To Frances H. Covert and the late Roger A. Covert
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Study</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of my Study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief History and Current Status of Study Abroad</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad and Student Learning</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Competence</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Intercultural Competence</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective vs. Objective Culture</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Process Model of Intercultural Competence</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning Theory</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on Study Abroad and Intercultural Learning</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Impact of Study Abroad on Intercultural Learning</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Intercultural Learning Process</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad Program Duration</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Abroad Program Structure</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effect of Individual Differences among Study Abroad Students</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Learning</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Effects of Studying Abroad</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of Research on Studying Abroad and Intercultural Learning</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Substantive Theory</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theoretical Perspective...........................................................................................................44
Setting ..................................................................................................................................46
Sampling ...............................................................................................................................48
  Access to Participants .........................................................................................................48
  Preston College ................................................................................................................49
  International Academic Programs ..................................................................................50
  Participant Recruitment ...................................................................................................51
  Participant Information ....................................................................................................52
  Participant Confidentiality .................................................................................................53
Narrative Inquiry ................................................................................................................53
Data Collection Methods ..................................................................................................55
  Photo Elicitation ................................................................................................................55
  Reflective Journaling .........................................................................................................56
  Semi-Structured Interviews .............................................................................................57
Data Collection Procedures ...............................................................................................58
  Photo Elicitation ................................................................................................................58
  Reflective Journaling .........................................................................................................59
  Semi-structured Interviews ...............................................................................................60
  Communication with Participants ....................................................................................60
  Participant Compensation ...............................................................................................61
  Memoing ............................................................................................................................61
Data Analysis Procedures ..................................................................................................62
  Analysis of Photo Elicitation Data ....................................................................................62
    Structural analysis of narratives .....................................................................................62
    Visual analysis of photos .................................................................................................65
    Analysis of photo-narrative cases ..................................................................................67
  Analysis of Reflective Journals .......................................................................................69
    Structural analysis of narratives .....................................................................................70
    Thematic analysis of narratives .....................................................................................71
  Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews .......................................................................72
    Structural analysis of narratives .....................................................................................72
    Thematic analysis of narratives .....................................................................................73
    Thematic analysis of data on intercultural learning activities ........................................74
Research Quality ................................................................................................................75
Subjectivity Statement .........................................................................................................77
Limitations ..........................................................................................................................79
Summary ................................................................................................................................81

4 RESULTS ............................................................................................................................85

Photo-Narratives of Cultural Differences ...........................................................................86
  Organization of Narratives of Cultural Differences .........................................................86
  Photos of Cultural Differences ........................................................................................94
    Overview of the photos ....................................................................................................94
    Content analysis of the photos .......................................................................................95
    Reviewing the photos for patterns of meaning ...............................................................99
  Interpretation of Photo-Narrative Cases .........................................................................103
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photo-narrative content</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo-narrative relationship</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives of Cultural Adaptation</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Cultural Adaptation Narratives</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content of Narratives of Cultural Adaptation</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives of Intercultural Competence</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Intercultural Competence Narratives</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content of Intercultural Competence Narratives</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Learning through Social Interaction</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of my Study</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Findings</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Student Learning</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Understanding of Intercultural Competence</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Study Abroad Practice</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Future Research</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A PHOTO ELICITATION GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B PHOTO ELICITATION INFORMATION SHEET</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED PHOTO INTERVIEWS</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D REFLECTIVE JOURNAL GUIDELINES</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF REFERENCES</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Table Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-1</td>
<td>Participant information</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2</td>
<td>Summary of data collection</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>Summary of data analysis</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Example of structural analysis of a narrative of cultural differences</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1</td>
<td>Overview of study</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2</td>
<td>Subjects of photos at face value</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-3</td>
<td>Inductively developed themes in photos</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-4</td>
<td>Number of photos by participants and themes</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Photo-narrative cases by themes and participants</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Photo-narrative cases by themes, learning mode, and reflection type</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>Example of structural analysis of a cultural adaptation narrative</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>Example of structural analysis of an intercultural competence narrative</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>Instances of communication and behavior in narratives</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>Process Model of Intercultural Competence</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1</td>
<td>Typical city vista</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2</td>
<td>Formality and hierarchy of educational event</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-3</td>
<td>Chilean eating habits and diet</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-4</td>
<td>Prevalence of stray dogs in streets</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Conservative values</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Power of cultural symbols</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>Prevalence of security walls</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>Conflict between modernization and traditional religious values</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>Culture of <em>pololeando</em></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>Many churches and historical development of city</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-11</td>
<td>Attitudes toward the Mapuche</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-12</td>
<td>Shopping in outdoor markets</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-13</td>
<td>Graffiti as a means of political expression</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-14</td>
<td>Children performing traditional dances</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-15</td>
<td>Culture of <em>micros</em></td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-16</td>
<td>Chilean women’s roles</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-17</td>
<td>Intercultural learning concept map</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Abstract Conceptualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Active Experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLU</td>
<td>Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Concrete Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMIS</td>
<td>Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>Experiential Learning Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDI</td>
<td>Intercultural Development Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIE</td>
<td>Institute for International Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUCC</td>
<td>Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUCV</td>
<td>Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>Reflective Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UACCh</td>
<td>Universidad Austral de Chile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The federal government, national educational organizations, and universities support undergraduate student participation in study abroad programs. Study abroad provides students the opportunity to gain skills required in an era of global interdependence, such as foreign language proficiency, knowledge of other countries, and intercultural skills. More research is needed, however, to better understand and document how and what students learn while abroad. Intercultural competence, one of several possible study abroad learning outcomes, is defined as the ability to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Knowledge of how students perceive their development of intercultural competence is important for understanding how learning occurs in study abroad contexts.

The purpose of my study was to investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions about developing intercultural competence while studying abroad for a semester. Specifically, I investigated a) how students experience cultural differences while studying abroad, b) students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior, and c) the activities that students perceive as promoting their intercultural learning while studying abroad. Following a
constructivist perspective, I collected data through photo elicitation, reflective journaling, and semi-structured interviews. Participants consisted of seven U.S. undergraduate students that were studying for a semester at three universities in Chile. I analyzed the data with structural analysis, visual analysis, and thematic analysis.

My study resulted in four main findings: a) how narrative inquiry informs our understanding of intercultural competence, b) how participants discern cultural differences, c) the role of personal agency in the development of intercultural competence, and c) social interaction as a means for intercultural learning. These findings have implications for study abroad research and practice. In particular, they contribute to the current conversation in the field of study abroad about intervening in student learning and they enrich our theoretical understanding of the development of intercultural competence. In terms of study abroad practice, they offer suggestions for instructional design, program structure, and advising.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

U.S. university students are studying abroad in foreign countries for academic credit in growing numbers. Over 260,000 U.S. university students studied abroad during the 2008-09 academic year, an increase of almost 100% in the last decade (IIE, 2010). Support for study abroad program participation comes from several sectors, including the federal government, national educational organizations, and universities. Study abroad is perceived as providing students the opportunity to gain skills required in an era of global interdependence, such as foreign language proficiency, knowledge of other countries, and intercultural skills (Association for American Colleges and Universities, 2008; Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005; Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008). More research is needed, however, to better understand and document how and what students learn while abroad (Sutton & Rubin, 2004).

Intercultural competence is one of several possible study abroad learning outcomes (Meyer-Lee & Evans, 2007). It is defined as the ability to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff, 2006). The most common method for assessing intercultural learning outcomes from study abroad consists of administering quantitative self-report tests to students before and after they study abroad (Hoff, 2008). Quantitative approaches to understanding intercultural learning are valuable, but they cannot adequately examine the learning process that takes place during study abroad (Jackson, 2006). To gain a complete understanding of how and what students learn while abroad, qualitative research is also needed. Knowledge of how students perceive their development of intercultural competence is important for a holistic understanding of how intercultural learning occurs in study abroad contexts. Information on students’ perceptions of
their development of intercultural competence, however, is lacking in the research literature (Deardorff, 2006). The purpose of my study was to investigate students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence while studying abroad for a semester.

**Statement of the Problem**

Government officials have endorsed the idea that U.S. students should study abroad during their undergraduate programs of study. In 2004, the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, a federally-appointed committee, set the goal to send one million students abroad by the year 2016-17 (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005). The Lincoln Commission acknowledges the need for the U.S. to better compete in the global marketplace and meet national security needs. A lack of global literacy among U.S. students “is a national liability in an age of global trade and business, global interdependence, and global terror” (S. 473, 2009). The Lincoln Commission concluded that the U.S. can increase the global literacy of its college graduates through improved foreign language proficiency, area studies knowledge, and intercultural skills. The government must “significantly enhance the global competitiveness and international knowledge base of the United States by ensuring that more United States students have the opportunity to acquire foreign language skills and international knowledge through significantly expanded study abroad” (S. 473, 2009). In addition to increasing study abroad participation, the commission seeks to: a) diversify the students that study abroad, b) diversify where students study, and c) fund scholarships for low-income students.

In the same vein, national educational organizations have embraced the need for more graduates who can succeed in globalized, interdependent societies characterized by “systems and phenomena that transcend national borders” (Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006; p. v). The Association for American Colleges and Universities (2008) identified intercultural knowledge and
competence as one of the essential learning outcomes of an undergraduate education and views study abroad as a high-impact educational practice. The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) (2007) determined six attributes of a globally competent college graduate: a) a diverse and knowledgeable worldview, b) comprehension of the international dimensions of a major field of study, c) effective communication in another language, d) understanding of the importance and exhibition of sensitivity and adaptability in cross-cultural communication and group experiences, e) experience outside the U.S. through study abroad or other programs, and f) commitment to the development of global competence throughout life.

Businesses, as well as the federal government and non-profit organizations, are in need of global specialists with cultural and linguistic expertise to serve in leadership and technical positions (Stearns, 2009). Employers, particularly human resource professionals and other hiring authorities, value study abroad experiences in job candidates and believe that studying abroad enhances desirable job skills (Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2008).

