaker\(^\text{122}\), it could be useful to conduct portfolio assessments among this community, as well. In both cases, data security could be protected by creating and evaluating portfolios on local servers accessible only through the employer’s intranet.

\(^{122}\) Personal communication, Galal Walker, August 5, 2008.
Between August 2007 and June 2008, five non-native speakers of Chinese were observed and evaluated on how well they were able to communicate professionally in the target language. Over the course of that year, it became apparent that there are significant differences in how different demographic groups approach advanced foreign language assessment. Some of these differences have important implications for how Chinese – or any foreign language – is assessed.

6.1 Formal advanced Chinese language assessment today

6.1.1 Who is interested in Chinese language assessment and why?

For the most part, Chinese language assessment today is an activity limited to students, instructors and language program administrators. Students take tests to prove they have mastered the taught material and can move on to the next level of instruction; instructors give tests to measure their students and evaluate their own efficacy;
administrators follow test results as an indicator of their own performance. Except for foreign language learners in the military and the Foreign Service, Chinese language assessment in the United States is primarily designed to serve the needs and interests of the education community.

In China, it is common practice to share foreign language test results with the non-academic community. The Chinese standardized test of English ability is a common yardstick that employers use to identify candidates for positions requiring language skill: an applicant with Band 8 English ability is supposed to be in the top tier and qualified to be a beginning interpreter. In the United States, there is no analogous standard for foreign language ability. Learners do not put their OPI rating on their resumes because the ACTFL and ILR scales are not known – or intended to be known – by the general public. A Chinese person can say s/he has Band 8 English and others will respect that; an American can say s/he has ILR 3+ proficiency in Chinese and most people will require an explanation.

6.1.2 By what means are skills assessed?

As described in chapter three, there are three main methods of assessing advanced Chinese language ability: the OPI, the HSK and the military’s DLPT. As useful as these tests may be for establishing a baseline for comparing students – and teachers – to one another, the interview is artificially social and the paper tests are artificially objective.
The OPI was designed by Americans to assess ability in European languages and not designed to assess ability participating in European culture. As a result, the ACTFL and FSI OPI are better at testing culturally-appropriate performance the closer the target culture is to American culture. Chinese language and culture, diametrically opposed to American culture in many respects, is not well reflected in the OPI. Conversations that might not take place in China are required to take place in an OPI so that the results can be comparable to tests in other languages. For example, American culture is relatively role-insensitive. As many Americans are fond of saying, ‘I am who I am, and people just need to get used to that’. Chinese culture, on the other hand, is highly role-sensitive, the result of thousands of years of Confucian thought. Depending on the roles of the actors involved, some situations may require total silence on the part of the learner, even if s/he could have responded to an utterance in the target language. Without cues that describe the different roles being played by tester and test-taker (e.g., teacher/student; manager/subordinate; friend/friend; supplicant/government official and vice-versa), it would be difficult to engage in culturally-appropriate conversation.

The HSK and DLPT are artificially objective in that they presume that the more items a student answers correctly, the “better” his or her Chinese ability is. Both the Chinese and American tests are based on the Western scientific belief that holds there is an objective Truth and, through testing, we can establish how close to that truth the
test-takers have come. If a test-taker answers 99% of questions correctly, then his or her Chinese must be 99% good. Standardized tests only measure a test-taker’s ability to take that test. Testing experts talk about validity and how their tests reflect reality, but these tests can only be said to reflect the reality in which educators live.

6.2 Using informal assessment to inform a new mode of formal assessment

6.2.1 How informal assessment works

Informal assessment is the mental image we carry of those around us, a mosaic made up of the impressions left by every performance we see others make, or hear about others making. Each time we interact with someone else, that other person interprets our intentions and consciously or unconsciously, makes note of how we made him or her feel. When people ask, “what do you think of [so-and-so]?”, they are asking for an informal assessment to add to their mosaic of impressions about that person.

The term ‘informal’ seems to imply inferiority to ‘formal’ assessment, as if informal assessment is less reliable because it is less “scientific”. Informal assessment is certainly less quantitative than formal assessment: when Chinese people discuss foreigners’ Chinese ability, they do not say “so-and-so is an ILR 2+ in reading, 3 in speaking and 2+ in writing.” But qualitative is by no means invalid. In fact, subjective language assessment may actually be more valid than the ‘objective’ tools described previously.
The process that Americans use to hire employees shows that they are already comfortable with the idea that informal assessment based on first-hand experience may be superior to formal assessment data. Job applicants are first screened on the basis of formal data in the form of a cover letter and resume. Resumes are expected to contain quantification of the candidate’s accomplishments (articles published, sales made, etc), but as the saying goes, some people only “look good on paper.” Finalists for most jobs are selected based on the way they make interviewers feel. Applicants that are able to make interviewers feel impressed and/or comfortable are often hired, and sometimes hired over people with more technical strength because “team playing” is more critical to success than number-crunching. Outside of foreign language education, then, the American working world is already set up to judge individuals based on the soft skills upon which our mental assessment mosaics are based.

6.2.2 Personal attributes that affect informal assessment

Informal assessment may be subjective, but as long as the biases of those doing the assessing can be taken into account, the assessment will still be useful. In fact, the biases themselves may be useful if an assessment subject is expected to interact with people of the same demographic as his or her evaluators. The research conducted on five advanced Chinese speakers using their language ability for work demonstrated that informal
assessment in China is influenced by at least the following factors:

- **Evaluator age**

  Based on interview and ALPPS data, Chinese who are older than the assessment subject are more likely to be forgiving of the subject’s behavior. The general manager of Zachary Ireland’s factory did not take Zachary’s occasional inappropriate behaviors and utterances seriously, attributing them to youthful inexperience rather than intentional arrogance, as some younger evaluators did.

- **Evaluator’s experience with foreigners**

  Chinese who had little interaction with foreigners were more likely to have positive impressions of the foreigners’ Chinese ability than did Chinese natives with significant experience with foreigners.

- **Evaluator’s experience with Chinese-speaking foreigners**

  Chinese who had high exposure to Chinese-speaking foreigners seem to have higher standards for successful communication than those who had little basis for comparison. This will be a key factor as American schools produce more Chinese-speakers.

- **Evaluator’s personal knowledge of the foreigner being evaluated**

  Assessments by Chinese people who worked with the subjects, on average, differed from Chinese who did not know the subjects by nearly half a point, positive or negative depending on the subject. This indicates that the fullness of the mental mosaic one has of another person has a distinct effect on one’s overall impression.

The fact that demographic factors affect informal assessment is real life. Some occupations will, by their nature, require advanced speakers of Chinese to interact regularly with Chinese natives who have little or no experience communicating with foreigners, let alone Chinese-speaking foreigners. Such jobs could include Peace Corps
volunteers, businesspeople working in remote areas, and journalists. Applicants for such jobs could reasonably be required to have lower Chinese ability because they will be able to achieve just as positive an impression upon their audiences as those with greater skill would with more cosmopolitan Chinese. Conversely, individuals working with Chinese in major cities will be held to increasingly higher standards. The competitive environment for English speakers in China has already changed. In the past, simply being a native speaker of the language was sufficient to find a good English-teaching job. Now, better paying and better located schools require a Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL) certificate. In the near future, Chinese organizations will have higher expectations for foreigners’ Chinese language and culture ability, as well.

6.3 Combining formal and informal assessment to meet the needs of tomorrow’s assessment users

If current formal foreign language assessment tools do not measure real life communicative ability, then a useful assessment tool must be able to include some form of informal assessment. Advanced non-native Chinese language speakers of tomorrow – of which there will be many more than there are today – deserve to be evaluated using a system that accurately reflects how they are perceived in their target environment. Such an assessment tool must meet tomorrow’s needs.
6.3.1 Who will be interested in foreign language assessment and why?

This research found that Chinese language learners already using their Chinese for work are not interested in assessing their language skills for anything except curiosity (and to do a doctoral student a favor). Their target audience has already told them that their ability to communicate in Chinese culture is sufficient to make a living, and there are few forms of positive feedback stronger than that. Future advanced language assessment tool users will still include students and educators, but their relationship will be different, and a new group of interested parties will be added: employers.

Students traditionally hope to score well on language assessment tools so that they can earn an A grade for their transcripts; teachers hope their students score well so that they can feel successful and so that they can show this success to their superiors, who in turn share good scores with their superiors. As mentioned earlier, foreign language assessment has, to this point, largely been by and for people within educational institutions. It is especially apparent during an economic downturn but no less true during times of prosperity that the role of education is to train society’s members to be effective contributors; for most people, this means being effective workers.

The Chinese have always known that education is directly tied to personal and national economic stability, but Americans are just beginning to reconsider cutting education in times of economic stress. As more schools initiate Chinese programs, there is a growing awareness that learners of Chinese are being trained to create economic
opportunity for the learner as well as the learner’s home area. This changes the relationship between teacher and student from a dyad whose horizons are limited to institutional education to a mentor-intern relationship in which the teacher is consciously preparing the learner for work.

With this in mind, foreign language assessment tools need to reflect the interests of those learners’ potential employers. Educators previously only needed a baseline against which to compare their students to each other and themselves to their colleagues; now they need assessment tools that reflect the judgments of those who will work with their graduates-to-be. Those potential colleagues are native speakers of the learners’ target languages, the individuals whose informal assessments will decide the learners’ effectiveness in the target culture.

As these advanced foreign language speakers rise through the ranks in their employing organizations, the employers will have a previously unrecognized interest in assessing their employees’ language skills. The federal government has done this with military and diplomatic employees for decades, but in the face of continuing globalization, American business is now forced to follow suit. To take advantage of labor price arbitrage, General Motors has moved much of the development of its next-generation electric car to China, resulting in a high level of interaction between Chinese and American engineers. Though few – if any – of the American-born engineers
speak Chinese, in 10 years, there may be several, and companies like GM will need a way to assess their employees’ increased effectiveness in working with Chinese counterparts.

6.3.2 Meeting the needs of learner, educator and employer

One attribute of foreign language assessment needed by learners, educators and employers alike is that it reflect an individual’s “true” abilities. Because skill is in the eye of the beholder, the only way to ascertain an advanced foreign language learner’s ability is to solicit the judgment of target culture natives, and preferably, natives who are familiar with the professional domain into which the learner is going or already is working. In reality, this is what traditional foreign language assessment has always been trying to approximate: a score of 95% on the HSK meant that the learner should be very successful in a Chinese environment. Now, thanks to the internet and digital data storage, performance-based portfolio assessment allows interested parties to have direct access to how a learner is perceived in the minds of target culture natives.

This dissertation has proved that Chinese people can and will assess foreign learners’ digitally-captured performances. The Chinese participants in this study did not appear to worry about their or the subjects’ potential loss of face – when they saw appropriate speech and behavior, they praised it; when they say inappropriate speech or behavior, they noted it. The participants also proved that teachers often have different opinions of
learner performance than do working professionals. Individual portfolios and individual samples showed that, time after time, Chinese professionals are more concerned with a foreigner’s professional effectiveness than linguistic accuracy. Far from confirming the belief that Americans do not need to learn Chinese well in order to succeed in China, this finding means that what most Chinese teachers are teaching – and assessing – is out of sync with the needs of the labor market.

Foreign language assessment tools subtly frame the content and methodology of instruction. A not-so-subtle case in point is the Chinese high school entrance exam or 高考: in order to pass this test, learners must memorize a tremendous amount of information and be able to regurgitate it verbatim (like the old Imperial Examinations). Therefore a “good student”, i.e., a successful student, is one who sacrificed social and practical skills for memorization skills. The result is that graduates of the best universities in China are book smart but often ‘work stupid’.

The HSK, DLPT, AP exam and, to a lesser extent, the OPI, have a similar effect on Chinese language instruction in the United States. “Good students” are expected to master the linguistic aspects of the language at the expense of mastering professional skills and culturally-appropriate behavior. Like Chinese engineers hired by foreign manufacturers, these good students of Chinese must quickly learn how to be effective communicators in China after they graduate. Many of them succeed, but not necessarily
because of what they learned in school. In Blake MacDonald’s case, it was his summer job at a Taiwanese bubble tea shop that taught him what he needed to know; for Isaac Chatham, it was selling advertisements in a Taiwanese magazine; for Ben Coltrane, it was working for a property consulting company.

If upper level foreign language programs in the United States used a performance-based portfolio assessment tool such as ALPPS to evaluate their learners, and employed (figuratively or literally) non-academic native speakers to assess those learners, a natural virtuous cycle would begin. In order to create portfolios, Chinese instructors would need to create opportunities for their learners to perform; in order to impress the portfolio evaluators, Chinese instructors would need to train their learners to perform well and in a culturally-appropriate manner. For advanced learners learning a trade as well as Chinese, instructors would need to create opportunities for learners to record themselves engaging in domain-specific performances that domain experts can evaluate.

If instituting a system of performance-based portfolio assessment sounds like a large undertaking, it is. But it is an undertaking well worth the expense. Imagine how many resources are spent training ACTFL OPI raters only to assess how well learners can impress language teachers. Imagine how many resources have been spent developing and administering the HSK only to assess whether or not a foreigner should be admitted to a
Chinese university, a sojourn of 4 years, at most. Imagine how many resources have been spent developing and administering the DLPT only to be able to tell commanders in Iraq that a particular learner of Arabic chose the right multiple choice answers more often than not.

With a performance-based portfolio assessment tool, learners, educators and employers can see for themselves how the learner conducts meetings, gives speeches, makes apologies, calls old friends for favors, pitches a proposal, and so on. If institutional users of the assessment tool cannot speak the target language, they can rely on the score data to tell them how the learner’s real or potential colleagues themselves thought the learner performed; if the users do speak the target language, they can use the scores as well as judge for themselves how well the learner performed.

If a potential employer were to receive a resume from an American trained to advanced levels of Chinese that said the applicant had ILR level 4 Chinese, the employer would probably ask, ‘but what can he do?’ Using the current education-centered assessment paradigm, the answer would be “he is able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations.” Given that response, the employer might be forgiven for repeating his question, ‘but what can he do?’
Using a performance-based portfolio assessment tool, a job applicant, career counselor, teacher, or administrator can say an individual “can chair a meeting that Chinese subordinates feel respects their viewpoints while maintaining authority,” “can give a speech on [a subject in the learner’s domain] and receive questions afterward in such a way that Chinese peers were impressed” or “can draft a press release in Chinese that reflects well on the organization to a Chinese audience.” In the same vein, if a company had two openings for bilingual Americans, one for a sales manager and one for a project engineer, two portfolios with an average score of 4 out of 5 could further inform the employer which candidate is considered more social in a Chinese context and which is more likely to thrive in a technical position.

