

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in six main areas along with a summary: (1) intercultural communication, (2) factors that affect intercultural communication success, (3) intercultural communication barriers, (4) intercultural adaptation, (5) working cultures, and (6) relevant research.

2.1 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In the modern era, the world has become smaller and people share some cultural practices in common as people in almost every corner of the world can now connect and communicate with one another. Consequently, it is not surprising that one person at one end of the world can go and live in or work at the other end of the world. However, to live or work in a different environment is not easy. Not only do they become increasingly sensitive to cultural differences, but inevitably, they are also anxious about communicating successfully. Therefore, the understanding and adaptation to intercultural communication is very important.

The purpose of studying intercultural communication is to understand the relationships between culture and communication because the ways we communicate, the language, and nonverbal behaviors we use are influenced by cultures. Therefore, the best way to understand intercultural communication is to try to understand others' communication behaviors and cultures. However, although the concepts of culture and communication are different, they cannot be separated. As a result, to get to know and understand the meanings of culture and communication is important for intercultural communication.

Many researchers agree that as culture has an effect on all forms of communication in a diversity of intercultural situations, it is very important to understand intercultural communication. In order to understand intercultural communication, we must know what culture is and how important is. In fact, culture is defined in many areas but the core meaning of culture is the norms, values, beliefs, activities, attitudes, ways of behaving, and ways of communicating that are shared by the members of a particular group in a particular area that are passed from one

generation to the next generation (Coffey, Cook, & Hunsaker, 1997, p. 112; Devito, 2003, p. 36; Dodd, 1998, p. 36; Fatehi, 1996, p. 164; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, p. 36).

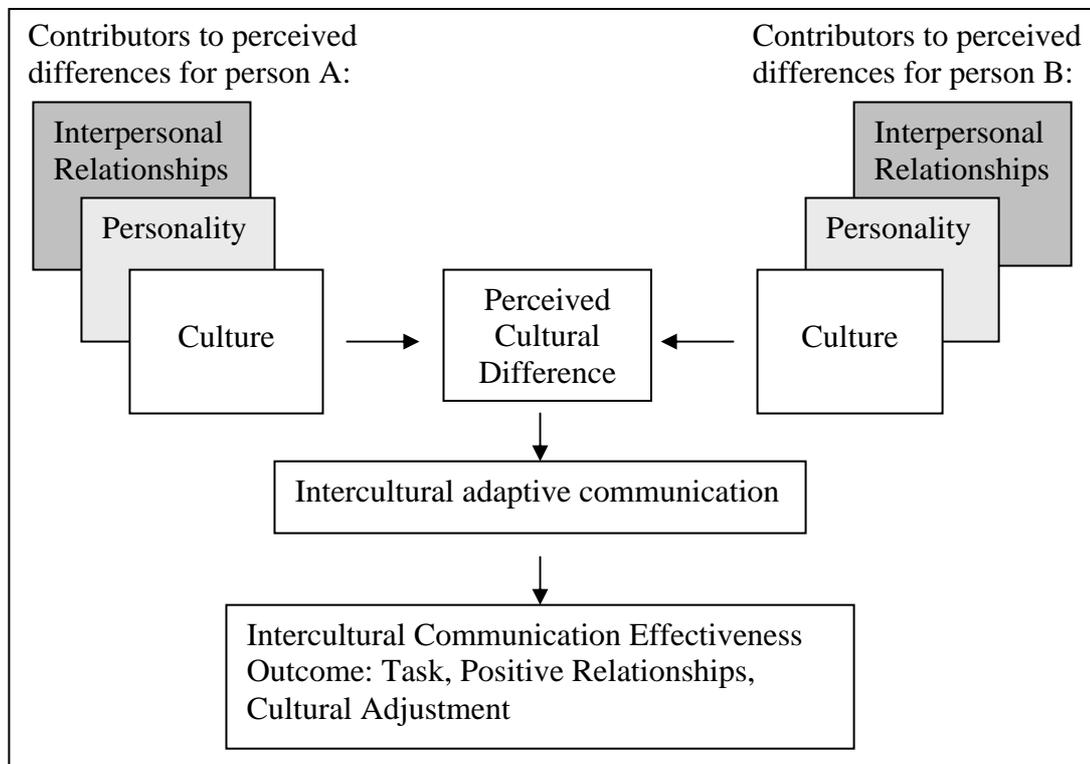
Moreover, communication is very important in intercultural communication because even though everyone communicates the same messages, it is possible that no one gets the same meanings. So, effective communication can help to minimize the failure of the process of sharing information with other people. Therefore, communication is defined as the process of sending and receiving messages, sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings in the creating of the meaning in commonly understandable ways (Coffey, Cook, & Hunsaker, 1997, p. 256; Devito, 2003, p. 2; Gudykunst, 1994, p. 25; Hamilton & Parker, 1997, p. 4).