At higher education institutions, there has been recent growth and interest in internationalization. Universities have responded to the demand for more globally competent graduates who can work in an interconnected world (APLU, 2004; Herrera, 2008). Internationally-related curricula, such as new courses and majors, as well as global learning outcomes have been implemented by institutions across the country (Olson et al., 2006). The most common international education activity at universities, however, is study abroad. In a survey of over 1,000 U.S. colleges and universities, 91% of the institutions offered study abroad programs (Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008).

Historically, study abroad programs were developed and managed by educational institutions. Over the last decade, however, non-profit and for-profit organizations have become
well-established and now compete with universities in providing study abroad opportunities. Today, many study abroad programs have minimal admission requirements and it is increasingly common for students to take courses on a pass/fail basis while abroad or to take courses in English in non-English speaking countries. As a result, some faculty and administrators have criticized the quality and educational value of study abroad (Burness, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Pappano, 2007; Vande Berg, 2007).

The research literature concerning study abroad learning outcomes is nascent. Only recently has a concerted effort been made to assess what students learn while abroad and what effect study abroad has on the development of intercultural competence (Bolen, 2007; Hoff, 2008; Sutton & Rubin, 2004). The most common method for assessing intercultural learning outcomes from study abroad consists of administering quantitative self-report tests to students before and after they study abroad (Hoff, 2008). The quantitative evidence suggests that studying abroad does positively influence students’ development of intercultural development and it appears that long-term study abroad programs of one semester to a year result in greater development of intercultural skills than short-term programs of less than eight weeks (Dwyer, 2004).

Quantitative approaches to understanding intercultural learning are valuable, but they are unable to “capture many of the complexities of language and cultural learning (Jackson, 2006; p. 135). To gain a complete understanding of how and what students learn while abroad, qualitative research is also needed. Existing qualitative studies have addressed various aspects of students’ study abroad experiences, such as affective and social learning (Immelman & Schneider, 1998), adjustment strategies (Jackson, 2005; Pearson-Evans, 2006), learning strategies (Mendelson, 2004), unintended outcomes (Hill & Thomas, 2005), and individual
differences among students (Anderson, 2003; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Tarp, 2006). These studies all have implications for the intercultural learning process, but just one study has dealt with the development of intercultural competence per se (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004). A deep understanding of the phenomenon of intercultural competence is lacking in the qualitative literature. In particular, little is known about students’ perceptions of developing intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). By investigating students’ perceptions, we can gain a detailed and holistic understanding of the complex learning processes that occur during study abroad (Jackson, 2006).

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of my study was to investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence during a semester study abroad program. In particular, I explored how students construed cultural differences and students’ perceptions of their ability to engage in interculturally competent communication and behavior. I also examined students’ perceptions of what activities were helpful to their intercultural learning.

**Research Questions**

My study was guided by three research questions:

1. How do students experience cultural differences while studying abroad?
2. What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?
3. What activities do students perceive as promoting their intercultural learning while studying abroad?

**Definition of Terms**

- **CULTURE.** A set of socially transmitted and shared beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of a community, population, or group (American Heritage Dictionary, 1985). Culture forms a “system of knowledge” (Keesing, 1974; p. 89) that influences how one communicates with and interprets the behavior of other members of a culture (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003).
• **EDUCATION ABROAD.** Any educational endeavor that occurs outside of a student’s home country, such as study abroad, internships, work, volunteering, and service learning (Forum on Education Abroad, 2009).

• **INTERCULTURAL.** An adjective used to describe an interaction or encounter that takes place between two or more cultures.

• **INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE.** Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve one’s goals to some degree (Deardorff, 2006); one of several possible study abroad learning outcomes.

• **INTERCULTURAL LEARNING.** The process of learning about a culture other than your own; the process may or may not result in intercultural competence.

• **INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY.** The ability to discriminate and experience cultural differences (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003); the affective foundation of intercultural competence.

• **INTERNATIONALIZATION.** The process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education at the national, sector, and institutional levels (Knight, 2003a). Postsecondary institutions engage in internationalization efforts on campus and abroad. On-campus efforts include incorporating international dimensions into a) curricula and academic programs, b) the teaching-learning process, c) co-curricular activities, and d) relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups. Efforts abroad involve the virtual or physical movement of people, academic programs, providers, and projects (Knight, 2003b; Olson et al., 2006).

• **INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION.** Activities that contribute to the institutional goal of internationalization, such as facilitation of education abroad for U.S. students, international student recruitment, area or international studies instruction, foreign language instruction, English as a second language instruction, as well as support for international scholars and students (both exchange and degree-seeking) (Forum on Education Abroad, 2009; Olson, Evans, & Shoenberg, 2007).

• **STUDY ABROAD.** Education that takes place outside of the country and results in progress toward a degree at the student’s home institution (Forum on Education Abroad, 2009).

**Significance of my Study**

The education abroad field is in need of more research on study abroad learning outcomes (Bolen, 2007). Likewise, universities and colleges, influenced by the accountability movement within the field of higher education, are increasingly concerned with better understanding what students learn while abroad and with documenting this learning (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). The
call for more research on study abroad learning outcomes is underscored by a) the recent growth in study abroad program participation by undergraduate students, b) the federal government’s call for increased study abroad participation and greater financial investment in study abroad, c) the interest that universities and employers have shown in study abroad, and d) the negative criticism of the value of study abroad by higher education faculty and administrators. My study adds to our knowledge about study abroad learning outcomes. In particular, it provides a qualitative understanding of the process by which undergraduate students develop intercultural competence while studying abroad.

My study also responds to the need to investigate the development of intercultural competence in a study abroad context. Two existing models describe the development of intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993; Deardorff, 2006) (see Chapter 2), but they do not specifically address undergraduate students or study abroad. There is room for investigating how intercultural competence is developed by study abroad students. So, part of my study’s significance is that it “fleshes out” the development of intercultural competence in a study abroad context.

The findings of my study are of practical use to study abroad professionals at both U.S. and overseas universities. Advisers, program coordinators, instructors, and faculty directors would benefit from a better understanding of students’ process of developing intercultural competence. The results of my study may lead to modifications in study abroad advising, instruction, and program structure that will enhance students’ intercultural learning and ultimately improve students’ intercultural competence. In the next chapter, I review the literature related to study abroad program participation and the development of intercultural competence.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The main objectives of this chapter are to a) provide background information on study abroad, b) examine the concepts and substantive theories of intercultural competence, and c) review the research literature related to study abroad program participation and intercultural learning. I start the chapter with a brief history of study abroad as an educational activity, followed by a description of the current participation trends and main learning outcomes of study abroad. Next, I examine the phenomenon of intercultural competence with particular attention to how it is developed. I also review experiential learning theory which provides a model for explaining how students can engage in intercultural learning while abroad. Finally, I join the topics of the first two sections in a review of the research on the relationship between study abroad program participation and intercultural learning.

Study Abroad

Brief History and Current Status of Study Abroad

The concept of studying outside of one’s home country developed from the European Grand Tour of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the time, it was common for upper and middle class British men to travel in Western Europe, particularly Italy and France, to tour the major cultural and historic sites for a period of several years. British women also undertook Grand Tours, but only if chaperoned. American men and women soon followed their British peers to Europe (Gore, 2005; Hoffa, 2007). The Grand Tour was considered an important educational experience, but it was not offered for academic credit and was often associated with “an element of leisure, even libertinism” (Gore, 2005; p. 28).

Study abroad became part of the American system of higher education in the 1920s. Credit-bearing programs consisted of three main types: a) a junior year abroad to study a foreign
language, b) faculty-led short-term study tours offered in English, and c) discipline-specific short-term summer programs (Hoffa, 2007). Almost all of these first programs were offered in Europe and many of the participants were female (Gore, 2005). Vande Berg (2007) writes, “The “Junior Year Abroad” hearkened back to that golden age when Henry James’ privileged young Americans traveled to Europe in search of the Cultural Enrichment they would find in the villas, drawing rooms, and museums of Florence, London, and Paris” (p. 393).

Today, study abroad opportunities are highly diverse. An array of programs is sponsored by institutions of higher education in the U.S. and abroad, and by non-profit and for-profit program providers. Programs are offered throughout the world in both developed and developing countries. Despite the expansion of locations and providers, Europe remains the most common study abroad location and white women still comprise the majority of participants. In 2008-09, about 64% of the 260,000 U.S. study abroad students were female and 81% were white. Most participants, 55%, studied in Europe, while 15% studied in Latin America, and 22% in Asia, Oceania and Africa combined. The United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, and China were the top five study destinations. In terms of program length, 55% studied abroad on short-term programs ranging from two to eight weeks, about 41% studied abroad for a semester, and 4% studied abroad for a full academic year (IIE, 2010).

**Study Abroad and Student Learning**

The discourse of study abroad as a Grand Tour, with connotations of leisurely travel, persists (Gore, 2005). But, a new discourse about study abroad, the Student Learning Paradigm (Vande Berg, 2007), has emerged. Universities and colleges, influenced by the accountability movement within the field of higher education, are increasingly concerned with better understanding what students learn while abroad and with documenting this learning (Sutton & Rubin, 2004). Likewise, there is the expectation that study abroad students “can learn things,
and learn in ways, that they will not if they stay on their home campuses (Vande Berg, 2007; p. 392).

Several outcomes of studying abroad have been identified, including a) foreign language learning, b) social and emotional growth, c) disciplinary knowledge, and d) intercultural competence (Meyer-Lee & Evans, 2007). The impact of study abroad on foreign language learning has been studied by second language acquisition researchers for some time and is the most well studied study abroad learning outcome (Sutton & Rubin 2004). For example, students who study a foreign language while abroad have better narrative abilities than language students who do not study abroad (Collentine, 2004). Studies dealing with the social and emotional outcomes of study abroad cover a variety of topics, such as self-efficacy (Milstein, 2005), stress and coping (Ryan & Twibell, 2000), and psychosocial development (Lathrop, 1999). Research on the disciplinary knowledge outcomes of studying abroad (for example, the benefits of learning political science abroad) is incipient, but several studies are underway (Hoff, 2008; Sutton & Rubin, 2004; Vande Berg, Balckum, Scheid, & Whalen, 2004). The literature dealing with the intercultural outcomes of studying abroad is fully reviewed in the third section of this chapter. First, however, I define intercultural competence and explain two theories of how it is developed.