Real life assessment is a mosaic of impressions left upon an individual’s interlocutors. It is the sum total of every time someone says “you deserve an award” and every time someone says “you’re wrong. Do it my way.” Traditional foreign language assessment produces a number that is supposed to substitute for this multifaceted and intersubjective mosaic. Thanks to technological advances, it is no longer necessary to use substitutes in foreign language assessment. Performance-based portfolios have finally given everyone with a stake in foreign language learning direct access to practical and meaningful foreign language assessment.
EMAIL RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR AMERICAN SUBJECTS

Subject: Request from a friend/former student of ---
Dear [potential American participant],

[Lead paragraph for people I do not know]
--- referred you to me as someone with advanced Chinese ability currently using the language for work, and I would like to ask for your participation in my dissertation research. I am writing my doctoral dissertation on what Chinese-speaking foreigners do with Chinese at work, and how well we are doing it.

[Lead paragraph for friends]
I really am going to graduate someday… and you can help me do it! I am writing my doctoral dissertation on what Chinese-speaking foreigners do with Chinese at work, and how well we are doing it. Since you are someone with advanced Chinese ability currently using the language for work (right?), I would like to ask for your participation in my study.

Details are found in the attached consent form, but in brief, I would like to observe and record your work-related Chinese language use over a 2-4 day period sometime in August. At the end of my visit, I would interview you on the topic of your language use.

Using video recordings and possibly document samples, I will create for you a digital language performance portfolio in an online database. You, anonymous Chinese peers and Ohio State Chinese language instructors will then evaluate those performance samples.

We hope to develop the database into a sort of “Monster.com” for foreign language speakers, with potential employers finding staff with the combination of language skills most appropriate for their needs. Your data will remain in the database for as long as you wish and/or as long as the database exists.
I will be able to show my appreciation for your participation with a small honorarium, but the real reward will be the creation of your language portfolio; in the near future, people will likely have to pay for this kind of portfolio.

If you would be willing to participate in my research, I would like to schedule a time for a brief screening chat on Skype. If we can continue the study together, please review the attached consent form, copy-paste it in its entirety into an email composed in your own email account, type your name where it asks for a signature and email it back to me. Following receipt of your completed consent form, I will contact your employer asking for permission to follow you while you work. Securing that, we can then work out the dates for my visit.

Sincerely,
Patrick McAloon
PhD candidate, Chinese language pedagogy
The Ohio State University
APPENDIX B

RESEARCH SUBJECT RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR BBS POSTING

Hello!

I am a PhD candidate at the Ohio State University writing my dissertation on foreigners with professional-level Chinese language ability and how the Chinese with whom they interact evaluate them.

I am now seeking individuals in Beijing or Guangzhou/Shenzhen to participate in my research, which involves observing the participants at work and creating online language performance portfolios that they can use to demonstrate their skill to current and future employers.

If you know any foreigners who use advanced Chinese ability for work that could participate in my research -- or are one yourself -- I would like to get in touch with you. My email is mcaloon.1@osu.edu.

Thank you!

Patrick McAloon
Westland, MI

Patrick McAloon is a PhD candidate at the Ohio State University writing his dissertation on Americans with professional-level Chinese language ability and how the Chinese with whom they interact evaluate them.

McAloon is seeking individuals to participate in his research which involves observing the participants at work, and using digital samples of their language use to create online performance portfolios that they can use to demonstrate their skill to current and future employers.

If you know any foreigners who use advanced Mandarin ability for business work in Beijing, Shanghai or Shenzhen/Guangzhou that could participate in his research -- or are one yourself -- please get in touch with Patrick at mcaloon.1@osu.edu for more details.
APPENDIX C

EMAIL RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR CHINESE SUBJECTS

(Chinese translation at bottom)

Subject: Request to participate in Chinese language study
Dear [potential Chinese participant],

As you know, I have been following [Foreign subject] in order to learn about how s/he uses Chinese at work. A key portion of my dissertation research is to ascertain what Chinese people think of Foreigners' Chinese [language] ability.

Even though we have met in person already, I am emailing you to preserve your anonymity in this phase of my research.

I would like to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed after work for about 20 minutes on the topic of [Foreign subject]'s ability to perform in a Chinese environment. When I return to the US, I will upload specific samples of [Foreign subject]'s Chinese use to an online database (mostly video clips, but possibly including written documents) and then ask you to go online and evaluate those samples as a peer in the field.

Further details of this study and your potential participation in it can be found in the attached consent form. If you are willing to participate in my research, please let me know by return email. We will then set up a time for you to meet my sister-in-law at a convenient location for the interview. At that time, she will ask you to sign two copies of the attached consent form, one for you and one for me.

To show my appreciation for your help, you will receive a USD$20 cash gift after our interview, but do know that your participation will contribute to improvement in how the Chinese language is taught in the United States.

Sincerely,
Patrick McAloon
PhD candidate, Chinese language pedagogy
The Ohio State University
主题：邀请参与中国语言文化课题研究项目
尊敬的---，

就您所知，我最近一直在跟进[foreign evaluation subject]的工作情况，希望能深入了解他/她在工作中使用中文的情况。我的论文的一个关键部分是了解国人周围的中国人是如何评价这些外国人的中文水平。

虽然我们在办公室见面，但为了不泄露您的身份，故以电子邮件向您发出此邀请。

我想征求您的意见，不知您是否愿意在下班后在办公室附近或在您住宅附近接受30分钟的采访，采访内容是关于[foreign evaluation subject]在中文环境中工作表现方面的问题，进行采访的人是我的研究助理，高洁萍老师。

回美国后，我会将所搜集录制的关于[foreign evaluation subject]用在中文环境中工作的一些片段上传到网上的一个数据库，然后我会邀请您上网，以同事的身份对我所录制的内容进行逐个评估。

随信附上的同意书对此研究项目及您的参与进行了详细描述。若您同意参加，请用电子邮件或短信回复。在我们约定的采访，我的研究助理将向您呈交此同意书。

采访后，为了表示感谢您的参与，您将收到150元的现金奖励，同时借此机会感谢您对提高外国的中文教学法所作出的贡献！

祝好！
裴贽
俄亥俄州立大学
中文教学法在读博士
手机：13954255252
APPENDIX D

ALPPS INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH SUBJECTS

How to evaluate your portfolio in the
Advanced Language Performance Portfolio System (ALPPS)

1. Go to http://test.alpps.org/

2. Sign in with the following:
   Username: [your email address]
   Password: [the part of your email address before the @]

3. From the control panel, click on ‘Edit my information’. If you would like to
   change anything, please feel free to do so; if it’s fine as-is, just close that new
   ‘edit information’ browser.

4. From the control panel, click on “Performance Evaluation”

5. You have:

   11 conversation clips
   3 composition samples
   4 occasional/spontaneous events clips

To begin evaluation, choose one of the above categories, then watch a clip.

6. Watch as much of each clip as you need to in order to render a self-evaluation of
   your performance in that clip.

7. After viewing each clip, click on the “evaluate” link underneath; it should open a
   new browser for submitting your evaluation. You can go back to the viewing
   browser anytime you wish to review a clip.
8. For Conversation Evaluation:

If the clip represents something specific to your profession, click on “domain” and continue to the Criteria section. If the clip portrays something unrelated to your profession, click on “general” and continue.

In the Criteria section, rate yourself on a scale of 0 to 5 for each criterion. A description of each level is given on the right. You can change the language on the screen to Chinese if it will help you get a better idea of what any given criterion is asking about.

9. For Composition Evaluation:

If the composition is for posterity (a paper, a book, etc), click on “long-term”; if the composition is situational (instant messaging, an email, etc), click on “short-term”.

10. If you have your own things you would like to upload, go ahead and use the uploader tool, but let me know they're there, please.

Please note: One can only put 100 characters in the file description field, and that field will not accept apostrophes. I am working on getting this field lengthened and getting the ‘ problem fixed. If you can think of more information that would contextualize each clip, please put it in the evaluation pages’ “comments” field.

As you can see from the URL, we are using the test version of the next iteration of http://osu.alpps.org, and not all links are functional yet. At some point, I will be able to let you know how to find out what ratings other people gave your performances.

Thanks for your help!

Pat
APPENDIX E

CHINESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING ALPPS
如何使用高级外语应用能力综合评估系统（ALPPS）进行对您外国同事的评估

To evaluate your foreign coworker’s portfolio on ALPPS

1. 打开 http://test.alpps.org/  Go to http://test.alpps.org/

2. 使用以下信息登录 Log in using the following information:
   a. Email address = 收到此说明邮箱的地址
      Email address = the email address to which this letter was sent
   b. Password = 您电子邮件@前的字母
      Password = the part of your email address before the @ symbol
      例如 Example:
      Email address = sunshineboy@hotmail.com
      Password = sunshineboy
3. After logging in, the first page is the control panel. Please click on the link "Performance Evaluation" located in the upper position. On the next screen (control panel), click on "performance evaluation" on the top right.

4. On the next page, in "Step 1" (Step 1), select the performance category "conversation". Under "Step 2", select the only name there by clicking on the circle. Click the Submit button.

If there is more than one name listed, please stop there and email me.
Click "Play" for the first video and watch the entire video.

Alan Kahn

File Name: KahnClip1.wmv
File Description: Discussing internet service options for office with employee.

Play

File Name: KahnClip5.wmv
File Description: Alan, would you be able to contextualize these phone calls?

Play

6. 看完一片视频，点击 “evaluate”（评估）。When you are finished watching the clip, click on “Evaluate”.
7. 若您的评估页面用英文而您想读中文，您可以在上面的 Select Language（语言选择）菜单选择简体中文。请注意：您每次切换界面的语言，您的评估信息都会消失。If your screen is in English and you prefer Chinese, you can choose Chinese – Simplified from the menu at top and click on the Select button.

8. Type: 若您在评估的视频不涉及到你们的行业（例如：新闻报道、中国菜，等等）请选择 General 或一般专业。若该视频内的话题与您和您外国同事的行业有密切关系，请点击特定专业/Domain（例如：公关、出版业、房地产，等等）。

Type: If the video clip you are evaluating represents discussion of a general topic (e.g., daily news, Chinese food, etc), select “一般专业/General”. If the video shows discussion of a topic that is special to your and your foreign coworker’s profession, select “特定专业/Domain” (e.g., public relations, publishing, real estate, etc).
9. **Criteria:** For each criterion, please evaluate the foreigner’s performance in the video clip on a scale of 0-5. The green box at right “Evaluation Criteria” describes what each rating stands for.

   ![](image)

   Tip: you can toggle between English and Chinese interfaces to get a better idea of what each criterion means. Be careful though – each time you toggle the language, your ratings are reset.

10. Use the “评语” field at the bottom to describe what you thought of the performance, especially if you believe the video clip is not representative of your foreign coworker’s Chinese ability. One of the goals of this research is to ascertain if the video editing process results in a skewed representation of the subject’s abilities.

   ![](image)

11. When you have completed the evaluation for the video clip, click on Submit. Once you submit your evaluation, you cannot change it, so please be careful!
12. If your submission is successful, you will get a screen like this:

![Evaluation Success!!](image)

If not, use the back button to return to the evaluation page and re-fill all of your responses.

13. Close the Evaluation Success window and watch/evaluate the next video (step 7 above).

14. When you have watched all the videos in a performance category, return to step 4 to select the next performance category and evaluate the all the samples. There are no oral interpretation or resolving conflicts videos, so you are finished when you complete evaluations for Occasional/spontaneous Events.

17. When you have finished all the evaluations, please send me an email at pmcaloon@hotmail.com to let me know. Thank you!!!
## ALPPS SCORING RUBRIC AND CONVERSATION SAMPLE EVALUATION CRITERIA

### ALPPS Conversation Sample Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery</strong></td>
<td>表达能力</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization of idea</strong></td>
<td>观点组织能力</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural appropriateness</strong></td>
<td>文化得体度（言谈举止）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjustment to audience</strong></td>
<td>听众/对象适应调整</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhetorical effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>修辞效果</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural reference</strong></td>
<td>文化知识相关度ureen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain reference</strong></td>
<td>专业知识相关度</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question and answer</strong></td>
<td>问题回答圆满度</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluators using the English evaluation interface saw:

| 5 - Superior Competence/Superior Performance | 5 - 表现非常好                                |
| 4 - Strong Competence/Strong Performance    | 4 - 表现挺好                                  |
| 3 - Competence/Passable Performance         | 3 - 表现不错                                  |
| 2 - Some Competence/Some Performance        | 2 - 表现一般                                  |
| 1 - Minimum Competence/Minimum Performance  | 1 - 表现有进步                                |
| 0 - No Competence/No Performance            | 0 - 表现差                                   |

Evaluators using the Chinese evaluation interface saw:
APPENDIX G

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY RESEARCH SUBJECTS DURING OBSERVATION

Eric Klein (public relations)
In English
- Writing meeting agenda for bilingual subordinates
- Writing emails
- Meeting with bilingual intern

In Chinese
- Greeting coworkers
- Obtaining work reports
- Discussing public relations plans with Chinese clients
- Phone calls with Chinese clients to talk about projects
- Listening to and giving feedback on project pitch given by partner companies
- Resolving conflict between employer’s client and relevant Chinese account representative
- Handling Chinese friend’s request for a favor
- Chit-chat with friends
- Asking former colleague to become business partner

English/Chinese mixed
- Chairing meetings with subordinates

Blake MacDonald (publishing)
In English
- Writing/editing articles for publication

In Chinese
- Chatting with Chinese colleagues
- Discussing work with Chinese colleagues in layout department, own department
Phone calls with businesses, service providers (freelance writers, photographers), Beijing court, landlord

English/Chinese mixed
- Chatting with American colleagues

**Isaac Chatham (architectural rendering)**

In English
- Discussing work with American business partner, foreign photographer
- Discussing business license with agent who applied for it on their behalf
- Emailing American clients, employees
- Phone calls with salespeople in US

In Chinese
- Discussing projects, software with employees
- Discussing architectural model outsourcing issues with employee
- Interviewing job applicant
- Emailing Chinese potential clients

English/Chinese mixed
- Discussing work with American partner, translator employee

**Zachary Ireland (factory management)**

In English
- (not observed but occurs on most days) Email/phone/fax communication with US head office

In Chinese
- Greeting factory workers, asking about their work and families
- Discussing client orders, product shipping, factory space rental issues with factory general manager
- Discussing factory space rental with local economic development officials
- Discussing factory space rental with potential lessor
- Banqueting with lessor, officials
- Chit-chat with general manager, company accountant

English/Chinese mixed
- Appended “OK?” to most exhortations/commands/suggestions
Ben Coltrane (real estate consultancy)

In English
- Meeting with foreign client
- Reading online news
- Writing emails
- Meeting with foreign clients to discuss domestic growth strategy

In Chinese
- Discussing work plans, results with subordinates
- Meeting with owners of property a foreign client would like to lease
- Meeting with owners of investment property, taking tour of property
- Phone calls with potential clients, partners

English/Chinese mixed
- Chit-chat with bilingual employee
APPENDIX H

ERIC KLEIN ALPPS DATA

Composition sample 1

Description: An email to the Chinese PR firm Eric is doing consulting work for, helping them apply for a PR award123

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to readers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td><strong>3.60</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.52</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

1) TA = native Chinese teaching assistant at Ohio State
2) A score of 0 indicates that this criterion was not observed in the sample, and so is not counted in score averages.