However, various researchers defined intercultural communication differently. Conaway, Easton, Schmidt, & Wardrope (2007, p. 32) defined intercultural communication as “A symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process whereby people from different cultures negotiate, at varying levels of awareness, shared meanings,” which is supported by Samovar, Porter, & Stefani (1998, p. 48) as “Intercultural communication is communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event.” Meanwhile, Dodd (1998, p. 277) asserted that “Intercultural communication is the interaction between people from diverse cultural backgrounds.”

Therefore, intercultural communication is concluded to be face to face interaction by sharing and exchanging meaning in messages, thoughts, ideas, and feelings in commonly understandable ways between people who have different cultural backgrounds.

Figure 3 shows why people from different cultures perceive differences between themselves. The figure illustrates the influence of interpersonal relationships, personality and culture that contributes to the perceived cultural differences. The outcome of perceived cultural differences contributes to intercultural adaptive communication, which can produce intercultural communication effectiveness such as task, positive relationships and cultural adjustment (Dodd, 1998, pp. 6-7).

FIGURE 3
THE MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



Source: "Dynamics of Intercultural Communication (5th ed.)," by Dodd, 1998, pp. 6-7.

2.2 THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SUCCESS

In working with people from different cultures, relationships, communication climates and time are very important factors that can affect intercultural communication success. Relationships and communication climates are very important factors because when relationships among members in an organization are developed, the relationships may promote a positive working atmosphere. Besides, if a climate in an organization is helpful, it can improve relationships among members in the organizations (Goldhaber, 1974, pp. 50-53). In addition to relationships and communication climates, the concept of time is also an important factor influencing communication behavior because the use of time can reflect how differently members of each culture perceives time and respond to time (Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998 p. 167). Therefore, the more we understand relationships, communication climates and time, the more effectively we can deal with various cultural differences.

2.2.1 Relationships

Relationships are very important in communication because when members in the organizations have a positive relationship with each other, this can fulfill the needs of each member and encourage members to feel free to talk to each other. As a result, the relationships will be developed and maintained. However, when members in an organization have poor relationships, this will inspire distrust and lead to distorted communication. Therefore, the success of an organization will be influenced by the quality of the relationship between members of the organization (Hamilton & Parker, 1997, p. 71; Goldhaber, 1974, pp. 18, 50; Motley & Osborn, 1999, p. 107).

In this research, the theories of collectivism and individualism are used to explain the relationships between people in different cultures in order to show how people from different cultures have different perceptions from each other of the roles of relationships (Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G. J., 2005, pp. 74-75).

Collectivism is “Societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G. J., 2005, p. 76). In collectivist cultures, a group’s initiative and achievement are promoted rather than an individual’s function and responsibility. Therefore, people in collectivist cultures tend to place an emphasis on harmony and cooperation within the group. They tend to avoid showing disagreement or avoid taking a part which would create controversy in order to maintain relationships with others. Moreover, members in collectivist cultures consider that rank-order of people in a group is very important. On the other side, individualism is “A society in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family” (Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G. J., 2005, p. 76). So, people in individualist cultures are likely to stand out in a group. They tend to place emphasis on individuals’ goals and achievement, in contrast to people in collectivist cultures. Therefore, the ties between individuals of members in an organization are loose because everyone expects to look after him/herself only (Conaway, Easton, Schmidt, & Wardrope, 2007, p. 25; Gudykunst, 1994, pp. 40-41; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Ting-Toomey, 1996, pp. 23-24).

2.2.2 Communication Climates

Communication climate is very important because it can directly affect communication style, relationships as well as communication behaviors in members in an organization. Communication climates result from the way members in an organization feel about the overall working atmosphere in the organization. In fact, the communication climate is shared by everyone who is involved in a conversation because once members in the organization start to communicate, a communication climate begins to develop. However, as it is hard to find only a positive characteristic or a negative characteristic in one person, communication climate could be both positive and negative at the same time and can change overtime. Therefore, communication climates in the organization could be both positive, in turn contributing to supportive feelings and negative, in turn contributing to defensive feelings (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Towne, 1995, pp. 266-267; Beck, 1999, pp. 199-201; Gaut & Perrigo, 1998, pp. 68-69; Neher, 1997, pp. 95-96; Wood, 1999, p. 260).

In this research, communication climates can be classified into supportive and defensive climates. A supportive climate is created when members in the organization see themselves as valuable and perceive that other members think that they are important. Therefore, when members in the organizations are open and honest, they feel supported and feel comfortable to communicate, present and discuss ideas with others. As a result, members in the organization will communicate and interact with other members positively. On the contrary, a defensive climate is created when members in the organization feel that they are unimportant and are abused by other members. Therefore, when members in the organization feel that other members in the organization lack openness and lack honesty, they become cautious and ignore the value of communication with others and their behaviors. As a result, they will react to each other negatively.