**Intercultural Competence**

The construct of intercultural competence stems from the field of intercultural communication. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall, influenced by cultural anthropology, linguistics, ethology, and Freudian psychoanalytic theory, developed the first paradigm of intercultural communication in order to train U.S. diplomats in the 1950s (Rogers, Hart, & Miike, 2002). Hall posited that communication was an inextricable part of culture (Jandt, 2004), and that culture, in turn, influences the way we communicate (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003).
Intercultural communication, which occurs between individuals of different cultures, is not straightforward. Cultural differences can “create dissimilar interpretations and expectations about how to communicate competently” (Lustig & Koester, 1999; p. 59).

**Defining Intercultural Competence**

Intercultural competence, synonymous with “intercultural communication competence,” is defined by Deardorff (2006) as “behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one’s goals to some degree” (p. 254). Bennett and Bennett (2004) define it as “the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts” (p. 149). Further, Milagros and Reese (1999) define intercultural competence as “the ability to relate and communicate effectively when individuals involved in the interaction do not share the same culture, ethnicity, language or other salient variable” (p. 2).

All three definitions highlight the communicative and behavioral aspects of intercultural competence. Important terms in these definitions are effective and appropriate. Effective refers to behaviors and communication that minimize misunderstandings (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) and that “lead to the achievement of desired outcomes” (Lustig & Koester, 1999, p. 67). Appropriate refers to “behaviors that are regarded as proper and suitable given the expectations generated by a given culture, the constraints of the specific situation, and the nature of the relationship between the interactants” (p. 67). Thus, intercultural competence involves achieving one’s objectives in a culturally suitable manner.

Certain cognitive, behavioral, and affective competencies are required to achieve intercultural competence (Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2006; Martin, 1987). Cognitive competencies include knowledge of the target culture, an understanding of the impact of culture on communication, cultural self-awareness, and sociolinguistic knowledge. Behavioral
competencies encompass such skills as forming and managing social relationships, analyzing, interpreting, listening, and problem-solving. Affective competencies or attitudes include curiosity, flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, ability to suspend judgment, and resourcefulness. All three components – cognitive, behavioral, and affective - work together in the development of intercultural competence (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). No one component is sufficient for achieving intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006; Lustig & Koester, 1999).

Bennett (2008) outlines five principles for understanding the development of intercultural competence. First, factual knowledge about a particular culture (e.g. geography, politics, and history) is not sufficient for carrying out effective intercultural interactions in that culture. An understanding of subjective culture, the shared values, beliefs and behaviors of a culture, is equally important. Second, proficiency in a foreign language, while often a requisite for intercultural competence, does not guarantee its development. Again, knowledge of subjective culture is important. Third, cultural differences can cause one to feel alienated or out of balance. These feelings of disequilibrium do not have to result in dissatisfaction and instead should be viewed as “stimuli” (p. 17) for intercultural learning. Fourth, contact with other cultures does not translate into intercultural learning. To learn interculturally, one needs to intentionally engage another culture and then reflect upon that engagement. “In the study abroad context, learners may be in the vicinity of Asian events when they occur but be having an American experience” (p. 17). Finally, contact with other cultures does not necessarily lead to a reduction of stereotypes and prejudice (Allport, 1979). There are certain conditions that alter prejudice and encourage intercultural learning; for example, when individuals from two cultures “do things together” (p. 276) or engage in contact of equal status towards a shared goal.
Subjective vs. Objective Culture

In the previous section, I mentioned the significance of understanding subjective culture for developing intercultural competence. I take a moment here to define subjective culture and discuss how it relates to objective culture. Subjective culture refers to “the psychological features of culture” (Stewart & Bennett, 1991; p. 2), such as values, beliefs, attitudes, and role perceptions (Triandis, 1972). Objective culture consists of the institutions and artifacts of culture (Stewart & Bennett, 1991), including clothing, music, history, economic systems, literature, and customs. Cultural institutions and artifacts are a reflection of a culture’s values and beliefs, thus objective culture is a reflection of subjective culture. In short, objective culture is readily observable and tangible, while subjective culture is not.

An understanding of subjective culture is considered to be more important for developing intercultural competence than an understanding of objective culture. This is because communication is based upon subjective assumptions, values, and patterns of thinking. Despite this, formal instruction about other cultures tends to focus on objective culture over subjective culture (Bennett, 1998). While knowledge of objective culture is important, it alone is not sufficient for developing intercultural competence (Bennett, 2008).

Georg Simmel, a German sociologist and philosopher from the late 1800s, wrote about the tragedy of culture. According to Simmel, subjective culture is produced more slowly than objective culture. People are unable to keep pace with the growth of objective culture and, as a result, we are increasingly controlled by our cultural products (Ritzer, 2007). Objective cultural products can “attain an independent status as external entities. They seem to exist ‘out there,’ and their ongoing human origins are forgotten” (Stewart & Bennett; p.2). The tragedy of culture is difficult to untangle in one’s own culture and only more complex to decipher in cross-cultural situations.
The Process Model of Intercultural Competence

Deardorff’s (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Figure 2-1) proposes that developing intercultural competence begins at the affective or attitudinal level of an individual, specifically with the capacity to differentiate and value cultural differences. Being open, respectful, and curious about others is the “starting point” (p. 257) for becoming intercultural competent. These affective competencies combine with one’s cognitive understandings (for example, cultural self-understanding, cultural knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness) and behavioral skills (such as, the abilities to listen, observe, evaluate, analyze etc.) to achieve an internal “informed frame of reference shift” (p. 256) that leads to adaptability, flexibility, an ethnorelative view, and empathy. This internal shift brings about the ability to externally engage in effective and appropriate intercultural communication and behavior, i.e. intercultural competence. Deardorff (2006) emphasizes that the development of intercultural competence is an ongoing process and cautions that one may never become completely interculturally competent.

It should be noted that the internal informed frame of reference shift is not a required part of the developmental process. According to the model, one can progress from attitudes directly to the external outcome of intercultural competence or progress from knowledge and skills directly to the external outcome. Should this happen, “the degree of appropriateness and effectiveness of the outcome (i.e. intercultural competence) may not be nearly as high as when the entire cycle is completed and begins again” (Deardorff, 2006; p. 257).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 1993) offers a theoretical framework for understanding the affective or attitudinal starting point of the development of intercultural competence. One construes cultural differences through
intercultural sensitivity, defined as “the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences” (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; p. 422). “The DMIS assumes that construing cultural difference can become an active part of one’s worldview, eventuating in an expanded understanding of one’s own and other cultures and an increased competence in intercultural relations” (Hammer et al., 2003; p. 423). Thus, increased levels of intercultural sensitivity lie at the foundation of intercultural competence. Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) refers to intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence as “two sides of the same coin. Intercultural competence refers to the external behaviors that individuals manifest when operating in a foreign cultural context, where intercultural sensitivity refers to the developmental process that dictates the degree of an individual’s psychological ability to deal with cultural differences” (p. 180).

The DMIS (Figure 2-2) delineates two orientations toward cultural difference, ethnocentrism and enthorelativism, which are further divided into six stages. The model is developmental in nature and explains changes in intercultural sensitivity that take place as “one’s experience of cultural difference becomes more complex and sophisticated” (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 423). The first three stages of the DMIS - Denial, Defense Reversal, and Minimization – are part of an ethnocentric orientation, meaning that one’s own culture is central to reality. The next three stages - Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration – are ethnorelative, indicating that one’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. Typical behaviors and attitudes are associated with each stage (Bennett & Bennett, 2004).

In the Denial stage, the first stage of ethnocentrism, one does not consider the existence of other cultures due to psychological or physical isolation. In the Defense Reversal stage, one works to actively counteract cultural differences since they are regarded as threatening. In
Minimization, cultural differences are perceived, but are subsumed under the idea of a shared humanity because, in the long run, everyone is believed to be similar. Acceptance, the first stage of ethnoretativism, acknowledges cultural differences and respects them. In Adaptation, an individual acquires the ability to communicate according to the appropriate cultural context. Finally, under Integration, one possesses the ability to integrate various worldviews into one’s identity and move from one worldview to another (Bennett, 1993). Movement from one DMIS stage to the next takes place from left to right (according to Figure 2-2) as one’s experience of cultural differences becomes more complex (Hammer et al., 2003). Complex experiences are construed through “perceptual and conceptual discriminations” (p. 423). Individuals do not typically move backwards on the model.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) measures one’s orientations toward cultural difference, or intercultural sensitivity, according to the DMIS (Hammer et al., 2003). The instrument, administered via pencil and paper or online, consists of 50 statements with Likert scale responses. Respondents receive a mean overall score as well as scores on each of the five scales. Overall scores range from 55 to 145 (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006).

The IDI is considered to be a valid and reliable measure of intercultural sensitivity and there is no evidence of social desirability bias (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003). My study did not administer the IDI, but it was used in several of the studies reviewed later in this chapter.

**Experiential Learning Theory**

Experiential learning theory (ELT) (Kolb, 1984) can be used to explain students’ learning process while engaged in education abroad (Pusch & Merrill, 2008; Savicki, 2008; Younes & Asay, 2003). ELT places experience at the foundation of learning, in opposition to the idea that learning consists of transmitting knowledge from teacher to student (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). In
ELT, learning is defined as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984; p. 41). Learning is a continuous process where “knowledge is continuously derived from and tested out in the experiences of the learner” (p. 27).