Comments (authorship not attributed)

Very good. Just need to mention who is the sender.

123 The “description” line is the context that evaluators were provided. The depth of description is limited by the number of characters allowed in this database field.
He followed the etiquette of email in Chinese. But he switched from Chinese to English at the end of email. If he was sure that the recipient is comfortable to read English, I think it is OK. But if not, it is better to keep using English.

This was just a small, everyday email. I used English and Chinese together on purpose with her to again assert my familiarity with the project. They hired me because of my experience, English language ability, and understanding of PR, and understanding of China so I wanted to underscore all of this to this person. Everyone in Beijing understands that these terms for creating a receipt, so I made the email quite short.

These criteria are so BIG for evaluating a one-sentence email like this, plus it's mixed with English and Chinese.

The email is a mix of Chinese and English since Eric knows his client understands English. Typical business communication, short and to the point. But it still has one sentence in English to demonstrate his view of another busy day. That draws his client closer to him.

Video Sample 1

Description: Discussing internet service options for office with employee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>4.67</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very good communication.

表达非常流利, 观点组织也很好。但有些词因为声调的关系听不太清楚, 比如网络的名字。Expression very fluent, organization of idea also good. But, some words not too clear because of tones, like the name of the internet company.
I was a bit anxious at first and didn't communicate so effectively. Especially since I needed to go to the bathroom. Also didn't really have my head focused on the Internet decision, since I had many calls to make, things going on. Later, when I focused and slowed down a bit, my Chinese was better and more effective. I tend to speak much worse when I am tense and multi-tasking.

I graded his "cultural appropriateness" one scale down because when his employee was talking to him, he wasn't really paying much attention and was trying to make some phone calls. Although I don't think this is seriously inappropriate, although I myself may even do it sometime too, but when it is shot and shown in a video, it looks obvious and gets my attention. The employee doesn't have a problem with it, so I don't mean it is unacceptable by grading it down.

Comprehensive conversation. Made right decision at the end of the conversation.

Video Sample 2

Description: (Eric, would you be able to contextualize these phone calls?)

In this clip, Eric speaks to two people on the phone about a report that was produced by a woman at D&S for a Mr. Ma (not the Mr. Ma that works in Eric’s office). He calls them to see if they had read the woman’s report yet and asks for feedback. After speaking with them, he calls the woman who wrote the report and says that, other than the report, everything in this particular project is going very well and that she should go home instead of waiting for feedback on the report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mixing Chinese with English is not good. But very good generally.

I really am fidgety in the films and say “neige” a lot...which is really a holder word like “uhh.” Chinese might be OK, but my physical expression is quite unusual to me. It is a bit hard to explain the context of these calls. I have a partnership with a Chinese PR firm called D&S and sometimes work out of their office as a consultant and at that time as Vice President of the company. This time, I was coordinating (first and last call) between a Chinese woman at D&S nicknamed Coco and a man named Ma Shijun (middle call) who is a Manager at another global PR firm named Manning Selvage & Lee (MS&L) who was having D&S do some PR event support work for their global client Philips. As someone who set up this bit of business, I was in charge of ensuring that the proposal and fees D&S submitted to MS&L were reasonable and that D&S was fulfilling its service appropriately. Apparently, Philips had told MS&L that they had som

He also has a habit of saying “OK”. (He said 我不在办公室现在我在外边 I’m not in the office, I’m outside right now...I count that into “adjustment to audience”.)

understand client situation well, especially project importance.

Video Sample 3

Description: (context?) Making small talk.

In this clip, Eric returns a friend’s call. He tries to shift the conversation to a desk phone because he cannot hear the friend clearly, but the friend does not accept the suggestion. During the conversation, Eric engages in small talk and then asks what the call is about. The friend asks Eric to do something and Eric says that he will talk to his wife about it, warning the friend that his wife is not in too great a mood these days
because their maid quit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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<td><strong>4.83</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4.63</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some lexical problems. Otherwise it is good.

There is a lot of local color in the video sample. The speaker uses a southern Chinese term for ‘wife’ that is commonly used with friends, so I figure he is fairly close to the other speaker and the relationship is less formal. Demonstrates a good grasp of local culture.

Video sample 4

Description: Helping a Chinese PR firm assemble an entry for an award based on their work for a real estate co.
In this performance, Eric asks his client, a Chinese PR firm, to describe the operations of one of their clients. The Chinese PR firm hired Eric to help them apply for an international PR award based on their service to this client. Eric and his intern are on one side of the client’s conference room and three client representatives are opposite them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
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<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.63</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not so smooth when talking about something new and there are some wording problems. 能较好的表达自己的想法，如果某些用词再准确些会更好。Is pretty good at expressing his ideas. If some of his word choices were more accurate, it would be even better.

I hear myself making mistakes in tones, but usually this is understood no problem, much as a non-Beijinger would be understood, (and indeed there were many non Beijingers in the meeting). The context is that I was working as a consultant in another domestic PR firm, “InsightPR.” This was a complex situation as I had several objectives in this meeting. Ultimately I wanted to get info from their ‘client team’ that would help me to draft in English a good awards entry for a PR award for them--which is what I was getting paid for. However, I was also trying to help ‘train them’ to understand that it is important to first think about what their client is trying to do before they do anything...since the client had just asked to put the award entry in their own name rather than in the PR firm’s name (which was a bit silly in the first place). I also wanted people in the meeting to see my value as a consultant, and therefore was asking important
After watching this video, I now know that his company is not computer engineer related. I thought it was and put the first video type as “domain”. I guess it should be “general”. Was it intentional that the subjects’ background and their working environments are not explained to us?

This is a well organized business interview conversation. Eric knew what he wanted but his ideas could be more structured in the interview process. However, very few could organize a coherent and logical conversation in a short time. Eric went into that meeting room with literally no preparation.

Video sample 5

Description: Discussing market environment of Chinese PR firms philanthropic client.

Still at the meeting in the previous clip, here Eric asks his client if the real estate developer the client worked with was affected by the regulation environment in which they work, particularly in regards to the government’s recent change to allow private land ownership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some wordings are not so appropriate or accurate.

观点组织得比较好，和对话者的互动也不错。Organization of ideas pretty good, interaction with interlocutors also not bad.

This was about understanding the background of China’s real estate reforms so that we could build a better case for our Chinese client, a real estate group, in their award entry. I tried to get to the root of how China’s reforms caused negative perceptions of real estate firms, but that this particular firm had conducted a CSR project in the midst of this. I think my spoken on this was just OK, but I could have used more expressive or choice vocabulary. However, when getting to the root of a large concept, whether using English or Chinese, I tend to try to simplify things and therefore use simple vocabulary.

No comments.

Understand land policy very well.

Video sample 6

Description: helping Chinese PR firm apply for PR award using their promotion of clients philanthropy

Still at the same meeting, Eric asks his client if/how their client encouraged employees to engage in philanthropic activities. Eric believes this is important for their project because the degree to which employees voluntarily helped the community versus the degree to which they were forced to do so by their company could inform their decision of what to promote in the application for a PR award.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Good communication, just some wording problems.

观点组织得比较有条理，同时能注意照顾听话者的反应。Ideas organized fairly reasonably, at the same time, he is able to react to the reactions of his audience.

Again, I was asserting my value and authority as a consultant in this clip, while at the same time probing to make sure the team understood the kinds of materials I needed from them. While the spoken could have been better, I feel the audience understood well what I was trying to convey, were comfortable with the rhetorical style, and it was a good group dialog.

No comments.

used a common Chinese slang in conversation. Impressive.

Video sample 7

Description: Discussing Chinese PR firms clients philanthropy in Yunnan as part of entry for PR award.

This clip also shows Eric and his intern at the meeting with the Chinese PR firm they are advising, this time talking about the relationship between the Yunnan provincial government and the Chinese PR firm’s client. Eric is still trying to find out the role of government in the real estate developer’s philanthropic activities. In this clip, Eric uses the phrase “sister cities” several times rather than its Chinese translation, “jiemei
chengshi” (姐妹城市).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
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<th>TA YJ</th>
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<td><strong>5.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

some wording problems.

对背景知识非常了解，对中国的政策法规也很熟悉。表达清楚流利。Very knowledgeable regarding background, also familiar with Chinese government rules and regulations. Expression clear and fluent.

Discussing Chinese government relations in the project, and “Sister City” relationship, to see how we could fit the government relations issue into support for our argument and messaging. After hearing about it, it seems it wasn’t so important, but still good. Switched to English a few times for a few words, which is normal when speaking with the younger generation folks (and Taiwanese, Singaporeans, and Hong Kongers). Older generations on the mainland will not do so as much, even if they speak very good English.

His informational culture on Yunnan is good. For adjustment to audience, the subjects are speaking to co-workers or clients in a working context most of the time, so it’s hard to see any adjustment. I think I am giving 0 to this item in most of the videos.

Good understanding of region specific situation and macro condition.

Video sample 8

Description: Discussing supporting materials for Erics clients PR award entry.
At the same meeting, Eric’s clients produce a book about and letters written by children involved in a philanthropic school building project in which the real estate developer engaged in Yunnan Province. Here, Eric reviews the Chinese documents and comments on their excellent applicability to the project at hand.

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<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.83</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mixing Chinese and English too much.

能较好的对材料做出评价和应对，并清楚的指出存在的问题。很有条理。Pretty good at evaluating and discussing materials and clearly bringing up issues. Very logical.

The book had exactly what we were looking for. You may notice that my spoken ability and clarity dropped a bit as I was reading and speaking at the same time.

No comments.

He spoke English only when his assistant did. He maintained Chinese language with clients in the entire conversation. Very good agility of switching languages. That demonstrates how good he is in both English and Chinese.

Video sample 9

Description: Taking the discussion of Chinese PR firms award entry to quantifying their clients philanthropy.
In this portion of the same meeting as above, Eric’s intern brings up the next item on the agenda, financial gains hoped for by their client’s client. Eric reflects for a moment and decides that the discussion may not need to be about financial gains, but about non-financial gains. He then gives some examples of the non-financial benefits his client’s client may have gained by engaging in philanthropic activities.

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<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
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<td><strong>5.00</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Ideas are not so clearly articulated in the very beginning; but then became better. 

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<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word use is accurate, ideas also clear.</td>
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This was probably my worst performance. Got stuck on the concept of “gain” and couldn’t think of the best Chinese at the time because it was part of another concept we were discussing. Also, was still thinking about what I was reading in the book and how to incorporate it into our argument. As well, Hugo next to me was getting into areas that I didn’t want to get into since it would demonstrate that we don’t clearly understand the award entry, so I had to stop him and tell him in English not to go down that path. This isn’t really good to do, but I didn’t want a host of other questions to come up from the client about our understanding of the award, as would surely have happened had Hugo continued.

I am giving 5 to delivery in most of the videos, although the speakers have lots of this, that, etc. My understanding of “delivery” here is that whether the
meaning is successfully conveyed and received, not necessarily smooth or “speech-error-less”.
sharp understanding of business impact.

Video sample 10

Description: Eric just finished a phone call with his next appointment (who will soon be waiting at his office).

Near the end of the meeting, Eric summarizes what needs to be provided by the client in order to move forward with the project because he plans to leave early in order to make his lunch appointment on time (he doesn’t – see the next sample).

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<th>Eric</th>
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Longer delivery is not so smooth; but ideas are clear. He is trying to holding the floor of talk. Also some pronunciation problems.

能得体的表达想先离开的意图，给出的理由也很合理。Able to appropriately say that he intends to leave early, and the reason he gives is reasonable.

Again, after a phone call, feeling rushed, my Chinese drops off. I was trying to sum up and get out of there. I turned to a bit of English, but not because I couldn’t think of the Chinese, but because those were terms we were all using in English at that point. What I noticed myself doing, which I do often when feeling a bit self-conscious about my
Chinese, is ask “do you get my meaning.” This usually prompts others to sum up and repeat back to me and opens a clearer dialog. Not a great thing when trying to show your superior command of a subject, but good for being a consultant and engaging the client, which at that point I wanted to do to set next steps the way I wanted.

| No comments. |
| Good summary. Could be more organized (from consulting perspective). |

Video sample 11

Description: Arriving late for meeting with old friend and potential business partner.

In this new context, Eric has arrived late to take his former coworker out to lunch (late from the meeting in the previous samples). He has invited this friend to lunch to ask her to become his business partner for Chinese media relations. In the clip, he hugs her in greeting, introduces her to the researcher and his two subordinates, and chastises his subordinates for being unreachable during their lunch hour (he tried to call them to let his friend into the office to sit down). This is a sample of an “occasional/spontaneous” performance, and so has different criteria from the preceding “conversation” performances.

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chinese people do not hug. Very good Chinese
寒暄，介绍对方给其他人，邀请客人吃饭都很得体。Chit-chat, introducing the person to others and inviting the guest out to eat were all appropriate.

I was in a rush and out of breath when I arrived, was embarrassed at being late, and had not previously introduced the researcher Pat to my guest, so I was not at my very best when I finally did open my mouth to speak.

Introducing people!!! CCC Unit 1 Stage 9! It’s very casual, so I guess it’s OK that he is pointing at people like that. If it’s in class at OSU, it would be corrected.

He treats client well and understands their needs. He manages cell phone culture well.