2.2.3 Time

Time is another important factor that affects intercultural communication success because people from different cultures have different ways to use and interpret time depending on their individual cultural and regional background. As being aware of time can make the difference between a success and a failure in

communicating in an organization, members in the organization must learn how time develops the skill of communication in order to determine the appropriate time to communicate with other people (Hamilton & Parker, 1997, pp. 150-151; Johnson, Mott, & Quible, 1996, pp. 22-23; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, pp. 169, 255).

In this research, the theories of Monochronic time or M-Time culture and Polychronic time or P-Time culture are used to discuss the use of time by people in various cultures. Many researchers agree that people in M-time culture generally emphasize punctuality and promptness. They are likely to do things one at a time, concentrate on the job at hand, and schedule things with time expectation, so people in M-time culture consider time as very important and important not to waste. On the other hand, researchers agree that people in P-Time culture deal with time holistically. They are likely to do many things at the same time without planning deadlines, so the jobs have the urgency of the moment. Moreover, as people in P-time culture consider personal relationship as an important part of social interactions, they tend to focus on their relationship requirements (Beamer & Varner, 1995, p. 86; Fatehi, 1996, p. 174; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, pp. 16-19).

2.3 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

In communicating with people from different cultures, there are not only communication skills that could be an obstacle in communicating with other people from different cultures (Flatley, Lesikar, & Pettit, 1999, p. 3), but attitudes are also an important barrier because attitudes can affect the way people communicate and interact with other people (Beamer & Varner, 1995, p. 45). Therefore, different communication skills and attitudes will be explored in this study in order to determine intercultural communication barriers.

2.3.1 Communication Skills

Communication skills are important barriers in communicating with other people, especially communicating with people who have different languages and cultures. Communication skills not only affect the ability to analyze purposes and intentions of communicators but they also affect the ability to encode messages which the communicators intend to communicate. Even though the four skills of

communication—speaking, writing, listening, and reading—are the basic skills in communication, these four skills are very important in the communication process. Therefore, the ability to use those four skills not only helps communication with other people become more effective but also helps us to integrate into other cultures more smoothly (Berlo, 1960, pp. 42, 45, 51-53; Jeffrey & Walton, 1995, pp. 4, 20, 74; Johnson, Mott, & Quible, 1996, p. 412).

The first communication skill is speaking. Speaking is very important in communication because the way we say things, our tone of voice, and the words we choose are added to the meaning of what we are trying to say and how we are interpreting the messages.

The second skill is writing. In fact, in the workplace, writing is rather more important than speaking because written messages can be checked and reviewed, so the chance of misunderstanding is reduced in comparison with speaking. However, the major problem of writing is it is quite difficult to arrange because it requires skills; otherwise, communication will be impeded.

The third skill is reading. The reading ability is very important in communication because it can determine how well we remember and summarize what we have read. Therefore, success in communication depends on how well we can read messages and can understand the messages we have read.

The last communication skill is listening. Listening is an important tool for communication because it can determine how well we receive a message from a speaker. Therefore, in order to succeed in communication, we should listen carefully because it not only helps us to determine the content of the messages but also determines the feelings of the speaker.

2.3.2 Attitudes

Attitude is defined as a feeling towards people, objects and situations. Many researchers agree that attitude is very important for intercultural communication because it can influence the way people communicate and interact with other people. Actually, attitude could be both positive and negative and we can have both kinds of attitude at the same time based on personal belief and experience. However, even though attitude is difficult to change, it can change depending on personal experience

with people, objects and situations. Therefore, the more direct experience we have toward those things, the stronger or fewer attitudes we have (Beamer & Varner, 1995, p. 6; DuBrin, 2002, p. 48; Gordon, 1991, pp. 54-55).

In this research, the attitude towards self and the attitude towards receiver are explored as intercultural communication barriers. Many researchers agree that the attitudes of a source and a receiver affect the effectiveness of communication. Attitude towards self is very important because attitude towards self is a kind of attitude that can affect the source's attitude. When the source has a positive attitude towards him/herself, the source would have a highly favorable attitude towards him/herself. As a result, the source will have high self-esteem. In contrast, if the source has a negative attitude towards him/herself, their self-evaluation would cause a less favorable attitude towards him/herself. As a result, the source will have low self-esteem. Furthermore, attitude towards receiver is also important because the attitude towards the receiver is a kind of attitude that can affect how a sender responds to the messages of a receiver because when the sender has a positive attitude towards the receiver, the sender is much less critical and more likely to accept the ideas of the receiver. However, if the sender has a negative attitude towards receiver, the sender may deny or be more critical about the ideas of the receiver (กิติมา สุรสุนธิ, 2541, น. 57; Berlo, 1960, pp. 46-48; Eyre, 1979, pp. 10-11).