In ELT, the grasping and transforming of experience is carried out through two dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world. Learners grasp experience through Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC), while they transform it through Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). “Immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn” (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; p. 194). Ideally, experiential learning is a cycle of all four modes of experiencing (CE), reflecting (RO), thinking (AC), and acting (AE). Otherwise, we are left with incomplete knowledge or a lack of implication for our knowledge. “Activity not checked by observation and analysis may be enjoyable, but intellectually it leads nowhere, neither to greater clarification nor to new ideas and experiences” (Chickering, 1977; p. 18).

Learners have a preferred mode of learning, which in ELT is referred to as a learning style. The four learning styles are called diverging, assimilating, converging, and accommodating. Diverging learners use CE and RO as their dominant abilities. Assimilating incorporates AC and RO, converging includes AC and AE, and accommodating combines CE and AE. Diverging learners prefer observing concrete situations from a variety of perspectives. The assimilating style represents learners who are drawn to abstract and logical ideas and concepts. Converging
learners prefer practical ideas and theories. Accommodating learners seek out hands-on experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Kolb (1984) views learning as a basis for human development, which consists of three stages: a) acquisition (birth to adolescence), b) specialization (from formal schooling to early adulthood), and c) integration (midcareer and beyond). According to Kolb, one’s progression through these stages “is characterized by increasing complexity and relativism in adapting to the world and by increased integration of the dialectic conflicts between AC and CE and AE and RO” (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; p. 195). Undergraduate study abroad students are probably in the specialization stage. This implies that their ability to view cultural differences from a relative perspective may not be completely developed. Achievement of intercultural competence is enhanced by an ethnorelative worldview (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, a study abroad student’s degree of intercultural competence may depend upon the extent of his/her progression through the specialization stage.

Savicki (2008) views study abroad as the “epitome” of experiential learning (p. 74). While studying abroad, students have daily experiences that question their established patterns of thinking, feeling, behaving, and communicating. ELT provides a “theoretical rationale” for study abroad program design (Bennett, 2008; p. 24). It also helps explain how students can learn from their intercultural experiences to engage in new and interculturally competent patterns of interaction. According to ELT, students would need to grasp an experience and then transform it into new forms of communication and behavior. Not all students are accustomed to experiential learning and instead they may be used to the traditional transmission-based style of teaching (Savicki, 2008). A variety of teaching techniques and tools exist for encouraging experiential
learning in intercultural situations, including study abroad (see Barmeyer, 2004; McCaffery, 1993; Savicki, 2008).

**Research on Study Abroad and Intercultural Learning**

Having discussed the status of study abroad as well as the theory and concepts of intercultural competence and experiential learning, I now review the research literature examining the relationship between studying abroad and intercultural learning. This review leads to a critique of this field of study and shows the need for research dealing with students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence as an outcome of studying abroad.

A concerted effort to assess what students learn while abroad and to investigate the relationship between study abroad and the intercultural development is fairly recent (Bolen, 2007; Hoff, 2008; Sutton & Rubin, 2004). Within this body of literature, several lines of research can be discerned: the impact of study abroad on intercultural learning, the intercultural learning process, program duration, program structure, individual differences among students, and long-term effects of studying abroad. Most of these studies deal with a variety of issues related to a general process intercultural learning, as opposed to discussing the development of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) as a specific outcome of study abroad.

Among quantitative studies, the most common method for assessing intercultural learning outcomes resulting from study abroad consists of administering self-report pre- and post-tests to students (Hoff, 2008). Many of these studies have used the IDI to measure intercultural sensitivity, but a variety of other instruments have also been utilized (Paige, 2004; Paige & Stallman, 2007). Qualitative studies collect data through three main methods - interviews, focus groups, and journals.
The Impact of Study Abroad on Intercultural Learning

Researchers have investigated whether students who study abroad exhibit higher gains in intercultural learning than those who do not study abroad. Williams (2005) administered both the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (Kelley & Meyers, 1999) and the Intercultural Sensitivity Index (Olson & Kroeger, 2001) as pre-tests and post-tests to students who studied abroad (n=48) and to those who did not (n=44). Students who studied abroad for one semester started off with a higher level of intercultural skills than those students who did not study abroad. Also, study abroad students exhibited greater changes in intercultural sensitivity than students who stayed on campus. Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) reported a similar outcome for students who studied abroad for just one month. A self-report instrument of their own design was administered as a post-test to students who went abroad (n=1509) and to those who stayed on campus (n=827). The students who studied abroad were more confident in their levels of cultural awareness and functional knowledge than students who did not go abroad.

The Intercultural Learning Process

Qualitative researchers have focused on students’ intercultural learning process while abroad, specifically perceived learning gains, personal objectives, and learning strategies. Providing support for students’ intercultural learning has also been discussed.

Immelman and Schneider (1998) used focus groups to collect data from U.S. students within one year of their return from abroad. Frequency counts showed that students most often mentioned gains in affective learning; such as self-confidence, broadening of worldview, responsibility, patience, and questioning or re-evaluating personal values. Tarp’s (2006) research with Danish high school students on a short-term program in Europe also demonstrated the importance of the affective domain for intercultural learning. Through analysis of student diaries and semi-structured interviews, Tarp found that the students’ objectives for studying
abroad played a strong role in their study abroad experience. The objective to “experience otherness,” which is similar the Process Model’s (Deardorff, 2006) attitudes of curiosity and discovery, influenced whether students’ accessed and interacted with the host cultures.

Jackson (2005) gained insight on the intercultural learning of Chinese university students studying for five weeks in England. The students wrote in reflective journals three times per week about their linguistic and cultural learning. Students’ strategies for adjusting to and learning about the English socio-cultural context included coping with cultural differences, remaining open to the discovery and application of new ideas, and engaging with the new cultural environment. Purposefully engaging with the host culture as an intercultural learning strategy was also revealed through Mendelson’s (2004) research with five undergraduates who studied in Spain for a semester as their second study abroad experience. Five learning strategies were identified in students’ essays about their time abroad: a) Information – learn about study abroad and adapt expectations, b) Integration – acknowledge and avoid the third culture, c) Interaction – pursue target language contact and communication, d) Intention – make a plan and push the comfort zone, and e) Introspection – continually reflect on experiences to put them in perspective. The strategy of purposeful engagement with the host culture meshes with Allport’s (1979) theory that it takes more than simple contact with another cultural group to gain mutual understanding.

To assist students to make the most intercultural gains while abroad, it has been posited that study abroad programs and personnel should actively support students’ learning (Anderson, 2003; Rexeisen, Anderson, Lawton, & Hubbard, 2008; Savicki, 2008; Vande Berg, 2007; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Vande Berg (2007) writes, ‘If study abroad’s unique potential is to be met, we need to intervene actively in our students’ learning—before, during,
and after their experiences abroad” (p. 392). Examples of such interventions are the *Maximizing Study Abroad* curriculum that teaches study abroad students about language and culture learning strategies (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2004) and the *What’s Up with Culture?* online cultural training resource for study abroad (LaBrack, 2003). A cultural mentor that meets often with study abroad students to support their intercultural learning may also be beneficial (Vande Berg et al., 2009).

Little research has been conducted on the role of curriculum or program interventions in enhancing students’ intercultural learning while abroad. The effect of the *Maximizing Study Abroad* curriculum was investigated in a mixed methods study. The difference in IDI scores for students exposed to the curriculum and those not exposed was not significant, however, the curriculum was supportive for intercultural learning based upon analysis of students’ reflective journal entries (Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004).

**Study Abroad Program Duration**

Researchers have investigated whether the length of time spent abroad has an effect on intercultural learning. Dwyer (2004) surveyed over 3,000 alumni of programs run by the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), a non-profit organization. The results suggest that studying abroad does positively influence students’ intercultural development and that long-term programs of one semester to a year result in greater development of intercultural skills than short-term programs of less than eight weeks.

Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) compared program length with students’ development of intercultural sensitivity. The IDI was administered as a pre- and post-test to students who studied on two language-based programs in Mexico, one of seven weeks and one of 16 weeks. The students on the semester-length program (n=10) were more likely to advance one stage of the DMIS than those who studied abroad for seven weeks (n=18). Interviews and questionnaires
were used to gather data from the same group of students about their opinions of cultural differences, their own cultural awareness, and their perceptions of Mexican culture both before and after study abroad. Semester students exhibited greater intercultural learning than the short-term students. Data collection from the two groups, however, was not consistent; the students on the seven-week program were administered a written questionnaire after completion of the program, while the semester students were interviewed by the researcher toward the end of their time in Mexico. The mismatch in data collection techniques and the small sample size for the IDI administration weaken the validity of these findings.

Interest in the effect of study abroad program duration was also demonstrated in a study that administered the IDI as a pre- and post-test to a group of students (n=16) who studied abroad for four weeks (Anderson et al., 2006). Statistically significant results were found at the Defense Reversal, Acceptance, and Adaptation stages of the DMIS. Due to the small sample size, it is difficult to interpret the data in this pilot study.

**Study Abroad Program Structure**

Study abroad program structure varies widely, influencing what and how students learn while abroad. Engle and Engle (2003) delineate seven aspects of study abroad program design that affect students’ intercultural learning: a) program duration, b) entry target language competence, c) language used in coursework, d) housing (e.g. homestay, shared apartment with other study abroad students, international student dormitory, etc.), e) provisions for cultural interaction/experiential learning, f) guided reflection on cultural experience, and g) academic study context (e.g. enrollment in host country institution, courses taught by home university faculty, special host university classes taught by host faculty, etc.).

Engle and Engle (2003) outline a five-level classification system of study abroad programs to better understand how different program structures influence the development of intercultural
competence. The classifications reflect “the degree of cultural immersion aimed at and facilitated by individual program types” (p. 7). For example, a study tour of several days to a few weeks requiring elementary or intermediate language proficiency, providing coursework in English by home institution faculty, having collective participant housing (likely in a hotel), and offering no opportunities for guided reflection on cultural experiences would lead to low levels of intercultural competence. On the other hand, a cross-cultural immersion program of one semester or academic year requiring advanced language proficiency, providing coursework and extracurricular activities in the target language according to local norms (e.g. direct enrollment in a local university), housing participants individually with local families, requiring regular participation in a cultural integration program, and providing an on-going orientation or course in cross-cultural perspectives would lead to high levels of intercultural competence.