Video sample 12

Description: At a meeting with a client to discuss marketing campaign. Client is a foreign-invested hospital.

Here, Eric discusses the meaning of the word “service” with clients at a foreign-owned hospital in Beijing. Eric says that current Chinese beliefs about what constitutes good service – lots of young women pouring tea – need to be accommodated or changed if Chinese health care providers are going to attract high-class local patients. Eric uses a mixture of Chinese and English to make his points to a mixed Chinese and English audience, switching between languages without apparent cause; Eric’s Chinese interlocutor code switches as easily as he does.
<table>
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<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
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</table>

Very good communication. Chinese talk becomes English talk, it is weird!

Expression fluent but did not give the client enough opportunity to talk at the beginning. However, after that, he was able to adjust appropriately.

Although I switched to English at the end because I was “thinking” in English, I mostly used the tone and rhetorical style in Chinese that I wanted and got the desired result, which was to make her feel like I was on the inside trying to listen to her issues as a friend and helper. I have a long history with this company and deeply know the issues in question. The hospital continues to have big problems with its marketing due to internal issues between strong foreigners who want to do things the foreign way internally and Chinese staff that are trying to bring in the newest and best practices. This was a meeting with patient services “Chinese” staff at the front line of the issue. I needed to get this info to take it back to my clients in the marketing department to use it as a catalyst for change. I was satisfied, and actually used the English at the end to make the woman feel a bit more empowered that I would take this info back to the “for[eigners]

He didn’t speak a lot. So it’s hard to evaluate. And also, I don’t think the client is getting his point about “that’s a bigger issue.”

I like his example and reference to 5-star hotel. It clearly explains similarity. The client knows some English in this case.
Video sample 13

Description: Setting up a meeting.

After the hospital meeting above, Eric receives a phone call from a colleague who wants to set up a meeting with a client; Eric gives his suggestions for how and when to make an appointment with the Japanese client.

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<th>Eric</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
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Who is the person on the other end of the phone call? If it is a subordinate, the behavior is appropriate. A more detailed description of the context is necessary. Also, the background is too noisy, sometimes it is hard to hear clearly.

Standard phone conversation to go over a couple of issues and make decisions on suggestions from an employee.

He says 你知道我的意思吧 - “you know what I am saying” a lot. So cultural appropriateness is scaled to 4. When he sets up the meeting, I don’t know if some of his arrangements are based on cultural consideration or domain consideration, or sth else. For example when he talks about having two people meet and have him and the other person to be the translator.
Clearly knows what “guan-xi” is. He is very thoughtful when setting up the meeting to avoid side effects.

Video sample 14

Description: Speaking with assistant about getting an address for another venture.

In this last performance of Eric’s portfolio, he discusses potential office locations for his fledgling China-International Small & Medium Enterprise association with the two subordinates in his own company. He describes different ways to rent office space: directly and through an agent.

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<th>TA YJ</th>
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<td><strong>4.17</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Kinda aggressive in some cases, especially the intonation has some impolite connotation. And kinda too straightforward sometimes.

Expression was fluent, but he always seems to have a habit of saying “Do you understand my meaning?” Sometimes this sounds like ‘what I am talking about is complicated and your skill isn’t great enough so you didn’t understand clearly’. Maybe it would be better...
Discussing helping a sister company get set up in China. I personally had lots of misgivings about this, but wanted to fill in the staff on what they were thinking and let them know it was “doable.” But as you could tell from my hesitation and voice, I personally wasn’t sold on the idea. As of today, I have disassociated myself from this company as I did not like their practices.

I don’t feel comfortable when hearing his frequent use of 你知道我的意思吧  You know what I mean, right?  but I guess that’s because I am a teacher of Chinese language and am aware that this line is probably directly from Americans’ habit of saying “you know what I am saying”. For native speakers, they probably won’t even notice it. Just like Chinese people would tell you that 你好  [ni hao] is hello while they don’t say 你好  [ni hao] to their close friends and family members. They don’t notice, or I should say, they have more tolerance on many unauthentic ways of language usage. In English context, this line doesn’t make me feel uncomfortable at all though.

He knows more than his assistant in office rental in Beijing. Clearly he has blended in everyday Chinese life and business.
Email Sample

For some reason, Blake and one of the Ohio State teaching assistants were unable to view and evaluate this composition sample. The evaluation scores were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MacDonald 1</th>
<th>MacDonald 2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to readers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2.67</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.50</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.29</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.43</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.77</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not very clear as to what has been received. Also the logic for the last two sentences is not very good. There is no domain reference.

He followed the format of email in Chinese. Only one vocabulary problem: the use of "danshi" is not very appropriate.

除了一处“但是过两天再联系”的语法不对以外，其他没有问题，不错的短篇 email. Other than the grammar in “but get in touch after two days”, everything else had no problem. Not a bad short email.

文字中没有表现出文化知识及专业知识 的方面，所以选择为零。There was no cultural or domain reference in the text, so I selected 0.
Video sample 1

Description: Instant-messaging a coworker about visa expenses and expenses incurred on book project (ONIB).

This video shows Blake conducting a conversation with a coworker via the company’s in-house IM software, Jabber. Unlike an email composition, this video recording allows evaluators to watch the actual composition process as Blake types pinyin into the Google pinyin input bar, chooses characters, deletes characters and phrases, and so on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blake</th>
<th>Mac1</th>
<th>Mac2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to readers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain reference</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

slow typing. Simple word and sentence usage.

There is no reflection of cultural reference and domain reference. But it is a good communication overall.
His typing speed is very fast. Only have some minor word order problems. Pretty good.

没看出什么问题，总体很好，和中国本土人的语言表达能力一样。不错！No particular problems. Overall, very good. Linguistic expression the same as someone from China. Not bad!

同样有些段中没文化、专业知识的体现选零。语言组织、语法上有些不足。总体意思可以表达出来。As before, no cultural or domain reference, choose 0. Linguistic composition and grammar have some shortcomings. Overall, is capable of expressing intention.

Video sample 2

Description: An email response to an inquiry.

In this video recorded email composition, Blake writes to the author of an article regarding some suggestions he has.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mac1</th>
<th>Mac2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting to readers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.33</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.33</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some grammatical and wording problems. Also there is no adjusting to readers and no domain reference.

Very good organization. He followed the Chinese email etiquette. Also, when he made a request, he was able to let the recipient feel his concern about the efforts made by the recipient.
Video sample 3

Description: Explaining acceptable photo layouts for One Night in Beijing book to layout manager

In this clip, a woman from the layout department comes into Blake’s room and asks if the photos for the upcoming photo book on Beijing need to be in landscape or portrait orientation. He picks up a book from his desk and explains that, because the book-to-be is going to be horizontal, the photos should be horizontal, as well. On her way out, he tells her to remember to leave the time stamps in the pictures. She comes back and asks if he means she is put time stamps on the images by hand and he says, no, as long as they’re in the… and she says, “in the data” (i.e., the file data). He says yes, and she leaves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blake</th>
<th>Mac1</th>
<th>Mac2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.50</td>
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<td>3.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

470
Bleh...

Generally he can communicate with his Chinese colleague very well in this clip. But there are some lexical and pronunciation problems: information here should be xin4xi, not xiao1xi. "Be" should be shi4, not si4.

基本能达到沟通目的。如果提出请求时能多用一些敬词，比如请，换用询问的方式比如“能不能”会更好。Basically he can achieve his communicative goals. If he were to use more polite language when making requests, like “please” and changing his method of request to “can you...?”, it would be better.

1. It is kind of hard to evaluate the speaker's performance in this clip because it is a little too short. 2. I chose 0 for rhetoric and cultural reference because they are not used in this conversation, not because his use of them is bad.

基本语言组织能力没有问题，能把问题和办法解释明白，但是有口音，口音的程度是比较明显，不过不妨碍交流 Basic linguistic organizational ability is fine. He is able to explain clearly the problem and the solution. But, he has an accent, and the accent is pretty obvious, but it does not interfere with communication.

可以充分表达出自己的观点，但语言组织上不够简练，听众需多听几句才能明白 Blake 要表达的意思。Able to fully express his point of view, but his organization is not concise enough. The audience must listen to sentences several times before they can understand what Blake is trying to say.

Video sample 4

Description: Checking in with layout chief, Yuki before leaving for the day.

Here, Blake visits the head of layout before they both leave. She stares at her computer the whole time and he scratches his head while he goes over the status of their projects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of idea</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriateness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to audience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical effectiveness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural reference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question &amp; Answer</td>
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<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fine**

Good communication, though there are some tone problems. Also fluency is not so good.

能和同事进行良好的沟通。特别是同事主动提出帮助时能得体的表示客气。Can communicate very well with coworkers. Especially the fact that he can express politeness when a coworker voluntarily offers to help.

It seems that the working environment there is pretty casual so I guess it is not unacceptable that he rubs his head for a long time when he starts to talk to the boss. But I'll still grade his 言谈举止 lower to 3. It seems he is not very confident of what he is saying.

总体表现不错, 因为是长期合作的老员工之间的对话, 所以没有什么大的差错, 就是还能听出来一些口音, 不过问题表达得很清楚。总体好评 Overall, the performance is not bad. Because this is a conversation between two old coworkers, so there’s no major mistake. It’s just that you can still hear a little accent, but his questions were expressed clearly. Overall, good grade.

此段对话对于专业知识上来讲过于简单所以整段对话较为顺畅。表达跟语言组织都很通畅, 其它 表现也相对没有阻碍。The domain knowledge in this conversation clip is really simple so the whole conversation was relatively fluent. Expression and organization were both clear. Also, there were no real hindrances in the performance.

**Video sample 5**

**Description:** Receptionist calls to say that Blake has a visitor

Blake receives a call from the receptionist saying that someone is there to see him.
He goes to the reception area and returns a stack of books to a young woman. At first, he does not realize that all of them are hers, but she says they are. He says, OK then (行。好吧). She thanks him for returning the books and he says you’re welcome. As the woman leaves, Blake waves and says the equivalent of ‘take care’ (慢走).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mac1</th>
<th>Mac2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4.33</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very natural and smooth communication, good job

Good use of gestures.

Very natural. It's nice that he uses 慢走 take care at the end.

不涉及任何专业知识及词汇。总体表现还不错。因为对话时间非常短，所以没有明显瑕疵 No connection at all to domain knowledge. Overall, performance not bad. Because the conversation is very short, so there were no obvious blemishes.

总体挺好的，最后两项没有体现。Overall, very good. The last two criteria did not appear.

Video sample 6

Description: A woman who would like her restaurant included in the next Beijing guidebook calls.

Blake answers the phone in Chinese (“---- Guides, ni hao”) and listens actively, saying “dui a” and “n, n”. He learns that the caller is a woman who would like to have
her restaurant included in the guidebook Blake’s office publishes, so he asks her to
describe it. At first, he guesses wrong as to the English name of the restaurant group, but
then hits on the right one. He asks the caller to send him an email [with her information]
and asks her name (您怎么称呼？). He thinks she says her surname is Wang, and then he
thinks her given name is Roxy. She corrects him and tells him her given name is Loxy.
She asks him his name and he tells her his Chinese name and his title in the office. When
she asks for his email address, he spells it for her and she picks up that his name – and
presumably his pronunciation of letters – sound foreign. He smiles, so presumably she
compliments his Chinese, but he continues to read his email address to her. There is some
confusion over the symbol @, which Blake calls “圈儿-a” (circle a) twice, then “at” and
finally, 圈儿-a again. She thanks him, he says you’re welcome and he says ‘baibai’. 
After hanging up, Blake comments that the restaurant she is with is already slated to be
listed in the guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mac1</th>
<th>Mac2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tr>
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<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.35</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smooth and good communication.
When asking for the caller’s name, his words and actions were very appropriate. Question and answer was also very fluent. Very good.

A work-related phone call. Overall, good performance. Very patient and professional. Did not make the caller encounter any difficulties.

His delivery was very polite and his performance very modest and gentle. There were no cultural or domain references.

Video sample 7

Description: Blake gets his new China visa from the front desk...

Blake walks over to the reception desk and says, “it came, the passport, right?” She replies affirmatively and as she says it is locked up, he asks if he can have an envelope (有信封吗？). The receptionist shows him his passport and opens it to his new visa. Upon seeing it, Blake exclaims, “what a coincidence!” (好巧！) His visa is valid until August 8th, 2008, a special date for Chinese people because it is the day of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. Blake laughingly says he is an Olympic Baby (我是奥运宝贝儿!) and gets a chuckle from the people around. The receptionist says there is another thing, that when she picked up the passport, the Chinese official told her Blake does not have enough empty pages in his passport for stamps and that he should add pages. Blake says he will do it when he comes back from the US. The receptionist, having had her advice refused, says she doesn’t know much about this kind of thing,
which causes Blake to reconsider the advice, asking her what the official said to her. She says the official thought Blake should go straight to the [US] embassy and add pages to his passport because he is afraid he will not have space for the stamps he needs to cross the borders. Blake still does not think it will be a major issue, and that he does not have enough time before he goes back to the US on vacation to add more pages. The conversation wraps up with Blake asking for the envelope again (那，那个信封呢？). He gets it, thanks her, and leaves.

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Another high-scoring performance, with an average of 4.16 points, except this time there is a clear difference between the scores given by Blake’s colleagues and by the TA’s. For the sake of reducing irrelevant variables, another version of the table above is presented below, with the ‘domain reference’ criterion removed, as there really was no reference to printing, publishing, writing, etc.

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476
Video sample 8

Description: Reviewing photo submissions for One Night in Beijing with Chinese photographer.

In this clip, Blake is looking at digital images on his computer with a Chinese photographer looking at the photos over his shoulder. As they look through the pictures, Blake identifies the various Beijing locations. The photos were taken by a variety of different photographers, so sometimes Blake describes the identity of a photo’s taker to the Chinese man. A one point, a photo taken in a Beijing gay bar appears and Blake explains that because the photo is ‘sensitive’, it is in black and white and says it is “uh, difficult”. Occasionally, the Chinese man corrects Blake’s Chinese when he is searching for a word. For example:

Blake: “这个玻璃很，很，广泛 [guāngfàn].” (*The glass is, is, ‘widespread’.*
Chinese man: 有反光 [fānguāng] (*there is a glare*).

Some photos are scans of film prints and Blake is able to point those out to the visitor.
The clip ends with the visitor saying, OK, [I’m] going to go eat and Blake saying he’d be in touch later and thanks.