2.4 INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

The ability to adapt to the new cultural environment is very important in working in multi-cultural organizations. In communicating with people from different cultures, learning to adapt ourselves to the new cultural environment not only helps us to reduce pressure and anxiety but it also helps us to understand other people better. Moreover, the ability to be flexible in terms of our behavior can help us to easily adapt our behavior and communication styles to new cultures. As a result, we can adapt ourselves to the new cultural environment more appropriately (Beebe, S.A., Beebe, S.J., & Redmond, 2005, pp. 113-114; Conaway, Easton, Schmidt, & Wardrope, 2007, p. 67; Dodd, 1998, pp. 162-163; Gudykunst, 1994, p. 186).

2.4.1 Improving Empathy

Empathy is defined as the ability to experience, respond to and understand other people's feelings, thoughts and actions. Empathy is very important for intercultural adaptation because empathy helps us to better understand other people at a deeper level. When we empathize with others, we have to try to understand the other feelings, needs, and points of view; improving our ability to empathize not only helps us to better understand others' communication behaviors and cultures but it also helps us to build and maintain our personal relationships with other people. However, as it requires more effort to learn to empathize with other people, especially those who have a different cultural background from us, we have to pay more attention to other's emotional expressions, become sensitive to the values and customs of other cultures, and improve our recognition of the similarities between our and others' cultural backgrounds in order to improve our ability to empathize (Beebe, S.A., Beebe, S.J., & Redmond, 2005, p. 113; Dodd, 1998, p.193; Gudykunst, 1994, p. 185; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, pp. 261-262; Verderber, K.S. & Verderber, R.F., 2001, p. 225).

2.4.2 Encouraging Feedback

Encouraging feedback is very important for intercultural adaptation because it helps us to better understand others' communication behaviors. When we encourage feedback from other people, we will learn how our behavior affects others and recognize which actions can produce positive or negative reactions from other people. Moreover, when we encourage feedback from other people, we will know how well other people are able to understand the message that we are communicating. For example, when we are communicating with other people, if we are doing it right, feedback can tell us that we can continue with that conversation. If we digress from the point, feedback from other people can tell us that we should adjust our method of communication. As a result, we can adjust our communication behaviors to meet other people's needs more appropriately (กิติมา สุรสุนธิ์, 2535, น. 36-37; Devito, 2004, p.13; Fatehi, 1996, p. 191; Gudykunst, 1994, p.135; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, pp. 262-263; Weaver, 1996, pp. 141-142).

2.4.3 Acquiring Social and Cultural Knowledge

Acquiring social and cultural knowledge is another important means of intercultural adaptation because when we learn about the social and cultural norms of other people, we not only know and understand other cultures, but we will also become acquainted and better understand others' values and behaviors. Moreover, learning other people's social and cultural norms can help us to know how to interact and get along with other people more appropriately. As a result, personal relationships will be maintained and developed. Therefore, getting to know and understanding others' societies and cultures can help us to decide what we should do or should not do; what type of behavior is proper or improper in communicating with other people in an appropriate and effective way (Burton & Dimbleby, 1992, pp. 69-70; Guirdham, 2005, p. 193; Hargie, 1997, p. 10; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, p. 263).

2.4.4 Increasing Contact

Increasing contact is crucial for intercultural adaptation because increasing the frequency at which we communicate with other people can help us not only to understand other cultures but also helps us to better understand others' feelings, thought and actions. As a result, communication barriers will be overcome and personal relationships will be developed and maintained. However, even though increasing contact with other people can help to solve communication barriers and develop personal relationships, some people think that avoiding increased contact is better. This is due to the fact that some people think that they will become more anxious and get stressed when communication is not successful. Moreover, if they still leave a line of communication open afterwards, the problems will be more serious. Therefore, they are likely to think that avoiding increased contact with other people or ignoring problems would be better (Dodd, 1998, pp. 193-194; Gudykunst, 1994, p. 167; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, p. 265).

The next section discusses the working cultures of American, Japanese and Thai people.

2.5 WORKING CULTURES

Many American and Japanese employees are currently working in international organizations in Thailand. Of course, the problems of intercultural communication are unavoidable because of the different working cultures of American, Japanese and Thai employees. Therefore, in order to work with the Americans, the Japanese and the Thais more effectively and successfully, a good understanding of their working cultures and communication behaviors is very important (Chaney & Martin, 2000, pp. 43-45; Dunung, 1995, pp. 13-33; Kriengsak Niratpattanasai, 2005, pp. 3-14).

The working cultures of the Americans, Japanese and Thais in terms of factors that affect intercultural communication success, intercultural communication barriers and intercultural adaptation are discussed in this section in order to analyze for this study.

2.5.1 Factors that Affect Intercultural Communication Success

Relationships, communication climates and time are very important factors that can affect intercultural communication success because these three factors not only reflect the perceptions but also influence communication behaviors of members of each culture (Goldhaber, 1974, pp. 50-53; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, p. 167).

2.5.1.1 Relationships

The Americans consider themselves independent and self-reliant, so they emphasize the importance of individual responsibilities. In addition, as Americans are friendly and informal, they are likely to be open and make friends with other people more easily. However, Americans are likely to be more self-protective and tend not to develop close relationships and long term relationships (Barnlund, 1989, pp. 39-40; Chaney & Martin, 2000, pp. 55-56; Fatehi, 1996, pp. 165-167; Ferraro, 1990, pp. 94-95; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, p. 107).