The Georgetown University Consortium Project (Vande Berg et al., 2009) attempted to correlate gains in intercultural sensitivity with the program characteristics identified by Engle and Engle (2003). This multi-year study administered the IDI to 1,159 study abroad students from a variety of programs before leaving the U.S. and just prior to returning to the U.S. Results show that students engaging in the following activities while abroad had statistically significant gains in their IDI scores: a) taking language courses in the target language, b) taking content courses in the target language, c) studying in a culture perceived as dissimilar or somewhat dissimilar, f) studying abroad for 13 – 18 weeks, and g) spending 26-50% of time with host country nationals. Students majoring in foreign languages, humanities, and social sciences also experienced statistically significant gains. Students living with host families and those who received cultural mentoring experienced increases in their IDI scores, but they were not significant.
The Effect of Individual Differences among Study Abroad Students on Intercultural Learning

The effect of individual differences among study abroad students, such as race and gender, on intercultural learning has also been researched. Talburt and Stewart (1999) completed an ethnographic study of a five-week summer study abroad program in Spain to understand how students’ race and gender affect their cultural learning. Data collected through student and faculty interviews, classroom observations, and student focus groups showed that the difficulties of interpreting and adjusting to the Spanish culture’s race and gender norms were particularly complicated for an African-American female student. Her experience was compounded by the fact that short-term programs provide little “opportunity for students to experience an ‘inside’ perspective or ‘gradual’ accretion of cultural discourse frames” (p. 173) of Spanish culture.

Anderson’s (2003) study of female students’ (n=9) experiences in Costa Rica for a month illustrated some of the issues that women may experience in adjusting to host culture expectations. Using data obtained through observations, students’ journals, focus groups with students, and interviews with Costa Rican host families, Anderson reported that the female students resisted conforming to Costa Rican standards for appropriate female behavior and chafed under host family concern.

The Georgetown University Consortium Project (Vande Berg et al., 2009) analyzed gains in IDI scores based upon gender. Women’s IDI scores increased significantly while men’s scores did not. Men and women appear to have differentiated intercultural learning experiences while abroad. Certainly, more women participate in study abroad programs than men by a factor of 2:1 (IIE, 2010).
Long-Term Effects of Studying Abroad

Researchers are interested in the long-term effects of studying abroad on intercultural development. The results of these studies, however, are mixed. Dwyer’s (2004) survey showed that studying abroad had a statistically significant impact on alumni in terms of their intercultural development. Students who studied abroad for a year (two academic semesters) reported the greatest long-term impact in terms of “achieving greater understanding of one’s own cultural values and biases, continuing to be influenced in one’s interactions with people from different cultures, and developing a more sophisticated way of looking at the world” (p. 158).

The long-term impact of study abroad was also investigated by Rexeisen et al. (2008). The IDI was administered three times to 39 semester-length study abroad students prior to studying abroad, prior to returning to the U.S., and then four months after returning to the U.S. The group showed significant gain in their overall IDI scores from pre-test to post-test, but there was not a significant difference in pre-test and follow-up scores. In other words, the participants did not continue their intercultural development after returning to the U.S. and there was even evidence of some regression, albeit not at a significant level. The authors recommended further study using a larger sample size and taking follow-up measurements more than four months after completion of the study abroad program.

Critique of Research on Studying Abroad and Intercultural Learning

The research reviewed in the preceding section suggests that intercultural learning does occur during study abroad. In addition, it appears that longer periods of study abroad result in greater intercultural development than shorter periods. Research on the intercultural learning process supports the importance of the affective domain in intercultural learning and provides insight on students’ intercultural learning strategies. Certain characteristics of a study abroad program affect students’ gains in intercultural sensitivity. Taking courses in the host language,
living in a home stay, and spending considerable time with host country nationals provide opportunities for gaining intercultural sensitivity. It is considered important that study abroad programs support students’ intercultural learning, but research on this in fairly inconclusive, as is research on the long-term effects of study abroad. Students’ race and gender affect their intercultural learning experiences while abroad, leading to differentiated experiences based upon individual characteristics.

The construct of intercultural competence is well understood from a theoretical standpoint, but there is room for further study of how intercultural competence is developed by U.S. undergraduate students on study abroad programs, particularly from a qualitative perspective. Moreover, the existing qualitative research on study abroad and intercultural learning has some weaknesses. Few of the studies discuss methodological issues in any detail, nor provide information on the theoretical perspectives framing the studies. The investigation of intercultural learning on short-term programs has been emphasized over research with semester-length programs, despite the fact that longer programs are thought to lead to greater intercultural development. Rich description of students’ perceptions of developing intercultural competence is absent from the literature. The next chapter explains how I conducted a qualitative study to investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence during a semester study abroad program.
Figure 2-1. Process Model of Intercultural Competence.

Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension, and skills achieved. Adapted from “The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States,” by D. Deardorff, 2004, Doctoral dissertation, p. 198. Copyright 2004 by D. Deardorff. Reprinted with permission.
Figure 2-2. The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my study was to investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence during a semester study abroad program. In particular, I explored how students construed cultural differences and students’ perceptions of their ability to engage in interculturally competent communication and behavior. I also examined students’ perceptions of what activities were helpful to their intercultural learning. My investigation was guided by three research questions:

1. How do students experience cultural differences while studying abroad?
2. What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?
3. What activities do students perceive as promoting their intercultural learning while studying abroad?

The purpose of this chapter is to explain my study’s methodology. I explain the role of substantive theory in identifying my areas of inquiry and describe the theoretical perspective that framed my study. Next, I describe the setting, sampling procedures, and participant recruitment. Then, I detail data collection and analysis. Finally, I address issues of research quality and subjectivity and review my study’s limitations.

Role of Substantive Theory

Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (1993) and Deardorff’s Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2006) as well as the research literature related to studying abroad and intercultural competence played a large role in formulating my study’s research questions and the questions I used in data collection. In devising my areas of inquiry, I took into account what the models and the research literature do and do not tell us about the development of intercultural competence while studying abroad.

My study’s purpose, dealing with students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence, responded to the lack of literature dealing with a) the development of
intercultural competence per se while studying abroad, and b) students’ perceptions of their development of intercultural competence while abroad. Most of the research literature I reviewed in Chapter 2 dealt with generalized intercultural learning during study abroad, as opposed to the development of the communication and behavioral skills that embody intercultural competence. Also, there exist very few, if any, qualitative studies that provide a deep, rich understanding of students’ perceptions of developing intercultural competence.

Most importantly, the purpose of my study to better understand students’ perceptions of developing intercultural competence responded to the need to investigate the development of intercultural competence in a study abroad context. Deardorff’s (2006) and Bennett’s (1993) models describe the development of intercultural competence by unspecified individuals in abstract intercultural contexts. As such, there was room for investigating how intercultural competence is developed by students in a study abroad environment. My study’s intent to “flesh out” intercultural competence from a study abroad context aligned with one of the main strengths of qualitative research – the “careful description and analysis of social phenomena in particular contexts” (Hatch, 2002; p. 43). Contextual description and analysis is required to gain a holistic understanding of the complex learning processes that occur during study abroad (Jackson, 2006).

My three research questions provided direction for exploring undergraduate students’ perceptions of development intercultural competence. The first question explored how students experience cultural differences while abroad. The impetus for this question came from the proposition by Bennett (1993) and Deardorff (2006) that intercultural sensitivity, the ability to discern cultural differences, is the foundation of intercultural competence. Thus, examining how study abroad students experience, value, and interpret cultural differences is important for understanding their development of intercultural competence. This question also served to
understand cultural differences in a study abroad context. The second question concerned students’ perceptions of their intercultural behavior and communication, i.e. their intercultural competence. The purpose of this question was to try to fill in the gaps in the literature about students’ perceptions of their own intercultural competence. Further information is needed on how students perceive, assess, understand, or critique their intercultural skills. The third question sought to better understand the activities that students undertake while abroad that promote their intercultural learning. Both Deardorff’s (2006) and Bennett’s (1993) models broadly describe the process of developing intercultural competence, but they do not explain the specific activities that individuals have found useful to their learning. The DMIS posits that intercultural sensitivity increases as one’s experience of cultural differences becomes more complex (Hammer et al., 2003). The model, however, is vague about how individuals come to a complex understanding of cultural differences. Study abroad students can provide practical information on what helps them acquire culturally effective and appropriate communication and behavior.

**Theoretical Perspective**

The theoretical framework for my study was constructivism. Constructivism maintains that all meaning and knowledge is not discovered by individuals, but constructed by them. Human beings interpret the world as they interact with it. Each person has his/her own interpretation of a phenomenon and as such, one interpretation cannot be truer or more valid than another (Crotty, 1998). Constructivism critiques the positivist notions of objectivism and essential truth. “Constructivists are antiessentialists. They assume that what we take to be self-evident kinds (e.g., man, woman, truth, self) are actually the product of complicated discursive practices” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 125).
Constructivist thinking is relativist in nature (Crotty, 1998). There are often multiple and sometimes conflicting constructions of meaning (Schwandt, 1994). Depending upon the historical or cultural context, there may be very different interpretations of the same phenomenon. As a result, our understandings of meaning in a constructivist perspective should be viewed “much more lightly and tentatively and far less dogmatically…than eternal truths of some kind” (Crotty, 1998, p. 64). Constructivist researchers work to create “idiographic knowledge” with “webs of mutual or plausible influence expressed as working hypotheses” (Lincoln, 1990, p.77).