This is a very long clip, over 11 minutes long; evaluators may or may not have viewed the entire video before evaluating – they were instructed that they may evaluate as soon as they feel they have a strong impression of the quality of the performance.

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Not so fluent, but still be able communicate with colleague. In most cases, only uses fragments, not complete sentences. Also there is not much talk here, so it is kinda difficult to judge.

有时不能对对方的话做出及时反应，有些声调有待提高。Sometimes he is unable to respond to the other person’s comments in a timely manner, some tones have yet to improve.

1. He shows tremendous informational culture of Beijing (recognizing places, etc.) 2. A lot of time he uses body language to help express himself (e.g. flipping his hand to indicate the 倒转冲 developing technique; pointing at certain part of the picture to indicate that that picture is not by digital camera, etc). I would not grade his 表达能力 delivery low because of this because the Chinese camera men understands him pretty well and the conversation was not effected.

出现了几处不知道如何表达的地方，还有整体表述也不太连贯。不如第一段的表现,
There were some times when he did not know how to express himself and overall enunciation was not too coherent. The performance was not as good as the first clip. The reason is that the interlocutor is not familiar to him. In the first clip, the interlocutor was a colleague, in this, it was a photographer from outside the company. From watching the whole thing, there is still room for improvement.

Overall communication good, ran into the occasional technical term that he could not say just right.

Video sample 9
Description: Blake welcomes a Japanese photographer that contributed to their One Night in Beijing book.

In this clip, a young Japanese woman who took photos as part of the book project Blake was working on has come to discuss development and submission of her work.

This video was classified as an ‘occasional’ performance because it shows Blake greeting the visitor, asking her to come in, offering a drink – warm or cool? – and asking her to sit down.

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Good communication, though too little talk.
Video sample 10

Description: Blake and Japanese photographer discuss development of her photos for use in One Night in Beijing book.

Blake asks the young Japanese woman how much it will cost for her to develop, scan and submit her photos. They work together to calculate the expense (which he is to reimburse her for), eventually using a calculator in Blake’s computer.

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<td><strong>2.60</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.10</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Not well delivered. Missed some words

Wording is not so good, e.g. shu3bu4 qing1chu, fen1 should be chu2.

流畅程度有待提高 There is room for improving fluency

1. It seems that when he is communicating with native speakers, he could put in less effort to convey his ideas. When talking to another non-native speaker of Chinese, he has to make himself clear and the task of communicating his ideas takes more effort and the process shows more weak points. He still relies on body language a lot to help him communicate (e.g. when he asks if they should do multiple or divide, he uses his hand to drew x and / in the air). 2. Some tonal errors and other errors are noticed (e.g. 乘还是分 multiply or split should be 乘还是除 multiply or divide).

表现不错，主要是对话比较短，涉及到的专业知识也不多，并且由于对方也是非中文母语的外国人，交流起来语速比较慢，所以总体来讲表现比较好。Performance not bad. The main thing is that the interaction was short, did not involve much domain reference and because the interlocutor is not a native Chinese speaker, the communication was relatively slow. As a result, the performance was pretty good.

可能是由于两个外国人的交谈，语言表达上有限制，但基本可以完成解决完一件事情。Maybe it is because it is two foreigners communicating, but their linguistic expression is limited. Still, for the most part, they are able to conclude one piece of business.

Video sample 11

Description: Small talk with Chinese photographer.

In this clip, Blake asks a Chinese photographer if he has time to complete a certain number of photos and then asks if the individual can perform a study or questionnaire of some kind. He looks at his computer most of the time, but it is because he is consulting a calendar. After the man moves toward the door, Blake indicates their chat is done by
saying, “好了，谢谢！那，再见！” (OK, thanks! Then, see you!) Then the conversation continues when Blake’s ABC coworker reminds him that the Chinese man will not be around the next day and they engage in small talk for a half a minute until the conversation dies and Blake says, “那，好吧。谢谢！” (Then, all right. Thanks!).

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Not so fluent in some cases and some problems with wording and pronunciation. 表达流利，但有些用词的问题，比如“还有勇敢做吗？” Fluent expression but some word choice problems, like, ‘are you courage to do it?’

Good good. 因为谈话内容比较多，不可避免的出现了一些错误，典型的：“你还有没有勇敢再为我们做调查”之类的用词错误。总体表现尚可接受 Because the length of the conversation is relatively long, it is impossible to avoid the appearance of some mistakes. A representative one: ‘are you courage enough to do a survey for us again?’ Overall, the performance was still acceptable

交谈中可以自然表现出一些幽默自然的话语增进与对方打扰交流。Is able to be humorous in communication, naturally increases the back-and-forth with the interlocutor.

Video sample 12
Description: Call to court to discuss how to get his court-awarded deposit back from a former landlord
Blake explains to someone at the court that his former landlord neither intends to appeal the judgment in Blake’s favor nor return his deposit to him, as per court order. He does not ask her what to do, but explains the situation and waits for her to say what to do. Based on his repeating what she said to confirm the directions, Blake is to bring a copy of the judgment and his ‘ID card’ to the court and someone will help him carry out the judgment. He tells her he is going back to the US for a time and she seems to say he can take care of it when he returns. He concludes by asking what the process for recovering the money will be, but does not seem to receive an answer. Finally, he says “好的，行，谢谢啊” (OK, that’s fine, thank you).

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a Though there was clearly no publishing domain reference in this clip, the three scores in this criterion did not effect the overall score significantly. Without ‘domain reference’, the overall average rises to 4.15.

Not fluent in some cases. But generally good communication.

表达流利，言行比较得体。但是电话开头问对方“这是 XX 女士吗？”还是受到了英文的影响。Expression fluent, speech and action relatively appropriate. However, at the beginning when he asked the other person “Is this Ms. XX?” , it reflected the influence of English.
Very polite and messages are conveyed clearly. The video is delayed and comes later than the audio, especially after half of the clip is shown (not sure if it is related to my internet connection or the speed of the server).

跟法院的人谈事情能有这个程度已经很不错了。能用到“上诉”等专业词汇。表现不错 Being able to discuss matters at this level with someone in the court really not bad. He is able to use technical terms like ‘appeal’. Performance not bad.

对于复杂的事情能够处理得当，礼貌用语也比较得当，表现很好。Can properly handle complicated affairs and use polite language relatively well. Good performance.

Video sample 13

File description: Checking in with layout chief, Yuki before leaving for the day.

Contrary to the file description, this clip was actually of Blake giving a farewell toast to one of his summer interns from the US. He thanks her for coming to their company, says she worked earnestly and hopes that when she returns to her university, she occasionally thinks of them in the guidebook office.

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good presentation, though not so fluent in some cases

语言有时不够流利，但内容很好，言行也比较得体。Sometimes, his language is not
fluid, but the content is very good and his words/action are pretty appropriate.

Fairly good short casual speech. The video is later than the audio.

前任实习生就职最后一天庆祝 party 上面的发言。总体感觉比较连贯，其中有小小顿挫，不过可以接受。表现良好 This was a speech on the former intern’s last day. Overall, it feels pretty coherent. There were some small pauses, but they were acceptable. Good performance.

表现还可以，可以再好些。Performance was decent, could be a little better.
Some wording problems, such as dang1 cheng2. Also there are some typos, which are really bad if this the first email to a potential customer. Also zhi4li3 is not a legal form in Chinese letters.

Good management of the email genre. He was able to use some ritual closing words, which is very appropriate for business email, but the character is wrong

There isn't a criterion for "format"? He need to work on his 书信格式. And there are wrong characters too. His subject also sounds funny. I count them all into genre and cultural reference.
Description: Discussing with employee problems arising from size of a scale model of a real estate development.

In this clip, Isaac is asking one of his employees, a young woman responsible for administrative tasks, how their model building service provider measures their models and asks her to find a way to get them to provide accurate measurements. He tells her that a solution needs to be found to avoid mismeasurement and that she may be held responsible if the issue is not resolved. Later, after the employee has contacted the service provider, Isaac accedes that the measurement issue may have been a case of miscommunication, as the model builder was measuring a different portion of the model from what the client expected to be measured. Nevertheless, Isaac and his employee must find a way to align the expectations and reduce or eliminate the negative feelings the issue has created.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Ok communication.
sometimes is not fluency
表达不是很流利，不能较好的向下属表达自己的要求，不过最后能指出问题的严重
Video sample 2

Description: Discussing two file formats with graphic design employee.

In this performance, Isaac is discussing two different graphic file formats with one of his graphic designers, a young man. Using technical vocabulary, Isaac asks about attributes of each type and the employee shows him the answers on his computer.

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Good communication.

Good communication

Background noise is too loud, can’t hear clearly.
It’s a little hard to hear what he is saying clearly. He is very polite.

Video sample 3

Description: Greeting a visitor come to discuss something with the general manager (under Isaac and Simon).

In this short “occasional/spontaneous” category clip, Isaac takes a break from the above discussion of file formats to greet a visitor to the office who has come to see Isaac’s Chinese general manager. He sees the visitor come in, turns and says:

Isaac: “啊。(Isaac walks over to the guest) 好久不见。最近还好吗? Oh! Long time no see. Have you been well lately?

Visitor: 【还好】(Isaac extends hand)【你好】I’m OK. Hi.

Isaac: 待会儿。。。” In a moment...

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<th>TA ZYX</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Good.

问候很得体，能熟练得体的运用“好久不见”“最近好吗？”Appropriate greeting, can skillfully use “long time, no see” and “how have you been lately?”

No comments

Video sample 4

Description: Introducing a new architectural rendering program to employees.

Another brief clip (30 seconds), this “conversation” performance shows Isaac introducing a new architectural rendering software program to his staff and indicating that he thinks they should be able to create animated presentations such as this, as well.

<table>
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<td>3.40</td>
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</table>

Not so fluent.

it is easy to communicate with specialists.

表达不是很流利,并没有介绍太多的细节。Expression is not very fluent and he did not explain in much detail.

This one is very short and it’s hard to apply these criteria to it.

这个视频是 Isaac 和员工在讨论一个新项目,沟通基本上没有问题. Isaac is talking
about a new program with employees. There is basically no problem with communication.

Video sample 5

Description: Describing different modeling/rendering programs to employees.

In this long conversation clip, Isaac continues to talk about the software above, but this time, instead of introducing the software, he is now discussing with his staff the viability of using this software themselves. The employees seem to believe that it would be problematic to use the new software and give a couple reasons, but Isaac comes back with his own reasons why the issues his employees brought up are not problems, and that this program represents the next generation of architectural and construction planning software. He uses English names for the software (they may not have Chinese names, or the Chinese may normally use their English names), and once uses the English word “embedded”, but otherwise the interaction is entirely in Chinese.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Chatham1</th>
<th>Chatham2</th>
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</table>
Good communication
he is professional to explain software.

他的声调某种程度上影响了听众对他的理解。In some sense, his tones affected his listeners’ understanding.

I don’t really see anything related to cultural reference or anything factors that requires to particularly consider cultural appropriateness.

这个视频中 Isaac 和员工在讨论有关我们项目的一些制作软件,交流很流畅. In this clip, Isaac is discussing some software related to our project, communication is fluent.

Video sample 6

Description: A potential client has asked for a quote on for a rendering style not previously done by their firm

This clip is a continuation of the discussion in the previous two clips. In this segment, Isaac asks his employees if they can produce for a potential client a quote for producing an architectural rendering that uses the new software Isaac just introduced to them. The employees say that they would need much more information in order to provide a quote and Isaac explains that the potential client has sent a sample of what they want and that the client only needs to know how much Isaac’s company would charge to produce exactly the same thing as the sample. The employees still feel uncomfortable about giving a quote based only on having seen the animated results of a lot of programming/design work. Isaac explains that the client is a large company and that he was hoping to avoid asking for more information, but in the end, he agrees that
If expression were more fluent, it would be more helpful for communication and establishing authority. His attitude toward his subordinates is very nice. For some reason he gives me an expression that his speaking is a kind of stuttery. But when I review the video again, his speaking is not that bad. I guess the difference is that other speakers, such as the third one (forgot his name) throws in a lot of conversational placeholders like ‘uh’ and ‘um’, but Isaac Bosworth doesn’t really do that. That leaves many gaps in his talking. It makes me feel that he is hesitating a lot when speaking. I am not sure if that’s his way of talking, or that he is thinking of the right Chinese words to say.

This video is mainly Isaac discussing a project with employees and then about how to reasonably give the client a quotation.

Video sample 7

Description: Isaac explains graphic changes to his English-speaking employee.
In this performance, Isaac explains to a young female employee the changes their salesman asked to have made in a rendering. The explanation involves describing how certain window elements project from the wall. The employee appears to understand what he means and returns to her work.

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Not fluent in some cases, but still good communication.

Easy understanding what he mean.

能和员工进行有效的互动，说话的语气和态度也比较让人接受 Can interact effectively with employees. His tone of voice and attitude are acceptable to people.

When he says 谢谢 thank you in this video, and in the second video, I think he is using it in an English speaker’s way. A Chinese person probably won’t say that in that situation. But I wouldn’t grade his cultural appropriateness down because of that, because it doesn’t affect what you translated as 言谈举止 speech and behavior in Chinese.

这个视频中 Isaac 和员工在交代一些关于项目的修改问题,员工可以很顺利的接受他的反馈. In this clip, Isaac and employee are exchanging issues related to a project. The employee smoothly accepted Isaac’s feedback.

Video sample 8
Description: First meeting with an applicant for a graphic design job.

This clip is only 21 seconds long and shows Isaac beginning to speak with a young man that has come to the office to interview for a graphic design position. It is around lunchtime, so Isaac asks the interviewee for permission to eat while they review his portfolio. As Isaac pulls his chair over to the computer, the interviewee tells Isaac which characters comprise his name.

<table>
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Too few remarks to make judgment

he just said a little word.

言谈非常得体，能给面谈者受到尊敬的感觉。Speech was very appropriate, giving the interviewee the feeling that he is respected

I know he said 不好意思 excuse me, and the working environment was probably fairly casual, but I wouldn’t like it if my interviewer tells me that he has to interview me and eat at the same time, especially it’s their first meeting.

这个视频只是一些平常的对话,这对 Isaac 来说也许有点太轻松了. This clip is just some regular conversation, maybe it’s too easy for Isaac.
It is impolite to talk with other while talking, esp., in the interview.