Many researchers agree that as Japanese people consider relationship extremely important, they tend to avoid confrontation or showing disagreement in order to preserve relationships with other people. However, the

Japanese tend to be careful in building relationships with people who they are not familiar with, so it takes a period of time to develop a relationship with them (Barnlund, 1989, p. 44; Dunung, 1995, p. 15; Fatehi, 1996, p. 165; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Ting-Toomey, 1996, p. 111; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, p. 107).

Meanwhile, the Thais see relationship-oriented activities as more important than task-oriented ones, so there is not much of a distinction between a social relationship and a working relationship. Therefore, in working with the Thais, trying to avoid confrontation while preserving a relationship and making everyone happy is rather important (Holmes, Suchada Tangtongtavy, & Tomizawa, 1995, pp. 46-50; Klausner, 1993, p. 253; Leppert, 1992, pp. 79, 181, 191; McGregor & Towes, 1998, p. 189; Mulder, 2000, pp. 59, 88).

2.5.1.2 Communication Climates

Various researchers agree that Americans value frankness and directness, so Americans prefer to be open and go to the point directly and view confrontation and expressions of disagreement as a positive result rather than a conflict. Therefore, when there is a problem, Americans are likely to argue and show their disagreement rather than be concerned about face saving (Brake, Walker, D. M., & Walker, T. T., 1995, pp. 130,133; Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 44; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, p. 122; Porter & Samovar, 1997, p. 308).

While the Japanese are likely to be concerned about others' feelings, so they tend to hide their real emotions and avoid showing disagreement in order to preserve relationships and maintain an appropriate atmosphere. Moreover, as Japanese people perceive that it is a sign of weakness if someone shows uncontrolled emotions or loses their temper, when a conflict arises, the Japanese tend to behave in a way they deem appropriate rather than show their real emotions (Fatehi, 1996, p. 171; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Ting-Toomey, 1996, p. 111).

For the Thais, as the Thais consider that losing their temper could be seen as degrading oneself, they are likely to be patient and tolerant rather than show emotional extremes. Therefore, when there is a problem, Thai people tend to avoid confrontation and maintain a peaceful working environment even though they feel angry and really want to lose their temper (Gordon & Yee, 1995, p. 19; Holmes,

Suchada Tangtongtavee, & Tomizawa, 1995, p. 92; Klausner, 1993, p. 379; Mulder, 2000, pp. 46-47; Kriengsak Niratpattanasai, 2005, p. 12).

2.5.1.3 Time

The Americans' use of time differs from that of other cultures. As Americans value time highly, they are conscious of time and try hard to use their time most wisely and efficiently. Therefore, they feel it is not respectful or not responsible to be late or to keep others waiting for any appointments. In addition, as Americans perceive time as a limited resource, they tend to be in a hurry and finish whatever they do as soon as possible (Brake, Walker, D. M., & Walker, T. T., 1995, p. 131; Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 44; Elashmawi & Harris, 1993, p. 34; Fatehi, 1996, p. 173; Ferraro, 1990, p. 98; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, p. 26; Johnson, Mott, & Quible, 1996, p. 417; Porter & Samovar, 1997, p.309).

For the Japanese, many researchers agree that the Japanese value punctuality highly and put an emphasis on keeping to schedule when doing business, while they tend to use time flexibly for social occasions. However, Japanese people are not likely to focus on time or push for a job to finish immediately, so it tends to take more time for the Japanese to make a decision (Chaney & Martin, 2000, p.123; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, p.146; Porter & Samovar, 1997, p. 260).

While the concept of time for Thai people is rather flexible, so they feel more comfortable with a pull technique rather than a push technique. As a result, when there is a matter at hand, the reason for urgency should be explained and deadlines should be requested instead of ordered (Holmes, Suchada Tangtongtavy, & Tomizawa, 1995, p. 78; Leppert, 1992, p. 182; McGregor & Toews, 1998, p. 195; Kriengsak Niratpattanasai, 2005, pp. 10-11; Sinha, 2000, p. 428).

Table 2.1 summarizes the significant values between the Americans, the Japanese and the Thais in terms of relationships, communication climates and time. The table shows that the Americans emphasize independence, openness and view time as money. On the contrary, the Japanese value relationship-oriented relationships, harmony and use time depending on the situation. Meanwhile, the Thais place relationship-oriented relationships, face-saving and flexible time high on lists.