In order to understand an individual’s experience with a phenomenon, such as intercultural competence, the individual must be the focus of study. In-depth interviews are a frequent data collection method in constructivist studies as they elicit the individual’s description of their experience with the target phenomenon (Hatch, 2002). During an interview, however, the researcher and participants engage and interact with each other. Then, the researcher interprets the data using a variety of analytical methods. Thus, the results of a constructivist study, while grounded in the participants’ perspectives, are a reconstruction of the phenomenon under investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The final objective then is “to distill a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions (including, of course, the etic construction of the investigator)” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.111).

Constructivism was an appropriate perspective for my study. The DMIS posits that individuals vary in their ability to construe cultural differences (Bennett, 1993). Thus, the development of intercultural competence is an individualized process (Deardorff, 2006). Constructivism, with its focus on an individual’s experience and creation of meaning, provided a
framework that respected my study participants’ personal perceptions of developing intercultural competence.

As I explained above, Deardorff’s (2006) and Bennett’s (1993) models and the research literature played a significant role in identifying my research questions. My study did not, however, explicitly test the models, nor use the models to drive the research findings. Following a constructivist approach, I privileged the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon. My data collection process focused on eliciting the participants’ own meaning-making related to intercultural competence. Likewise, my data collection methods allowed space for pursuing new lines of inquiry that surfaced from the participants’ perspectives. During data analysis, I paid close attention to what emerged from the data (Grbich, 2007) and to the context in which data was collected (Patton, 2002). The goal of my study was not to test theory, but rather to generate theory,

where you draw from a range of ‘theories’ from the literature and from available theoretical ideas of relevance. Some of these will fall by the wayside as their explanatory power cannot be sustained in light of your research findings, while you may combine others with what is emerging from the data to form the basis for new theoretical explanations and models of practice. (Grbich, 2007; p. 186)

Now, I shift discussion to the specifics of my study, starting with a brief description of the research setting.

### Setting

I collected data in three cities in Chile – Santiago, Valparaíso, and Valdivia. Each city is home to a major university that hosts U.S. study abroad programs. Santiago, the capital of Chile, is a large city of approximately 6.25 million people in the country’s central valley. About 40% of the Chilean population lives in the greater Santiago area (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Santiago is the national center for culture and education (Municipalidad de Santiago, n.d.) and is the home to the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUCC), a private Catholic university
that enrolls approximately 20,000 students; 90% of whom are undergraduate students (Bernasconi, 2007). PUCC is a comprehensive institution with more than 40 undergraduate and graduate programs each (Bernasconi, 2003). It has approximately 2,300 faculty members, 30% with Ph.D. degrees, and it is one of the five research-oriented universities in the country. PUCC conferred 37 Ph.D. degrees in 2003, second only to the Universidad de Chile (Bernasconi, 2007). It has consistently been ranked as the most prestigious university in the nation (Bernasconi, 2003). It hosts study abroad students from 16 U.S. universities and programs and has several hundred international student exchange and cooperative agreements, including agreements for dual degrees (PUCC, 2011).

Valparaíso is a port city located on the Pacific Ocean about 85 miles west of Santiago. It has a population of approximately 800,000 people (including the nearby city of Viña del Mar) and is the headquarters of the Chilean Navy and the Chilean National Congress (U.S. Department of State, 2011). The Pontifícia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (PUCV), a private Catholic university, enrolls about 13,000 students (PUCV, n.d.); 97% of whom are undergraduates. PUCV has more than 50 undergraduate programs and 25 graduate programs. About 40% of its 500 faculty members have a graduate degree (Bernasconi, 2003). The institution has numerous international student exchange agreements and hosts study abroad students from at least five U.S.-based study abroad programs. It also offers its own study abroad programs.

Valdivia, located in the south of Chile, is the capital of the region of Los Ríos. In 2002, it had a population of 140,559 (Ilustre Municipalidad de Valdivia, 2007). The private Universidad Austral de Chile (UACh) enrolls some 11,600 students; 95% of whom are undergraduates. UACh has more than 60 undergraduate majors and 24 graduate programs (UACh, 2007). In
2003, UACh had 784 faculty members; 23% with doctorates. It is one of the five research-oriented universities in the country (Bernasconi, 2007). UACh has more than 170 student exchange and cooperative agreements with universities and colleges around the world (UACh, n.d.).

Participants for my study were U.S. undergraduate students studying for the fall 2010 semester at PUCC, PUCV, and UACh under the auspices of two U.S. study abroad programs. Next, I provide information on how I gained access to and recruited participants.

**Sampling**

My study employed criterion sampling to select participants. Criterion sampling allows for the study of cases “that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton, 2002; p. 238). I collected data from students who were a) studying abroad for a semester in Chile, b) living with a homestay family, and c) taking courses in Spanish. These criteria were selected according to the research literature dealing with the relationship between study abroad program characteristics and gains in intercultural sensitivity. Longer programs, spending significant time with host country nationals, and studying in the host language are positively related to gains in intercultural sensitivity and thus the development of intercultural competence (Dwyer, 2004; Engle & Engle, 2003; Vande Berg et al., 2009). I recruited students from two study abroad programs operating in Chile that met my sampling criteria – Preston College and International Academic Programs (IAP).

**Access to Participants**

Both formal and informal gatekeepers control access to research settings and participants (Hatch, 2002). In my study, the first gatekeeper was the University of Florida (UF) Institutional Review Board (IRB). My research protocol was approved by the UF IRB in May 2010. The second set of gatekeepers consisted of the staff (based in the U.S. and Chile) of study abroad
programs operating in Chile. I contacted six universities and program providers in the U.S. that offer study abroad programs in Chile with the program characteristics that met my sampling criteria. Two of these institutions (one university and one program provider) allowed me to recruit their students to participate in my study – Preston College and IAP. I first received permission to recruit students from the institutions’ U.S. based administrators and then from the two program directors based in Chile. (Preston College also required approval of my research protocol by its IRB and it was obtained in May 2010. IAP required I send them a copy UF’s IRB approval.) I also worked with UF’s international programs office to identify any UF students studying in Chile for the semester on programs that met the sampling criteria.

I was interested in recruiting participants for my study who were studying in Latin America due to my own personal interests and background, as explained in my subjectivity statement later in this chapter. I had originally intended to conduct research with students studying in Mexico, but when I contacted Preston College to inquire about the possibility of recruiting their students studying in Mexico, Preston staff suggested that I conduct my research with their students studying in Chile. I agreed to this and, thus, the selection of Chile as my research site was due to my ability to access research participants there.

**Preston College**

Preston College, a private liberal arts college in the northeastern U.S. enrolling some 2,500 undergraduate students, is known for its foreign language and international studies programs. Its Basic Carnegie Classification is Baccalaureate College – Arts and Sciences. Approximately 60% of Preston’s junior class study abroad each year. Recently, the college ranked in the top 15 baccalaureate institutions in the nation for the total number of study abroad students (n=400). In 2009-10, Preston enrolled 118 students on its semester and academic year programs in five Latin American countries. Of these students, 52 studied in Chile at universities in six different cities.
About half of the students enrolled in Preston’s programs in Latin America are Preston undergraduate students, while half are degree-seeking students at other institutions. The program fee for the semester program in Chile is approximately $10,500.

In fall 2010, 14 students studied in Chile on Preston’s program. All of these students lived with Chilean host families. They enrolled in at least three courses taught in Spanish at Chilean universities and took a writing course taught in Spanish by a Preston faculty member. About 75% of the students also completed a credit-bearing semester-length internship at a Chilean company, government office, or community organization. Preston’s staff in Chile is based at an office in a largely residential area of Santiago, while the students are based at several different universities in cities around the country. The program hosted an orientation program at the beginning of program in Santiago and then the students traveled to the cities where they studied for the semester. Program staff interacted with the students throughout the semester via e-mail and phone and the program director also visited the students periodically in the cities where they were studying. About two-thirds of the way through the semester, the program sponsored a weekend excursion for the students in the Santiago area. Preston students that participated in my study were enrolled at PUCV and UACH.

**International Academic Programs**

International Academic Programs (IAP) is a non-profit organization that runs some 100 undergraduate study abroad programs in 40 countries around the world. IAP offers 24 semester, academic year, and summer programs in eight countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Chile, programs are offered in Valparaíso and Santiago. In fall 2010, 36 students were enrolled in the program in Santiago. Students directly enrolled in courses taught in Spanish at several universities in Santiago and lived with Chilean homestay families. IAP’s staff in Santiago has offices based at the international center of one of the universities where IAP students enroll. An
orientation program was provided at the beginning of the semester. Two program-sponsored weekend excursions took place during the semester to sites of educational and cultural interest outside of Santiago. The IAP program fee for one semester of study in Chile is $13,500. IAP students that participated in my study were enrolled at PUCC.

Participant Recruitment

To recruit participants, I wrote a recruitment e-mail and designed a recruitment poster. Preston College’s international office sent the e-mail to the students enrolled in their Chile program two times in May and June 2010, before the students left the U.S. Two students responded that they would like to participate in my study. I also sent the recruitment e-mail to UF students who planned to study abroad in Chile with programs that met the sampling requirements. One UF student agreed to participate. I did not receive approval from IAP to recruit their students until just a few weeks prior to the start of the program in early August. The on-site program director preferred to inform the students about my study after they arrived in Chile.

In August 2010, I traveled to Chile for ten days. My visit coincided with the orientation programs for Preston College and IAP. I conducted a short information session about my study during the Preston College orientation at a Santiago hotel. I explained my study using the recruitment poster and then asked those students who were interested in participating to complete the informed consent document and a note card with their contact information. During the information session, I also explained the first part of the data collection process. Five additional students agreed to participate, bringing the total number of participants recruited from Preston to seven.

While in Santiago, I met with the director of the IAP program to explain my study. He agreed to allow me to attend an afternoon session of the orientation program to inform IAP
students of the opportunity to participate. I met the group at a classroom of a local university and explained the project. Due to time constraints, students were unable to immediately sign up for my study, so students interested in participating were instructed to e-mail me directly. Two students contacted me and agreed to participate. A few days later, I met personally with these participants at the IAP office to explain the photo elicitation project (explained below) and have them sign the informed consent document. Finally, I arranged to meet with the UF participant at the university where he was studying to discuss my study. Thus, the total number of students recruited for my study was ten.