视频好像在 conversation 中出现过。表达很流利，在吃饭前询问对方，并道歉也表现得很得体。This clip seems to have appeared in the conversation category. Expression is fluent, apologizing before eating is appropriate.

Video sample 9

Description: Discussing sample of graphic design job applicants work at a previous company.

Here, Isaac and his employees are watching a multimedia presentation that the job applicant made for a real estate developer. Isaac reacts to the loud dance music soundtrack by saying “this is really avant-garde” (这个很前卫) and asking how the applicant’s company was given they music by the client. The applicant replies that they chose it themselves and Isaac asks, “was the client satisfied?” The applicant responds positively and Isaac asks again if they were comfortable with the style of music. The applicant then explained how it all fit together.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Chatham 2</th>
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<th>TA YJ</th>
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Very inappropriate to talk with applicants while eating.

I think it is not polite to eat food when talk to somebody

流利程度仍是他的主要问题。Fluency is still his main issue.

Still eating...

这个视频是我们在面试一个来应聘的新员工，讨论一些关于他的作品等等，Isaac 在对话中，也不断的向应聘者提问，基本没有沟通的问题。This clip shows us interviewing a candidate for a job, discussing his portfolio. In the discussion, Isaac continually asks questions of the applicant and basically has no problems in communicating.

Video sample 10

Description: architectural rendering video in a job applicants portfolio.

In this video, Isaac and two of his employees are watching a sample from the above-mentioned job applicant’s portfolio. The sample is a multimedia presentation of a residential real estate development in Dalian. When Isaac hears in the presentation that it is the most expensive real estate in Dalian, he exclaims, “the most expensive real estate in Dalian is 15,000[RMB per square meter]? I should invest there! You can’t find real estate at that price in Shanghai…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chatham1</th>
<th>Chatham2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
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497
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</table>

Good communication.

在面试员工时表现对市场不是很熟悉可能不是很合适。It may not be appropriate to let on to a job applicant that you are not very familiar with the market.

not so formal for interviewing

No comments

这个视频内容和上一个一样, Isaac 表现的不错, 以他的中文水平基本可以应付和一个中国人的对话. The content of this clip is the same as the previous one. Isaac’s performance is not bad. Based on his Chinese ability, he is basically able to handle conversation with a Chinese person.

**Video sample 11**

Description: Mr. Wang is applying for a graphic design job and has come to show his portfolio.

In this three-minute clip, Isaac engages in chit-chat with the job applicant, interviews him for a time, and then invites his American partner to continue the conversation. Isaac initiates the chit-chat phase of interaction by asking where the applicant is from, a topic which leads to Romance of the Three Kingdoms and Liu Bang. Isaac then asks about where the applicant has worked before and what he had done there, asking follow-up questions and identifying what tasks the young man has done in the past.
<table>
<thead>
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</tbody>
</table>

Attitude is not so amiable, or maybe it is the individual habit.

表达很流利，但有些声调不太准确。能根据对话者的谈话提出问题，做出应对。

*Expression is fluent but some tones are inaccurate. Is able to ask questions and give responses based on what the interlocutor says.*

No comments

Video sample 12

Description: Engaging in small talk with someone on the phone and delegating a task to one of his employees

In this clip, Isaac is on the phone with a man with whom he has apparently not spoken in a year. He asks how the man is, they both say they’re the same as always, and then Isaac says that because this acquaintance knows about shipping, he would like to know if one of his employees can call him to ask about how shipping architectural models. Then, after they engage in small talk for a couple minutes, Isaac asks if he can put his employee on the phone directly.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>

Ok communication.

Professional!

No comments

In this clip, Isaac and a friend are talking about some things on the phone. His Chinese use is good. The first time I spoke with Isaac on the phone, I had not yet met him. I thought he was Chinese. You can imagine how his Chinese was already first-rate.

Video sample 13

Description: Subordinate asks for leave; owner Isaac defers question to his general manager.

In this clip, one of Isaac’s employees asks if she can take Friday off from work to “take care of some business” (办一点事). When Isaac asks if she needs to use a sick day, she explains that she intends to take the day off in recompense for overtime she had put in before. Saying that he does not keep track of such issues, Isaac defers to his Chinese GM who apparently explains that the young woman is entitled to take the time off and Isaac
accepts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chatham1</th>
<th>Chatham2</th>
<th>TA YCS</th>
<th>TA YJ</th>
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</table>

Attitude is not so good.

在不了解规定的情况下，处理得很合理。*Under the circumstances of not knowing the policy, handled very reasonably.*

no block when he communicate with makers

No comments.

这是一些平时的基本对话,在这里 Isaac 很好的解决了员工的反馈. *This is some normal, basic dialogue. Here, Isaac resolves an employee's response.*

Video sample 14

Description: Talking about problems with a real estate project scale model made by a Shanghai subcontractor.

Just back from visiting the architectural model service provider, one of Isaac’s employees reports that she saw the mosquito trapped in dried glue that Isaac had learned
about. First, Isaac asks how the mosquito will be taken care of and is a little unhappy to hear that it will have to be carved out, even though it’s ‘not very deep’ according to the employee. Then, he asks how a mosquito could have gotten caught in the glue to begin with. The employee explains that when the glue is drying overnight, the bug got in and got stuck. What Isaac seemed to mean, though, was ‘why was there so much glue showing that a mosquito could get caught and become submerged?’ He tells the employee to communicate to the vendor that they are not too happy with the amount of and messiness of the glue that was used on their order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chatham1</th>
<th>Chatham2</th>
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<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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<td><strong>3.50</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not so fluent.

Seems not to have suggested a resolution to the problem. Some words are used inaccurately.

he master the basic skill to communicate with makers.

No comments.

这个视频中 Isaac 在向一位员工反应关于我们的项目的一些问题, 其中谈论到很多的修改, 员工能够很正确的得到反馈. In this clip, Isaac is informing an employee about
some problems with our project, including many revisions and that the employee needs to get more accurate feedback.

Video sample 15

Description: Isaac’s company has just received its business license and is now a fully certified WOFE.

In this last video clip of Isaac’s portfolio, he is visited by the woman served as their agent in establishing their Wholly Foreign-owned Enterprise in Shanghai. She has brought with her the certificates that prove their company’s legal existence and explains what each means. Isaac then asks her which certificates can or should be hung on the wall as well as which certificate would cause the most trouble if stolen (i.e. from the wall); the agent points out the most important document is the business license (营业执照), but reassures him that it would not be difficult to take care of if it were to be stolen.

<table>
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<th>TA ZYX</th>
<th>Average</th>
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</table>

Not very fluent.

声调问题仍然是主要的问题。表达的意思也比较清楚，流利。Tone problems are still
The main issue. Expression of idea is relatively clear and fluent.

I count the knowledge on those licenses as cultural reference, not domain reference.
Composition Sample 1

File Description: An email to a manager at Zacharys factory via the factory accountant.

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</table>

The writer didn’t include much contextualization. The writer needs to be less direct in some areas.124

First, there is no address to the recipient. There are a few grammatical and wordings problems. Also sometimes it is not so clear as to what he tries to convey. Organization is good. But there were some minor word order problems in his email. The foreigner communicated his meaning clearly. Phrases are weird but understandable. He also needs to work on his 书信格式.

124 Due to a glitch in the system, many comment tables contain two separate comments from Zachary himself.
is not easy to understand. I always think the sentence is unfinished.

Composition sample 2

File Description: An email to the accountant at Zachary's factory.

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<td><strong>3.20</strong></td>
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</table>

The writer did a good job.

Still there is no addressee name. Also there are some grammatical and word order problems. Also no appropriate punctuations were used.

Word order is still his primary problem. Sometimes, his word order influences the understanding of his writing. [i.e., the word order affects the reader’s understanding of the meaning=]

The foreigner communicated quite effectively.

His Chinese is more like the direct translation of English sentences.

意思明确，只是有些地方要加标点符号。[the meaning is clear, it’s just that there are some places where punctuation needs to be added]

Composition sample 3

File Description: Zachary passes along new policies to his factory management.
The writer presents the content accurately and thoroughly.

It is well written, except that in the last sentence there is something wrong. Also email needs the addressee and addresser names.

Word order is still the primary problem of this email, especially the last sentence in the email. But the organization of this email is pretty good. He explained not only the new policy but also the reason why they need to follow the new policy.

Many of the sentences sound like very strong orders. I don't think he meant to be this direct. It's probably because he is translating it from English.

每次他发给我邮件我都很烦，此文一看就能懂，但可以修改某些词表达会更清楚。I am annoyed every time he sends me a letter. I can understand this text with one look, but if some words were changed, it would be clearer.

Video sample 1

File Description: Zachary has just arrived for his weekly visit at the wheel hub factory he oversees for an American co.

In this two-minute clip, Zachary has just arrived at the factory and is going from work station to work station checking in with the employees. One man in his 40’s appears
to be putting rust-preventing lubricant and wheel hubs prior to shipping when Zachary approaches him and asks if he has any problems. The worker seems uneasy and says, “You’re filming this.” Zachary explains that the video recording is of himself, not of the worker. Zachary then asks if the worker had put a description of himself on the wall in the cafeteria as he had asked (an attempt to increase team spirit in the plant). The man says he had not and so Zachary says, “Aren’t you [such-and-such] company?” The worker continues to paint the product with his brush and does not respond when Zachary repeats “I want you to put your introduction up, OK?”

Moving on to another work station, Zachary finds an empty water bottle in a wheel hub and uses body language to show the nearest man that he is not happy to have found it. The man smiles in embarrassment and gives a thumbs-up sign to indicate that he understands Zachary does not want to find garbage in the product. Next, Zachary asks a worker how his family is doing, his wife, his child. The worker says “very good” and Zachary asks if this worker has put his introduction up on the wall. The worker says no and Zachary asks loudly – but with a smile – “why?” The worker responds, “no one told me to.” Zachary then says, “I want you to. Are we [such-and-such] company? You are also! Next time, put it up! It doesn’t matter if it’s typed or handwritten…” Zachary asks another worker if he has any problems and the worker says he does not.

<table>
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508
My tones were not so good.  
Kinda aggressive, not appropriate to the Chinese culture.  
背景太吵，不太能听清对话，所以评价可能不是很客观。The background is too noisy, I can’t hear the dialogue clearly, so the evaluation may not be objective.  
在车间观察仔细，关心员工个人情况 In the shop, he inspects very carefully and cares about the workers’ personal lives.  
The company was introducing a new campaign to encourage workers to feel that they were the company. Few workers followed through, therefore this speech was not effective enough.  
It seems that he is trying to be funny sometimes, but those factory workers don’t really care. I am not sure how to grade cultural reference.  

Video sample 2  
File Description: Zachary meets his wheel factorys two new vertical lathe operators for the first time.

In this clip, Zachary introduces himself to a new employee that is learning to use a vertical lathe. After exchanging names, Zachary explains that the company needs to improve efficiency, and that having three people on one machine is not efficient. He admits that they only have one vertical lathe, so they cannot have one operator for one
lathe, as they do in Australia, but with the extra labor, someone can be preparing the next wheel hub for grinding while another person is actually doing grinding. He then tells them if they can increase their efficiency – and prove it – they will get a bonus. He then tells them that in the future, they will have three shifts on the lathe and he asks, we now have two shifts, right? The worker says “one shift” and Zachary says, who works from 5[pm] to 12 [midnight]? The worker says, “no one”. Zachary: “Why?” Worker: “couldn’t find anyone [to work that shift]. Zachary shows his frustration at the situation and reiterates that he will keep a special eye on the lathe operation. Finally, he meets with a young man and checks his work log… which does not have much written down, apparently. He asks the young man to write down the start and stop times for each part he works on so that Zachary can see their efficiency and improvement. He says he will be grateful to the worker if the worker can show paperwork demonstrating improvement in efficiency.

<table>
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510
The foreigner did not achieve the results he wanted to with his questions. Nor did he show a great understanding of the lathe operator’s explanations.

Too much English mixed. Not appropriate in some cases and kinda arrogant.

虽然他的用词有时不太正确，但能清楚地表达自己的要求，以及为什么这样做的原因。Even though sometimes word choice is not entirely accurate, but he is still able to express his request clearly, even explaining the reason for the request.

此片段中他表达得很清楚，思路清晰。In this clip, he expresses himself clearly, his thoughts are clear.

The foreigner didn’t completely understand the worker, but failed to ask more questions to engage him.

He uses many OKs. When someone uses OK like that, it always makes me feel uncomfortable. I feel that this person is either mad or impatient. It’s like that he is saying, OK, did you get it or not, in a very impatient way. So I, as the listener, feel that he thinks I am stupid or something. So in this video, he is using it in a Chinese context, so it seems even worse. But maybe he is just trying to get his point crossed. Maybe those workers are not doing a good job and he had enough of it. His face is still nice though. So I didn’t grade his cultural appropriateness too low. P.S. the video is behind the audio.

Video sample 3

File Description: Zachary previously asked all staff to put their bios on the cafeteria wall to encourage &\#22242;&a¹²⁵

In this clip, Zachary has just finished his walk-through of the shop floor and encounters two workers at the shop door. He asks them if they have put their self-introductions on the cafeteria wall yet. When they inevitably say “no,” Zachary smiles and says semi-angrily, “we are such-and-such company!” One worker says “I don’t have time”, to which Zachary again smiles and says in a raised voice, “why? It’s 5 minutes!” After another couple lines like this, the employee says no one told him to

¹²⁵ The nonsense characters were originally entered as 团对精神 (team spirit), but the database does not appear to be able to display Chinese characters in this field.
write an introduction, so Zachary says “I am notifying you,” and says it is only 5 minutes’ writing. The older of the two workers smiles during the exchange while the younger one looks a little more earnest.

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</table>

The foreigner has organized his thoughts better but he needs to find a response other than the playful angry response.

Whether what he meant is good or bad, he should use a better way.

虽然表达了自己的要求, 但态度很不客气, 员工可能很容易产生抵触心理, 不利于工作效率的提高。Even though he expresses his request, his attitude is very impolite. It may make the employees start feeling resentful, which would not contribute to increasing work efficiency.

不可以指对方It is unacceptable to point at an interlocutor when speaking with them, unless the two people are arguing.

The foreigner did well.