TABLE 2.1

THE SUMMARY OF FACTORS THAT AFFECT INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SUCCESS

Nationalities	The Americans	The Japanese	The Thais
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent - Self-reliant - Personal accomplishment - Self-protective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship-oriented - Group achievement - Confrontation avoidance - Careful to build relationship with people who they are not familiar with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship-oriented - Cooperation - Compromise - Confrontation avoidance
Communication climates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Openness - Directness - Frankness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harmony - Concerned about others' feelings - Avoiding showing disagreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Face saving - Tolerant - Relaxed interaction
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time is a limited source - Punctuality - Trying to finish whatever as soon as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punctuality on business - Flexible on social occasions - Taking time to make a decision - Not focusing on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time is flexible - Dealing with time holistically - Pressured when doing something urgently

2.5.2 Intercultural Barriers

In communicating with people from different cultures, there are not only communication skills that could be an obstacle in communicating (Flatley, Lesikar, & Pettit, 1999, p. 3), but attitudes are also an important barrier that can affect the way people interact with others (Beamer & Varner, 1995, p. 45).

2.5.2.1 Communication Skills

Several researchers agree that Americans value verbalization highly, so they are likely to put anything into words, and express everything verbally and as concisely as possible. Furthermore, as Americans consider directness and openness as acceptable, they are likely to be straightforward, explicit and unambiguous. Therefore, Americans tend to say whatever they mean as precisely and straightforwardly as possible. As a result, it would not be difficult for others to understand whatever they mean (Beamer & Varner, 2005, p. 163; Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 132; Ferraro, 1990, p. 55; Porter & Samovar, 1997, p. 309).

As the Japanese value indirect expression, they feel more comfortable in communicating ambiguously than explicitly. Moreover, as Japanese people believe that speaking too much could destroy any chance of success, they try to say only what they want to communicate and what they mean. As a result, nonverbal communication seems to play a much more significant role in communication with the Japanese (Barnlund, 1989, p. 42; Beamer & Varner, 2005, p. 162; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Ting-Toomey, 1996, p. 112; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, p. 147; Porter, Samovar, & Stefani, 1998, pp. 127-128).

Thais sometimes are afraid to speak second languages because they are afraid to express themselves clearly. Besides, Thai people would rather communicate in an indirect and subtle way rather than speak openly, so when working with the Thais, trying to observe their body language can help to understand them more easily (Holmes, Suchada Tangtongtavee, & Tomizawa, 1995, pp. 96-98; Leppert, 1992, p. 89; McGregor & Toews, 1998, pp.197, 202-205; Kriengsak Nirapattanasai, 2005, pp. 85-88).

2.5.2.2 Attitudes

For the Americans, it was found that as the nature of Americans is informal, they use this kind of informality to make people around them feel comfortable in order to reduce social and cultural barriers. Moreover, as Americans think that it is essential to learn new and different things in order to better understand and accept those differences, it is seen that Americans are willing to be open and easy to accept those differences (Conaway, Easton, Schmidt, & Wardrope, 2007, p. 169; Fatehi, 1996, pp. 166, 171-172; Fatehi, 2008, pp. 133-134).

Various researchers agree that as the Japanese are careful in building relationships with other people who they are not familiar with, they are likely to treat others who are not ethnically Japanese as outsiders. Moreover, as the Japanese tend to expect others to be similar to themselves, they are likely to reject any behavior which is different from theirs. As a result, the Japanese only gradually open to different things and tend to adapt themselves over a long period of time (The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan, 1994, pp. 54-55; Dunung, 1995, pp. 13-15; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, p. 53; Mente, 1981, p. 17).

Meanwhile, Thai people tend to insist on getting to know other people if they do not know them well, so it will take a period of time to get to know and make friends with them. However, as the Thais consider relationships as very important, once their relationships with other people are maintained, they are willing to open to one another (Leppert, 1992, pp. 84-85; McGregor & Toews, 1998, pp. 189).

Table 2.2 summarizes the significant values of the Americans, the Japanese and the Thais in terms of communication skills and attitudes. The significant values regarding communication skills illustrate that the Americans consider verbalization very important while the Japanese and the Thais value indirect expression, so body languages play a significant role in communicating with them. The significant values regarding attitudes show that the Americans think that it is essential to learn new different things, so they are willing to be open and to accept those differences. The Japanese are likely to expect others to be similar, so they gradually open to different things. Meanwhile the Thais tend to take time to make friends, but once their relationships are maintained, they are more willing to open to others.

TABLE 2.2
THE SUMMARY OF INTERCULTURAL BARRIERS

Nationalities	The Americans	The Japanese	The Thais
Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct expression - Concise - Straightforward - Verbal valuable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indirect expression - Ambiguous - Nonverbal communication plays a significant role - Using minimum amount of words as much as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indirect expression - Ambiguous - Body language plays an important role
Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal - Friendly - Easily open to more new different things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal - Expecting others to be similar - Gradually open to different things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking time to make friends - Once their relationships are developed, they are willing to open to others.