**Participant Information**

Three of the ten students recruited for my study did not ultimately participate, so the final number of participants was seven – four from Preston College, two from IAP, and one from UF. Two students studied in Santiago at PUCC, four in Valparaíso at PUCV, and one in Valdivia at UACH. Four of the participants were male and three were female. The average age was 20.4 years. All self-assessed their Spanish language proficiency as advanced (Table 3-1). Four participants had never studied abroad prior to their semester in Chile. Three had studied abroad previously. One student had studied in Latin America for five weeks and another in Latin America for ten weeks and in Asia for six. A third participant had fairly extensive study abroad experiences on four different programs in Europe and the Caribbean, totaling just over a year since elementary school. The participants’ majors included foreign languages, a social science discipline, four social science disciplines with an international focus, and a natural science discipline. All had taken Spanish language and literature courses prior to studying in Chile, while two had taken one or two Latin American area studies courses in addition to language and literature. One participant was enrolled at Preston College as a degree-seeking student. One attended a private not-for-profit Baccalaureate College – Arts and Sciences, four attended three
different Research Universities with very high research activity, and one attended a Research University with high research activity. Of these research universities, two were private not-for-profit and two were public.

**Participant Confidentiality**

Participants’ identities were kept confidential throughout my study. Records pertaining to my study (i.e. audio recordings, transcripts, field notes etc.) were kept on a password protected computer or in a secure location at my home. Participants’ real names are not used in my dissertation, nor will they appear in any report, publication, or presentation of my findings. Preston College and IAP are pseudonyms. Recordings were destroyed at the end of my study as instructed by IRB. These measures were outlined in the informed consent document.

**Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry guided the data collection and analysis phases of my study. In this mode of inquiry, researchers investigate the stories or narratives that participants tell about their lives, experiences, and understandings of phenomena (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). All narratives include an “ordering and sequence; one action is viewed as consequential for the next” (Riessman, 2003; pp. 334). The analysis of narratives is particularly useful for interpreting human development and experience (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Josselson & Lieblich, 1993). Through close study of stories, we can better understand how study participants “elaborate knowledge” and navigate “the emergence of complexity, such as multiplicity of perspectives, orientations, and even self concepts” (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; p. xiii).

A variety of disciplines study narratives to investigate human life (Riessman, 2008), including education (Cortazzi, 1993; Trahar, 2006). Grbich (2007) distinguishes two major approaches to narrative inquiry using spoken or written discourse – the socio-cultural approach
and the socio-linguistic approach. Riessman (2008) suggests a third visual approach which investigates stories told through images. I used all three approaches in my study.

In the socio-cultural approach, researchers are interested in the meaning conveyed by narratives. Stories are used by narrators (i.e. the storyteller) to reflect upon and make meaning of their experiences, providing a mechanism for organizing and reassessing memories. Through this process of retrospective meaning-making, the narrator positions him/herself in the story and constructs his/her identity vis-à-vis the experience. Narratives, however, are not isolated from societal discourse and are embedded in a specific context with its associated history, culture, and power relations (Riessman, 2008).

The socio-linguistic approach to narrative inquiry investigates the role of language in the formation of narratives and how narrative structures influence and convey meaning (Riessman, 2006). According to Labov (1997), narrative structure is made up of six sequential elements: an abstract (summary of the story), an orientation (time, place, characters), a complicating action (plot), an evaluation (narrator’s evaluation), a resolution (outcome), and a coda (return to present). Labovian structural analysis allows us to understand the organization of narratives (Riessman, 1993) and how participants “use speech to construct themselves and their histories” (Riessman, 2008; p. 103). The structural aspects of narratives also convey meaning. This is especially true of the narrator’s evaluation of the story. The evaluation signals the importance of the story and how the narrator would like it to be interpreted (Wiles, Rosenberg, & Kearns, 2005). “The evaluation is the ‘soul’ of the narrative, the flag to the audience of how the story should be interpreted and understood, providing a frame for understanding the immediate story and the deeper meanings and normative values behind it” (p. 91). In the visual approach to narrative inquiry, images “become ‘texts’ to be read interpretively” (Riessman, 2008; pp. 142).
Researchers investigate how and why images (i.e. photos, paintings, video etc.) are produced and examine the meaning communicated by the creator.

The development of intercultural competence is a process that requires individuals to evaluate and reflect upon complex cultural differences in order to engage in new ways of communication and behavior (Bennett, 1993; Deardorff, 2006). Making sense of one’s interactions and experiences in a new cultural context lends itself to the production of narratives (Adams, 2008), particularly under conditions of uncertainty or surprise (Mendoza, 2008). As such, narrative inquiry was a suitable approach for investigating intercultural competence. In the next section, I provide an overview of data collection methods.

**Data Collection Methods**

The development of intercultural competence is a multi-faced phenomenon involving both communication and behavior. To gain a well-rounded view of students’ experiences, I utilized three data collection methods: photo elicitation, reflective journaling, and semi-structured interviews.

**Photo Elicitation**

Photo elicitation, also referred to as autophotography, is a data collection technique combining photography with reflective journaling and/or semi-structured interviews. Participants are asked by researchers to take photos of the phenomenon under study and then note their motivations, thoughts, and feelings about the photos in a diary or journal. Later, the photos are discussed in a semi-structured interview with the researcher (Banks, 2001; Bruck & Kainzbauer, 2009; Rose, 2007). During photo interviews, researchers start with open-ended questions, allowing participants the freedom to describe and interpret the photo as they wish (Collier, 2001). Conducting interviews at “this stage [of data collection] is vital in clarifying what photos taken by interviewees mean to them” (Rose, 2007; p. 242). Once data collection is
complete, the interview transcript, journal text, and photos are analyzed by the researcher (Rose, 2007). Photos are appropriate for social science research because they reflect information as well as the photographer’s feelings and thoughts (Rose, 2007). Photos “give birth to stories” (Collier, 2001; p. 46), offering both an internal and external narrative (Banks, 2001). The internal narrative concerns the object of the photo, while the external narrative explains the motivation for taking the photo.

In my study, photo elicitation provided a means for collecting data on how participants interrogated or problematized differences between their own culture and Chilean culture. The experience and understanding of cultural differences or intercultural sensitivity (Hammer et al., 2003) is the affective base or starting point of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). In designing my approach to photo elicitation, I drew upon the work of the scholars mentioned above as well as journal articles that describe the use of photo elicitation in a variety of research contexts (Clark-Ibañez, 2004; Croghan, Griffin, Hunter, & Phoenix, 2008; Frith & Harcourt, 2007; Harper, 2002; Markwell, 2000; Moore et al., 2008). A photographic technique similar to photo elicitation is photovoice, a participatory process through which communities and marginalized groups tell their stories and represent their experiences, often with the goal of bringing about social change (Wang & Burris, 1997). My research did intend for participants to tell their stories through photographs, but it did not have the objective of bringing about social change. Thus, I do not consider my research to be a photovoice project. I was aware, however, that taking photographs and telling stories during photo interviews might allow participants a space to examine their intercultural experiences.

Reflective Journaling

Reflective journals are useful for gaining insight on participants’ perspectives of the phenomenon under study. Journals allow participants to express their thoughts, understandings,
and insights directly, without the presence of the researcher. The quality of data collected through journals varies, however, as not all participants are comfortable expressing themselves in writing. Thus, journals are usually used in combination with other qualitative data collection techniques. When using journals in a research study, it is suggested that researchers: a) be explicit in explaining their expectations for writing in the journals (i.e. how much, how often etc.) and b) provide guidance on topics to write about in the journals (Hatch, 2002). For my study, I used reflective journaling to collect data on the participants’ informed frame of reference shift as described by the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006). This reference shift enhances an individual’s ability to become interculturally competent.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

Qualitative interviews provide an opportunity for researchers to collect data on participants’ experiences and interpretations. Semi-structured interviews use a set of questions to guide interview sessions, but there is enough flexibility in the discussion for the interviewer to pursue other lines of questioning and follow-up on participants’ responses (Hatch, 2002). By allowing flexibility, interviewers give up some control to the participants. Holstein and Gubrium (2003) write, “we must leave our research efforts open to respondents’ stories if we are to understand respondents’ experiences in, and on, their own terms, leading to less formal control in the interview process” (p. 17). Interviewers following a narrative mode of inquiry need to facilitate storytelling during interview sessions. Narrative interviews should elicit rich, detailed stories instead of generalizations. To do this, questions should be open-ended and inviting. The interviewer must also show “emotional attentiveness and engagement” (Riessman, 2008; p. 24). I used semi-structured interviews to collect data on students’ perceptions of their intercultural competence. I was interested in knowing when and why students thought they had successfully or unsuccessfully communicated or behaved in intercultural interactions. I carried out these
interviews toward the end of the semester so that participants would have sufficient time to interact with Chileans and accumulate stories to tell about their experiences.

**Data Collection Procedures**

I undertook four phases of data collection from August to November 2010, as summarized in Table 3-2. I describe my data collection procedures for photo elicitation, reflective journaling, and semi-structured interviews next.

**Photo Elicitation**

During the first phase of data collection, participants completed a photo elicitation project over a period of five to six weeks. When participants signed up for my study in early August, I provided them with a written description of the photo elicitation project, instructing them to take a series of photos of aspects of Chilean culture that made them curious or that interested them (Appendix A.) Of this series of photos, participants selected five to ten photos that they felt best represented their interests or curiosity about Chilean culture. They then wrote some brief notes about the selected photos on an information sheet that I provided (Appendix B). These notes dealt with the location of the photo, the object of the photo, why the object of the photo made them curious or drew their interest, and their emotions or thoughts while taking the photo. Participants submitted their photos and information sheets to me via e-mail in early September. Upon receipt of the digital images, I printed two copies of each participant’s photos.