It’s funny that I often hear people who work in China with Chinese people complain that Chinese people "don’t listen". They just ignore your demands and act innocent. Haha...
Video sample 4

File Description: During weekly meeting with factory GM, Zachary does interface between GM and everyone outside factory

Here, Zachary has sat down in the factory general manager’s office to go over the week’s plans. A shipment is going to be late leaving port because it is difficult to get dock time for all the ships waiting to pick up Chinese goods. This turns into a discussion of how much Chinese and Americans work, with the GM saying that the Chinese work a lot and Zachary saying Americans don’t work so much… but that they work with efficiency. The GM responds by saying that factory workers work hard.

Based on the author’s experience working with Americans that work with Chinese in the manufacturing sector, the issue of efficiency is a common topic. In this clip, Zachary articulates the perspective held by many Americans (and some Chinese), that the Chinese may work long hours, but this is necessitated by a lower level of efficiency in work. The scores and comments below will reflect how Chinese natives respond to the way Zachary frames this frank evaluation.

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</table>
The foreigner has a much better flow in his conversation here, but he still doesn’t always understand the comments of his peers.

Not fluent.

表达流利，但声调还是主要问题。另外，如果他和经理只是合作关系，能避免主观的对两国工作方式的评论会更好。Fluent expression, but his tones are still the main issue. Also, if he and his manager are only colleagues, it would be better to avoid a subjective discussion of the two countries’ work styles.

了解中美在工作中的差异 He understands the differences between Chinese and American work

The foreigner did well.

Video sample 5

File Description: Zachary's company is seeking space for expanded operations.

In this sample, Zachary, his general manager, and two representatives from the local government economic development office are in a van, going to view factory space that Zachary’s company may rent for expanded operations. The leading official tells Zachary that expanding operations to a new location may have implications for the business license, which lists the factory’s address. Zachary indicates that he is following the
monologue by repeating certain words and phrases and then follows up with a statement describing his company’s desire to maintain operations at the current location as well as at a new location because management of a certain business relationship is made easier that way.

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It sounded ok. I believe the foreigner still needs to organize better responses to his questioners.

Not fluent, and not much talk.

能对对话者提供的信息做出相应的反应，但说的话并不多，所以不能做出更多的评论。He can respond appropriately to the information provided by his interlocutor, but he does not say much, so it is not possible to provide more comments.

虽然可能对中国的法律规定不是全面了解，但能虚心请教。Even though he may not be completely familiar with China’s legal regulations, he is able to humbly ask to be educated on the subject.

The foreigner did well.

His Chinese is not as good as the other four speakers. [pm note: the other speakers were all Chinese natives]
Video sample 6

File Description: Visiting a potential site for expansion of Zacharys companys factory.

After arriving at the potential site for factory expansion, Zachary and his GM meet the owner and are led through the empty shop floor. The leading government official tells Zachary the dimensions of the factory space, Zachary confirms it and writes it in his notebook. Zachary then explains to everyone what his company would do with the space if they were to rent it, including what processes would take place there (e.g., painting), and how much volume of product would be produced.

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<td><strong>3.67</strong></td>
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The foreigner spoke relatively well, explaining himself better than before.

Not so fluent and there are some wording problems.
Even though sometimes his word choice and grammar are not entirely accurate, it does not have a particularly large effect on communication. But, if he could be more fluent, perhaps the result would be even better.

He writes down every detail. Typical American.

The foreigner knew what he wanted to say, but didn’t express it as well as he should have.

Video sample 7

File Description: Beginning of negotiation over factory space rent. There: factory owners, two govt reps, Zachary+GM

All of the visitors to the potential new factory space arrive in the guest room of the factory offices. It is unclear who should sit where, as there are fewer seats than people at first and the seats are of many types: a sofa, four large leather seats for guests, and two lightweight chairs brought in from another room. Eventually, all are seated and the younger government official offers cigarettes to Zachary and the researcher. Both politely refuse and the official chuckles to one of the factory representatives, “ha, [they’re] kids!” The locals talk in Wuxi dialect until Zachary’s GM shifts to Mandarin to continue the same conversation. Zachary starts to talk about the factory space in question and the potential landlord responds.
The foreigner allowed his colleague to present on his behalf too much. He hesitated as to how to proceed. This is probably more from not having done much of this negotiation before rather than language problems.

It is not so polite to cross legs in front of others, especially two government representatives.

被测者说的话不多，信息不足以给出比较客观的评价。总体来来说表达很流利。The subject did not say very much. The information was insufficient to give an objective evaluation. Overall, he expressed himself fluently.

有点拘束，但可以理解。He is a little reserved, but it is understandable.

The foreigner didn’t participate in the conversation going on. He started his own topic.

He didn’t talk a lot. How did you separate videos for "Conversation" category and "Occasional events"?

Video sample 8

File Description: Still in negotiation over factory space. Man on Zachary’s right owns the space.

The higher-ranking government official at the negotiation brings up the issue of how adding an address to Zachary’s operations will affect the business license, including how the invested capital should be listed in the records, which address is used, how the unity of the business entity could be affected. Zachary indicates that his company does not
want to register another company simply for the sake of this expansion and the official recognizes this.

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</table>

The foreigner does ok with listening, but he doesn’t appear to engage very well.

Too little talk here.

除个别的用词问题外，表现不错。*Other than the occasional misused word, performance was not bad.*

和中国政府官员沟通得体 *Appropriate communication with Chinese government official*

The student did so-so.

Video sample 9
File Description: Factory space owner treats to a banquet. Room door 60 deg. to left of camera angle. Windows 180 deg.

This sequence shows everyone taking their seats at the lunch banquet that followed the initial factory space negotiations. Some people point to a seat for Zachary to take, and after a moment of hesitation, he sits and someone says “today, Zachary is treating!” and the others laugh. The host of the banquet – the owner of the empty factory space – walks over to a seat and stands at it when the clip ends.

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<tr>
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</table>

|                  | Ireland | Ireland 3 | TA YCS | TA YJ | TA ZYX | Criterion average |
| Cultural appropriateness | 4       | 3         | 3      | 4     | 3      | 3.40              |
| Cultural reference | 4       | 2         | 2      | 0     | 3      | 2.75              |
| **Evaluator average** | **4.00** | **2.50** | **2.50** | **4.00** | **3.00** | **3.20** |
| Domain average   | 3.25    | TA average | 3.17   |
The foreigner did not fight much over the main banquet seat. Perhaps he should have.

Nearly no talk. Guests are not supposed to sit down until the host sits down.

I don’t know if the government official is in the same industry. If there is an official of relatively high rank in attendance, it would be more appropriate to let him sit first.

So-so

Although the foreigner did not treat everyone to the meal, he was the main guest because his decision was the most important in determining the rental of the new facility. It was not needed for him to sit in a lower ranked seat. This could be argued.

Am I supposed to evaluation their seating arrangement? I don’t have much knowledge on that. So I just gave him two medium score on cultural appropriateness and reference.

Video sample 10

File Description: Factory space owner asks for a business card 1 hour into banquet.

In this clip, the factory space owner asks Zachary for a business card. As Zachary explains in the comments section below, he looks at the researcher while deciding whether or not to get his last business card back, but decides against it and tells the host that he does not have a card on him, but will get one when he gets back to the company. Immediately upon being unable to produce a card, Zachary’s GM compliments Zachary’s Chinese and Zachary modestly says, ‘nali, nali’ (something like “no, no”). The host follows up with his own compliments regarding Zachary’s Chinese and how it is like a person from Xinjiang126.

126 Xinjiang is an autonomous region in western China whose native inhabitants speak a Turkic language and when they speak Mandarin, it is often atonal, like Americans.
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<th>TA YJ</th>
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<td><strong>3.25</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.40</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Domain average 2.80  TA average 3.81

The foreigner did a reasonably good job of explaining that he didn’t have a business card. He was actually considering stealing the one he gave to the videographer but declined. Hardly hear what he is talking [sic].

The content of the clip and the description of the context do not seem to match – I did not see an exchange of business cards. However, the subject’s attitude in responding to compliments was completely appropriate.

So so/not bad/good enough

The foreigner should have given a better excuse for why he didn’t have a business card.

No comments. All "foreigners" are good at using nali nali.

Video sample 11

File Description: 1.5 hours into banquet. Zacharys GM asserts that Chinas growth depends on large labor force.

In this clip, Zachary and his GM again discuss the importance of efficiency in the workplace. Unfortunately, the other conversations at the banquet had become louder,
making it difficult to hear what is being said. The researcher had hoped that native Chinese listeners would have been able to discern what was being said better than his own foreign ears would allow, but the comments indicate that this was not the case:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Ireland 1</th>
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<td>3.38</td>
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</table>

It is difficult to hear the foreigner, but he appears to be handling the give and take of the conversation much better.

can not hear very clearly. Little basis to make judgment.

背景声音过大，大部分对话无法听清。Background noise too great, unable to hear most of the conversation.

本片和中方老板的谈话内容不可以在这样的场合说，道理没错，可中国人会觉得没有面子。The subject of the conversation with the Chinese boss in this clip cannot be discussed in this kind of context. The reasoning is accurate, but Chinese people will think it makes them lose face.

The foreigner did ok.

I cannot really hear what he is saying. But he seems to be pretty involved in the
conversation, and is paying attention to other speakers. So I gave him a 4 for *cultural appropriateness*.

Video sample 12

File Description: 2 hrs into banquet. Govt rep (in front of camera) says factory rent only needs to be "reasonable"\(^\text{127}\)

Zachary says to the government official that the company needs to pay attention to every penny and dime (分，毛), otherwise they will not be in business; the official agrees... as long as the company is “reasonable” (合理). Zachary reiterates that a company must reduce expenses and then the GM stands up (remember, this is after two hours of drinking) and says that he has a responsibility to his superiors as well as his subordinates to be able to pay the bills. While the government official and the GM talk, Zachary and the host engage in a private discussion during which Zachary says that as long as the price is right, they can work together. The host is happy and they shake on it.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Ireland 1</th>
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<th>TA YJ</th>
<th>TA ZYX</th>
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\(^{127}\) The file description was cut off by the character limit in the database field.
The foreigner doesn’t respond as best as possible to the "reasonable rent" statement.128

Deep understanding of Chinese culture! He really is a China Hand, at least in terms of behavior!

Not bad, but could have been done better.129

The foreigner didn’t do enough to reassure everyone that a harmonious relationship can be maintained.129

Video sample 13

File Description: Following a banquet with the potential landlord, discussing with his GM the factory space negotiation

After the banquet and after dropping the officials off at the economic development office, Zachary is driving the GM and the researcher back to their own factory. He asks the GM if he thinks the rent for the empty factory space is expensive and the GM says it is a little expensive. Zachary asks if he thinks the price can come down and the GM says confidently that it can, explaining that the price he thinks the space is worth is the local

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128 This is self-criticism and does not necessarily reflect a native speaker’s opinion
129 I believe this is also Zachary’s own comment.
market price.

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<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Ireland 3</th>
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<td><strong>4.17</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.83</strong></td>
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| Domain average | 4.38 | TA average | 4.17 |

The range of average scores for this performance was a sizeable 1.33, but there seemed to be overall agreement that this was a good performance, resulting in a “strong competence” score of 4.25. There was no clear leader in individual criterion performance and the “low” score of 3.67 was for the now-ignored ‘rhetorical effectiveness’. The comments below confirm that this performance was acceptable to native speakers:

The speaker understood the appropriate timing to discuss pricing.

ok communication.

表达很流利。并且征求别人意见时所采用的方法也很好。Fluent expression. Furthermore, they way in which he asked for the other person’s opinion was very good.

本片中说话口气有点偏重。The tone of his voice in this clip is a little serious/heavy.
Video sample 14

File Description: Going to Wuxi train sta. 2 return to SH, Zachary explains to his accountant how he knows videographer.

After Zachary introduces the researcher to his accountant, he compliments the accountant’s skills. He says she is a good accountant and even though she’s a little shy, she knows her work well. She says he always compliments her and he responds by saying he likes to compliment people. Zachary then says that, while he’s on tape – but not because he’s on tape – he wants to talk about how the general manager is a skilled factory manager. The GM deflects the compliment by saying “this American is not modest; ‘I am skillful!’”, though sometimes he is humble and says ‘nali, nali’”. Everyone laughs and then Zachary gets stuck in traffic.

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</table>
In everyday conversation the foreigner exhibits a strong handle of Chinese, though his tones need much improvement.

Use some dirty words. Maybe more Chinese-like, but inappropriate. [pm note: evaluator may have mistook ‘aiya maiya’ – a version of the innocent exclamation ‘wo de maiya’ (?) – at end of clip for a more vulgar phrase]

在夸奖别人时, 虽然用词不是最好的, 但很有助于拉近和别人的关系。When he compliments other people, even though his word choice isn’t the best, it is very helpful in drawing the relationships closer.

抓住时机赞扬别人, 是美国人的特点 Taking advantage of an opportunity to compliment others, that is a specialty of Americans.

He did well.

He knows how to make Chinese people happy by praising them.

Video sample 15

File Description: Zachary, GM and their accountant discuss a serial Zachary watches. "Maria" is Zachary's wife.

The accountant asks Zachary if he still watches a particular Chinese television serial and he says he is still watching it, on Anhui [Satellite] TV every night at 8pm. As he begins to sing the theme song, the accountant asks who his favorite female character is. He waves his finger in her direction and says “it’s the story I like, not the women.” The accountant and GM laugh and say, “don’t worry about it!” (没有关系！) The accountant
then says, “this doesn’t let Maria down [to have a favorite female character]” (这 不是 对 不 起 Maria), but Zachary insists that it is the story he likes. To change the subject, Zachary points to the GM and says that his self-introduction is not on the wall [in the cafeteria], nor is the accountant’s. The accountant says Zachary will see it there next week. Zachary brings the conversation back to the TV show saying that he has seen the serial in its entirety already but now he’s watching it again with his wife. He starts singing the theme again and the accountant says “[Zachary] isn’t willing to say [which woman he likes in the show]. It’s a secret.” (不肯说。还是个秘密。) The GM slaps Zachary on the shoulder and says “he’s still a little kid. When he’s with me, he’s like a little kid.” The accountant then says, “you can tell us! As long as you don’t tell Maria, it’s OK! Think about it – which female character do you like?” Zachary laughs, waves his hand and doesn’t answer.

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The foreigner can handle himself in an everyday conversation without a problem. He does, though, exhibit times when his speech is not smooth enough.

He knows what is the latest soap opera in China. It is good.

Can use some techniques to deal with questions he does not want to answer, like changing the conversation topic.

Expression is clear, actively or passively accepts Chinese culture.

The foreigner did ok.