2.5.3 Intercultural Adaptation

In working in multi-cultural organizations, the ability to adapt to the new cultural environment is very important because it not only helps us to reduce pressure and anxiety but it also helps us to understand other people better (Beebe, S.A., Beebe, S.J., & Redmond, 2005, pp. 113-114; Conaway, Easton, Schmidt, & Wardrope, 2007. p. 67; Gudykunst, 1994, p. 186). The four techniques of intercultural adaptation in terms of improving empathy, encouraging feedback, acquiring social and cultural knowledge and increasing contact are as follows:

2.5.3.1 Improving Empathy

Several researchers agree that Americans believe in equality, so they are not likely to play down the importance of rank, status or any social privilege in their society. Therefore, Americans are likely to give equal opportunities for everyone to show their ideas and opinions freely. Furthermore, as Americans are open to a new situation, when there is a problem, they are likely to share in any situation and are ready to help and listen to any problems (Beamer & Varner, 1995, p. 137; Chaney & Martin, 2000, p. 44; Fatehi, 1996, p. 166; Ferraro, 1990, p. 109).

For the Japanese, as hierarchy is very important in their society, they are likely to rank anyone and anything at different levels in their society. Therefore, seniority is very important in Japanese society. Moreover, as the Japanese value unity, they tend to give priority to their group rather than the individual. Therefore, it is quite difficult for foreigners to get inside a Japanese social circle in a short time (The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan, 1994, pp. 54-55; Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, pp. 80-81).

Meanwhile, Thai people are likely to care for others' feelings, so when there is a problem, the Thais tend not to show disagreement or blame one another in order to maintain harmonious relations with other people. Moreover, "Hen jai" is another Thai value that shows an ability to understand or empathize with other people. The Thais usually present the "Hen jai" characteristic when they want to show that they are willing to listen to and help other people in order to show that they understand how they feel. Furthermore, as Thai people value seniority, they usually regard the level of ranks in order to show who are in the positions above and below

(Holmes, Suchada Tangtongtavy, & Tomizawa, 1995, pp. 28-30, 53-55; McGregor & Toews, 1998, pp. 176-177, 196-197; Kriengsak Niratpattanasai, 2005, p. 12).

2.5.3.2 Encouraging Feedback

The Americans are interested in giving and taking feedback rather than keeping silent. So, when talking with Americans, they usually encourage feedback from other people by giving a clue such as lowering the voice, pausing at the end of a sentence, or looking at the other party. Moreover, as Americans prefer an open door policy in working in an organization, when there is a problem, it is not difficult for other people to talk about the problems and encourage feedback from Americans (Beamer & Varner, 1995, p. 150; Copeland & Schuster, 2006, p. 55).

While the Japanese tend to use a minimum amount of words and leave out much of what they want to say, it is hard to get factual ideas and feedback from them. Moreover, as Japanese people believe that silence can save them from any embarrassment when they don't want to show their emotions or feelings, silence plays a significant role in Japanese communication behavior. Therefore, when talking to the Japanese, trying to observe non-verbal clues is another way to get feedback from the Japanese (Elashmawi & Harris, 1993, p. 40; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Ting-Toomey, 1996, pp. 113-115; Porter & Samovar, 1997, p. 261).

As the Thais consider assertiveness as a negative trait, they are not likely to present any sign of showing off to other people. Moreover, Thais consider that to show disagreement with an idea would mean to have disagreement with the person who presents the idea. Therefore, in order to get reliable feedback from the Thais, it is better to look at their body language as a clue (Holmes, Suchada Tangtongtavy, & Tomizawa, 1995, pp. 88-90; McGregor & Toews, 1998, pp. 178, 203-204; Sinha, 2000, p. 421).

2.5.3.3 Acquiring Social and Cultural Knowledge

The Americans normally spend their non-working time on their personal life, so it is quite difficult to socialize and increase contact with Americans. As a result, it is not easy to get to know them to the core (Copeland & Schuster, 2006, pp. 58-59; Hodge, 2000, pp. 38, 45).

The Japanese consider socializing as an essential part in doing business because it helps to develop and strengthen relationships with other people (Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, pp. 26, 67,132; Mente, 1981, p. 98).

Like the Japanese, the Thais are collectivist, they are likely to socialize with other people in order to build and develop relationships, so they are likely to join in and take part in as many social occasions as they can (Klausner, 1993, p. 290; McGregor & Toews, 1998, p. 182).

2.5.3.4 Increasing Contact

Many researchers agree that the Americans are likely to focus on task accomplishment rather than on building relationships with other people, so they tend to spend little time on talking about non-related issues during working hours (Copeland & Schuster, 2006, pp. 58-59; Hodge, 2000, pp. 38, 45).

Meanwhile, the Japanese believe that it is impossible to get to know another person deeply unless they have had a drink with them because the Japanese think that when they are drinking, they are being completely informal and frank with each other. Therefore, the Japanese consider drinking as an important factor to develop relationships with others as well as to provide a comfortable setting in which facts can be established (Hall, E. T. & Hall, M. R., 1987, pp. 26, 67,132; Mente, 1981, p. 98).

Thai people tend to insist on getting to know other people if they don't know them well. Thus, if their relationships with other people are not well developed, it is quite difficult to get the opportunity to be social and increase contact with them (Klausner, 1993, p. 290; McGregor & Toews, 1998, p. 182).

Table 2.3 summarizes the significant values between the Americans, the Japanese and the Thais in terms of intercultural adaptation. The table represents that equality, sharing ideas, and spending non-working time on their personal life are higher priorities for the Americans. The Japanese consider seniority, silence, socializing and drinking after work very important. While the Thais place seniority, disagreement avoidance and fun on the high lists.

TABLE 2.3
THE SUMMARY OF INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

Nationalities	The Americans	The Japanese	The Thais
Improving empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality - Ready to share in any situation - Open door policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seniority - Group priority - Lowest priority to outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seniority - Caring about others' feelings - Willing to help other people
Encouraging feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing opinions and ideas with others - Giving and taking feedback rather than keeping silence - Giving a clue such as lowering the voice or pausing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using minimum amount of words - Observing non-verbal clues - Keeping silence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assertiveness as a negative trait - Observing body languages - Avoiding showing disagreement
Acquiring social and cultural knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spending non-working time on their personal life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socializing is an essential part in doing business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fun plays an important role - Trying to join and take part in any social occasions
Increasing contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spending little time on talking about non-related issues during working hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drinking after work is important to develop relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insisting on getting to know others if don't know well

2.6 RELEVANT RESEARCH

A few studies related to intercultural communication of American, Japanese and Thai employees working in Thailand have been conducted. The relevant studies can be summarized as follows:

Mingkhwan Sinthuwong (มิ่งขวัญ สินธุวงศ์, 2543) conducted research on the cultural training of international corporations in Thailand. The results showed that Thai people have gradually adopted some Western ways in terms of assertiveness, confrontation, punctuality, goal setting and task responsibility; as a result, Thai people have made a contribution to Western culture. Of course, experience with foreigners is one of the factors that affects the values and attitudes of Thai people because Thai people who have experience with foreigners are more likely to adopt Western values than Thai people who haven't had a chance to meet or work with foreigners directly.

Furthermore, Suwannee Taechawiratchon (สุวรรณี เตชะวิรัชชน, 2541) conducted research on the communication behavior and adaptation of Japanese employees who work in Thailand. The results showed that Japanese employees seemed to have moderate communication behavior. Japanese employees thought that it was important to follow company policy, so when the assigned job did not conform with the policy, they immediately argued and gave their opinions to their superior. However, as Japanese employees thought that to have a good relationship with their colleagues was important, when they had problems at work, they tended to avoid saying anything directly and openly in order to preserve and maintain relationships with their colleagues. Moreover, even though Japanese employees thought that to adjust their communication style could help them to better get along with their colleagues, they spent less time socializing and learning about Thai lifestyle. As a result, Japanese employees seemed to adapt only to a low moderate degree with their Thai colleagues.

In addition, Thanit Kongkaew (ธานีษฎ์ กองแก้ว, 2544) conducted research on communication and adjustment of foreign lecturers to Thai universities. The findings showed that sex, age and nationality did not relate to an ability to adapt to Thai culture. However, the results mentioned that foreign lecturers who were highly competent in communication, i.e. had the ability to speak, listen, read and write the

Thai language, were better able to adapt themselves to Thai culture. Moreover, foreign lecturers who had Thai friends and had stayed in Thailand for a long period of time were rather more able to adapt themselves to Thai culture than other foreign lecturers who did not have Thai friends and who had stayed in Thailand for only a short time.

Finally, Vanida Pornpirun (วนิดา พรพิรุฬห์, 2547) compared organizational culture of Japanese companies and American companies in Thailand. The sample for this research consisted of American, Japanese and Thai employees who worked in Japanese and American companies in Thailand. The findings showed that employees in American companies had equal opportunities to present their work and their ideas in order to participate in any decision making; therefore, employees seemed to be satisfied with their jobs in contrast to employees in Japanese companies. However, even though employees in American companies tended to be more individualistic, employees liked to work in a group and cooperate with other employees, so the communication climate in American companies was friendly and cooperative in comparison to Japanese companies. However, Thai employees in both Japanese and American companies suggested that even though the language barrier is one of the problems in working with the Japanese, it was not the main problem. The main obstacle was the difference in cultures because a lack of understanding of other cultures could cause many problems in working in a cross-cultural workplace. Therefore, foreigners who work in Thailand should learn about Thai culture and try to understand Thai culture so that they can work and communicate with Thai people more effectively.

In summary, Chapter Two has mentioned six concepts in connection with this research. The model of intercultural communication, factors that affect intercultural communication success, intercultural communication barriers and intercultural adaptation were presented in this section. The working cultures of the Americans, the Japanese and the Thais and relevant research were also reviewed in this research. In the next chapter, the details of the research methodology will be presented.