The videos of this speaker shows his different aspects. It’s easier to evaluate his adjustment to audience.
APPENDIX L

BEN COLTRANE ALPPS DATA

Sample 1

Description: GM of Ben’s company asks Ben a question first thing in the morning.

Ben has just arrived in the office in the morning and his staff bring issues to his attention. First, the general manager of his company brings a document to Ben’s attention that apparently refers to the cost of rent for space on three different floors of a building. After Ben asks the GM to clarify a piece of information, the GM leaves and another employee enters the room where Ben is seated at his laptop. The second employee says that someone is going to take a client to look at property that Ben’s company put on a list of potential rental spaces (probably commercial). They talk about the price for a moment and then Ben tells the employee that when they take clients to visit sites, they should keep a record of the visit and then write a report on the result. After they discuss the rental price of another property, the man asks Ben if Ben intends to use the company car when someone comes back with it. Ben says it’s fine and says he has a meeting at 4pm,
so as long as the employee returns by then, it is ok.

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Colleague: 4.88

TA: 4.28

Generally good communication, just some tonal and vocabulary problems.
a fairly typical exchange in China with different things going on at once and quick responses needed at different levels

能很好的抓住问题的关键，并且可以对说话对象的要求和问题做出适当的反应。只是录像的质量不是很好，不太能听清谈话的内容。

Able to grasp well the key parts of issues and can give appropriate responses to interlocutors’ requests and questions.

He is speaking with a low volume and fast speed. Sometimes it is hard to hear what he is saying (not a problem of his language ability though) and I had to replay the video a couple of time. But from the native speaker's responses, I can tell that he is communicating his ideas clearly. It seems he knows areas of Shanghai good enough to know what to ask about when looking at the report. I count that into cultural knowledge, informational culture.

中文很好，理解能力、表达能力都好。我认为该视频代表我同事的能力。Chinese very good, comprehension, expression both good. I believe this clip represents my colleague’s ability.

can understand and response properly for daily work problems
First thing in the morning... All rather spontaneous.

Sample 2

Description: Meeting with assistant to discuss afternoon meeting with [a major American wood products supplier, name deleted here for privacy].

Ben calls his former administrative assistant, Candy, into his “office” (an empty room with a table that Ben uses as his office) to discuss a meeting with a major American wood product company that retains Ben for consulting services. Candy goes and gets her notebook and the meeting begins when she returns. Ben asks her where they stand with the company, and what matters they have to attend to. He asks about the timing of a meeting with another company and the clip ends (it was a long meeting).

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It is not good to mix English with Chinese

视频的声音不是很清晰，不太能听清说话的内容，但整体感觉表达很流利，举止也很得体。The clip’s audio is not very clear, I can’t hear what they’re saying very well, but overall, it feels like the expression is fluent and the behavior is appropriate.
I feel that some of the criteria are not very applicable in some of the videos. Or maybe the criteria need to be more specific or further explained. For cultural appropriateness, I notice that the subject likes to use "OK" a lot. That would be corrected if it happens in our Chinese classroom at OSU. But the assistant is fine with it. I guess it's because she knows she is speaking with a foreigner, so it is acceptable.

Sample 3

Description: Talking with second-in-charge about payment terms in a contract.

(Uploaded wrong clip. Clip should have been described as: Talking with GM about client's contract length)

The researcher had intended to upload a clip showing Ben discussing the payment terms of a contract with a client, but inadvertently uploaded a different clip. The uploaded clip is the minute of conversation that immediately preceded the intended clip’s content, so the contexts were practically the same – only the subject of that portion of the discussion was different. As it was, the discussion was long and referred to a contract with which both interlocutors were already familiar, which may have made following the conversation difficult.

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Adjustment to audience 4 5 5 5 5 0 4.80
Rhetorical effectiveness 4 5 4 4 0 0 4.25
Cultural reference 2 5 4 4 0 5 4.00
Domain reference 4 5 5 4 5 5 4.67
Question & Answer 4 5 5 5 5 5 4.83
Average 3.38 5.00 4.75 4.63 5.00 4.17 4.49

Good communication.
Language is very fluent and is able to express his meaning with precision.

Chinese very good Represents his ability

基本上在日常公务处理上没有使用修辞

Basically, in handling daily affairs, he does not use rhetoric

I found it harder to evaluate some of the videos using Chinese criteria so I switched the language to English. It's not that the Chinese translation is not good. I think when I see something something 能力 [“something something 能力” is a Chinglish expression that comes from 什么什么能力, something-something ability, meaning 'such-and-such ability'], I expect to hear a longer speech which requires higher abilities of delivery and organization of ideas, etc. If it is for conversational purposes, I wouldn't have to be very strict.

Not a great performance, but message getting across, just.

Sample 4

Description: Closing a meeting with assistant.

In this clip, Ben wraps up his meeting with Candy by saying, “好吧” all right, then and then asking 还有什么事情 is anything else to talk about? Candy says basically says
no and then leaves. This clip was less than a minute long and very little was said, but it was included because things like closing a meeting or leave-taking (which can be shorter than the 48 seconds this clip lasted) are still important skills to master, as these situations arise frequently.

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Too little talk, hard to decide.

视频的声音还是不太清楚，很难听清所说的内容。The clip’s audio quality is still not too clear, it’s hard to hear what is going on.

表达清楚 Clear expression

The only thing I can really evaluate was his delivery. But he didn't really speak a lot.

All done!

Sample 5

Description: Ben asks a new hire in the research section for a summary of new regulations.

A new employee who is responsible for synthesizing research information for Ben is
called in to Ben’s room. Ben explains that he is writing a 500-word English article on a certain topic, and that he needs information on new housing loan regulations. The employee begins to explain how there is a new loan policy that allows loans at lower interest rates. Ben says OK and then asks him to make sure he writes clearly in his report.

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Wording problems, not smooth/fluent. uses some English words. Not acquainted with the Chinese housing loan system. Attitude is kinda arrogant.

能向听话者有效地传达自己的意思，能指出问题存在于什么地方。用词也比较准确。如果，最后能给听话者一些鼓励的话可能更好。Is able to effectively convey his meaning to the listener, is able to point out where issues lie.

好。能代表他的能力 Good. Represents his ability

对较长的句子理解能力相对略低 His comprehension of long sentences is rather low.

His attitude when talking to people in different positions seems to be the same, at least in the first three videos I watched. So I gave his "adjustment to audience" a 0. It's not because that he didn't change his attitude, nor is because that he did a bad job changing it. It's because I think this item doesn't applicable to his situation.

Attempting to give clear explanations to a new hand, showing more than the usual patience and thought in communication

537
Sample 6

Description: A country club that Ben wanted to research for work calls, offering him membership.

Ben receives a cell phone call, answering, “hello?” After he confirms that he is the man the caller is looking for, there is a pause during which the caller explains the reason for this call. The remainder of Ben’s part of the call went thusly:

我不要打球，我要参观你们的项目。可以吗? I don’t want to play ball [here, “ball” means golf], I want to visit your project. Is that OK?

这样子，我给你办公室的电话，你跟我的同时练习一下，好吗？Let’s do this – I’ll give you the office number and you can get in touch with my coworker, OK?

行，苗先生。电话是。。。OK, Mr. Miao. The phone number is ---

苗先生，你跟他联系然后我们约一个时间。Mr. Miao, get in touch with him and then we’ll make an appointment.

OK。

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Kinda rude, esp. at the very beginning of the phone call. But very smooth communication. I don’t know the identity of the caller, but if it is just a regular salesperson, then maybe Ben’s talking to him this way is understandable. But, if the caller were a decision-maker, then Ben’s tone of voice and manner of answering questions may make the caller feel uncomfortable and perhaps the caller would not be willing to provide help in the future.

语言得体 Appropriate language.

Although I don't hear what the person on the other side of the phone said, I can tell the conversation was smooth and there was no communicating problems.

Phone conversations are the real test!

Sample 7

Description: Ben discussing an email he sent.

One of Ben’s employees is reviewing a document he emailed to her to edit. Based on the dialogue, there is Chinese and English content in the document and though she
understands English, he tells her that she can ask him if there are any questions. He asks her to print out the document so that they can go over it together, but she hesitates. He asks, does it have a problem? She haltingly responds in the affirmative and he asks, is it a big problem or a little problem? For most of the rest of the clip, they work out the accurate translation of a large number. The number ended up being “670 个亿”, or 67 billion.

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Kinda rude in some cases, it may be due to his high position in the company.
能很好的回答下属的问题，并向下属提出下次工作应注意的问题。意思表达也很清楚。Is able to answer subordinate’s questions well as well as point out what the subordinate should pay attention to in the next assignment. Meaning is very clearly expressed.
Sample 8

Description: Discussing the schedule with someone and asking for clear information.

Ben is talking on the phone with a person who has set up a schedule to meet with people. He appears frustrated because the person on the other end of the line says that s/he has made a schedule for him, but the schedule seems to be missing certain information, including places, meeting topics, meeting members, and times (perhaps different meetings have different information noted). Sometimes Ben interjects by saying “Listen” and then speaking in Chinese. He tries to end the confusion by starting all over and asking (in Chinese) at 10:30, who am I meeting? With what company am I meeting? S/he tells him and he says, OK, you need to give this “list”, otherwise I won’t know what company I’m meeting and for what purpose (你要给我这个 list，否则什么公司、什么事情，我不知道). At the end of the conversation, a phone number is confirmed, he thanks the caller, Priscilla, in English, and says ‘baibai’. There was no “Priscilla” listed on the
employee list at Ben’s company, but not all employees had English names listed on the roster.

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Attitude is kinda rude. Mixing chinese with English is not good.

不太清楚对方是不是 Ben 的下属，如果是他的下属，他说话的语气和态度可以被接受。但如果 是别的公司的人。他这样的态度可能就让人觉得他有一些不礼貌。It is unclear if the other person is or is not Ben’s subordinate. If so, then his tone of voice and attitude are acceptable. If the other person is from another company, this kind of attitude might make people think he is impolite.

Good. Reflects his ability

patient and clear

I assume his position is fairly high in the company, so maybe that's why he doesn't really have to do much adjustment to different audience.

Can't always make oneself understood to get the answer to the question actually being asked.
Sample 9

Description: Assistant says a client is now thinking about other locations, so Ben emails a contact to learn why.

Candy is telling Ben why one of their clients has indicated they are now considering locations for their business other than those recommended by Ben’s firm. Candy explains that the client company perceives itself as a top-tier brand, along the lines of Louis Vuitton and Gucci. Ben chuckles and sits in thought for a while until Candy says this is very strange and Ben agrees. Ben asks with whom Candy had communicated – their agent or with them directly – and she says their such-and-such department. Ben brainstorms some higher-end properties but decides they are too expensive. They chat for a moment and then Ben composes an email to the assistant to the son of the developer, which makes Candy laugh when she hears the guanxi to whom he is writing for help. He pauses in his writing, says “OK?” and Candy takes the cue to leave. Ben says, “thanks.”

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Ok communication.

能对问题做出及时的反应并很好的解决问题。对听话者的态度也很符合语境和问话的要求。Is able to give timely responses to questions and resolve them well. His attitude towards the interlocutor is also appropriate to the context and the requirements of the dialogue.

Good Reflects his ability

Language fluent Point of view clear

I couldn't really hear what he was saying clearly but I didn't see any communication problems. So I still gave a 5 for delivery.

Tough one

Sample 10

Description: Visiting a building that a foundation Ben represents had thought about buying.

The context for this sample is complex. In addition to owning his own property consulting business, Ben represents an investment foundation that purchases real estate. Their current project involves looking to buy an entire high-rise building, so Ben made an appointment to meet the owners of a building under construction in the Hongkou District of Shanghai, just north of Suzhou Creek. During the welcome meeting (not videotaped
because the researcher’s identity was a little mysterious and a video camera could have introduced an added level of discomfort to the meeting), it was discovered that what was for sale was several floors of the new building, not the entire building itself. This made the deal outside the scope of the foundation’s interest, but since Ben and his hosts had made time to get together, Ben thought it best to complete the walk-through.

In this sample, Ben learns that the building is registered as a hotel, but that the developer intends to make it into a hotel-style apartment building (酒店式公寓). Ben asks if it is allowed to register as a hotel and build as an apartment building. The woman responds that it is OK, but that buyers should consult current regulations. They also discuss the physical specifications of the property – it is sold unfinished (e.g. 毛坯房) and without central air conditioning. The woman showing the property says the ceiling is 3.46 meters high – which appears to be the height from the floor to the ceiling between the low-hanging concrete rafters. Ben is a tall man and remarks that the height is short.

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Sample 11

Description: Ben avoids arguing over whether or not a building seller should provide a business plan.

Ben asks the woman showing him the empty property in the sample above whether or not a business plan was done. She says they did write one and that she can share it with him as a reference. The existing business plan describes the building as a hotel rather than a hotel-style (i.e., full service) apartment building. And the dimensions of the building in the plan are different from those as-built. Ben then asks if a detailed financial analysis...
had been made. The guide responds there was certainly a financial analysis made. Ben asks if it can be shared or if it is confidential and she says, ‘of course this is confidential’. Ben says, the issue is that a buyer would have to do a financial analysis, too, and it would only take some revision to make it different from the original. Candy adds, “That would be simple”.

After revealing that there is basically no up to date information that they can provide potential buyers to help them, the guide says that their asking price is based on 2003 prices, before the market went up (that is to say, ‘it’s a steal’). Ben stands there smiling, which the researcher interpreted as avoiding further discussion over the lack of current materials. Other foreigners in this position might very well have pressed for information until the guide would be forced to refuse outright, though this is admittedly an assumption.
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>能较好的运用沉默来避免争论，很成功。</td>
<td>Is relatively able to use silence to avoid conflict, very successful.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>好 能代表他的能力</td>
<td>Good  Reflects his ability</td>
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<tr>
<td>有一定的语言技巧</td>
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<td>When you say in the description that he &quot;avoids arguing&quot;, are you indicating his silent response and smile at the end of the video? If yes, I count that into cultural appropriateness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of things going on, quick responses and well handled</td>
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APPENDIX M

AVERAGE CRITERION SCORE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EVALUATOR TYPES

### Adjustment to Audience

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### Delivery

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### Cultural Appropriateness

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**Domain Reference**

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* Only includes data from samples in which at least two TAs gave a score for this criterion

**Organization of Ideas**

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**Rhetorical Effectiveness**

Purposely omitted

**Question & Answer**

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