The second phase of photo elicitation consisted of individual semi-structured photo interviews with each participant in Chile. I returned to Chile for ten days in late September 2010 and traveled to the three cities where the students were studying. I contacted the participants by e-mail or phone to set up the interviews. We met in public places, such as cafés and university campuses, to complete the interviews. During these interviews, lasting 35 to 80 minutes, participants told the stories of their photos and expanded on their comments from the information
sheets. They also talked about the process of taking and selecting photos (see Appendix C for semi-structured interview guide.) The interviews were recorded. I brought the two sets of photos from each participant to his/her interview so we could refer to them during our conversation. At the end of the interviews, I gave one set of the photos to participants to keep.

Prior to the start of each interview participants completed a short demographic questionnaire that collected information on their age, gender, major, language proficiency, previous study abroad experiences, and previous coursework related to Latin America (Appendix D). Participants also completed a photo reproduction rights form to give me permission to reproduce (or not) their photos for educational purposes.

Six of the seven participants completed the photo elicitation project. Five of the six submitted photos, filled out the information sheet, and completed a photo interview. One did not complete the information sheet, but he/she submitted photos and completed the interview.

**Reflective Journaling**

During the month of October, I collected data through reflective journaling. Participants completed two reflective essays on their tolerance, adaptability and flexibility when interacting with Chilean culture. I provided participants with detailed guidelines about what to write and the expected length of each essay (Appendix E). I gave these guidelines as a hard copy information sheet to the six participants who completed the photo interview. I also e-mailed the guidelines to all ten recruited participants after I returned to the U.S.

In the journal guidelines, I asked participants to reflect upon a situation where they exhibited tolerance, flexibility, or adaptability when encountering aspects of Chilean culture. They were directed to describe the situation, interpret why they thought they acted in that manner, and evaluate their reaction or feelings about the situation. Then, participants were told to write a second essay about a situation when they did not exhibit tolerance, flexibility or
adaptability. To facilitate a reflective approach, I modeled the guidelines for the essays after a framework called Description-Interpretation-Evaluation or D-I-E. D-I-E is a common tool used in the study abroad field for assisting students to assess intercultural situations and experiences through written description, interpretation and evaluation (Paige et al., 2004). Description outlines the details of the intercultural situation, interpretation provides possible explanations for the situation, and evaluation considers one’s feelings about the experience (Lustig & Koester, 1999). Four participants submitted reflective essays. All four had completed the photo elicitation project.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

The final phase of data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews that I conducted on a third trip to Chile in early November. As previously, I contacted the participants via e-mail or phone to set up the interviews. The interviews took place in public parks and on university campuses. They lasted 30 to 60 minutes. Guiding questions for these interviews dealt with external behaviors associated with intercultural competence. Participants were asked to describe situations when they felt they had or had not communicated and behaved effectively and appropriately when interacting with Chileans. I also queried students about what activities had promoted their intercultural learning while abroad (see Appendix F for interview guide.) Seven participants completed this interview; the six participants who completed photo elicitation plus one more.

**Communication with Participants**

Throughout data collection, I communicated with the participants via e-mail to provide guidelines for data collection, remind them about deadlines for photo and journal submissions, and arrange interviews. During the recruitment process, participants from Preston and IAP expressed interest in communicating with me in Spanish so they could practice their language
skills as much as possible during their semester abroad. I agreed to do this and as such, all of my
e-mail correspondence with them was written in Spanish. (My correspondence with the
remaining participant took place in English.) I also translated the information sheet for photo
elicitation into Spanish so that they could fill it out in Spanish. The two interviews were
completed in English. The guidelines for the reflective journals were provided in English and I
requested that they write their responses in English. Three of the participants wrote their
journals in English, while one wrote in Spanish. Because I speak Spanish, I did not translate the
information sheets or the journals written in Spanish unless I cited portions of this data in
discussing the results in Chapter 4.

Participant Compensation

Participants made a fairly significant time commitment to participate in my study. While
this time commitment provided a space for participants to examine and interpret their
intercultural learning, they appreciated a more tangible benefit of participation. Compensation
was provided after each completed phase of data collection. After photo elicitation, participants
received a metrocard for use on Santiago’s buses and subways (called a “tarjeta bip!”) valued at
approximately $5.00. Upon completing the journal entries, they received a $10 gift certificate
from snapfish.com, a website for printing digital photos. After the final semi-structured
interview, participants received a $15 gift certificate from Amazon.com, an online retail store
specializing in books.

Memoing

After each interview, I made notes in my field journal. I wrote very preliminary
conclusions about the content of the interview and I also reflected upon the interview process
itself; for example, our rapport, whether certain questions seemed to “work” or not, and ideas for
upcoming interviews. In separate journal entries, I reflected upon my own thoughts and feelings
about the overall data collection process. Finally, I kept a log to chronologically record
decisions, events, and communications related to data collection. I maintained the log during
data analysis as well.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Collecting three types of data (photos, interviews, and reflective journals) compelled me to
use several methods of analysis. Drawing upon the three approaches within narrative inquiry, I
undertook structural analysis, visual analysis, and thematic analysis to thoroughly analyze the
data. In the next sections, I explain how each type of data was analyzed. Table 3-3 summarizes
the different steps in data analysis.

**Analysis of Photo Elicitation Data**

Photo elicitation resulted in two forms of data – narratives and photos. This data related
mainly to the first research question, “How do students experience cultural differences while
studying abroad?” To answer this question, I carried out three types of analysis. First, I
structurally analyzed (Labov, 1997) the narratives present in the interview text. Then, I used
Collier’s (2001) direct analysis technique for visual data to analyze the photos. Finally, I
analyzed the photos and the narratives together to interpret their content and relationship with
guiding questions that I formulated. I describe these analytic processes below. The audit trail is
based upon the content of my field journal.

**Structural analysis of narratives**

The audio recordings of the six photo interviews were transcribed by a transcription
service. When complete, I reviewed the transcripts against the audio recordings to double check
for accuracy. Then I printed the transcripts and coded them. Each code represented a unit of
meaning in the text. I hand-wrote the codes in the margins of the transcripts and preliminarily
identified extended turns at talk that appeared to have narrative form. I coded each transcript in
its entirety, paying particular attention to the data relating to participants’ experiences of cultural difference, i.e. the research question.

At this beginning stage of analysis, I viewed the coding process mainly as a technique for undertaking a close reading of the data so I could familiarize myself with it. After coding each transcript, I made notes in my field journal describing preliminary patterns or themes I noticed. This process followed Riessman’s (1993) suggestion to review transcripts closely to focus the analysis and identify those parts of the texts that have narrative form.

My next step involved analyzing the narratives in the interview text according to Labov’s (1997) six elements of narrative structure: abstract (summary of the story), orientation (time, place, events and characters in the story), complicating action (the plot or description of events), evaluation (the narrator’s interpretation or opinions), resolution (outcome of the story), and coda (a return to the present). Before doing this, however, I defined the characteristics of a narrative for the purposes of this data set and identified the narratives’ boundaries.

I defined a narrative for this group of interviews as a topic-centered, episodic turn at talk (Reissman, 2008) relating to how participants experienced cultural differences. As such, I stipulated that a narrative must include a) a description of the aspects of Chilean culture that the participant thought were different and b) an opinion, reaction, or evaluation of the cultural differences. In terms of Labovian analysis, this definition implied that two types of clauses were necessary to form a narrative: a complicating action describing the cultural difference and an evaluation of the cultural difference.

Defining narrative boundaries is an interpretive analytic decision (Riessman, 2008). Since the interviews revolved around the participants’ photos, conversation about each photo provided a natural starting point for identifying narratives. But, not all of the photo conversations or just
portions of them met my definition of narrative. So, I reviewed each photo conversation and decided whether it fit the definition of a narrative and if so, determined its boundaries. Participants also told stories that were not based on photos and I identified these narratives by noticing changes in topics and extended turns at talk by the participant.

Defining the end of narratives was sometimes difficult, especially when there were no definitive resolution or coda clauses. In these situations, I looked for changes in topic as a sign for the end of the narrative or I looked for times when my questions took the participants too far afield from their original train of thought. Sometimes my questions dealt with the content of their photo elicitation information sheets. I usually considered my prompting from their sheets to be a continuation of the narrative since I was taking the conversation in a direction that the participants’ had originally provided.

After delimiting the narratives’ boundaries, I cut the narratives (n=56) out of the interviews and pasted them into a new Microsoft Word® document. Then, I printed the document and commenced identification of the six structural clauses. To identify the clauses, I read and re-read the narratives and marked the clauses in writing, clearly indicating on the transcripts where one clause ended and another began. I analyzed the narratives in groups according to participant. This was a fairly long interpretive process that often involved rethinking and changing my original classification of clauses. I made notes in my field journal about the function and content of the various clauses for each participant’s narratives. I also jotted down examples from the narratives to illustrate my points. Next, I transferred my hand-written notes indicating the limits of the structural clauses to tables in Microsoft Word® (Table 3-4). This allowed me to easily view the beginning and the end of the clauses and relationships between clauses. I reviewed my notes or memos about the participants’ narratives and then wrote up overall findings about the
I also documented the steps in my analytic process to create the audit trail.

**Visual analysis of photos**

I analyzed the photos using Collier’s direct analysis technique (2001). This technique involves four stages: a) open viewing or observing all of the photos as a whole to discover patterns, b) making an inventory and categorizing the photos as related to my study’s goals, c) producing detailed descriptions of the photos by asking specific questions, and finally, d) reviewing or returning to view the complete set of photos. Collier refers to steps b and c above as structured analysis.

For open viewing, I placed all of the photos (n=58) in rows on a large table. I looked over the photos and wrote down my first impressions and thoughts in my field journal. As time went on, I looked for connections and contrasts among the group. Then I typed up my notes to clarify and better structure my impressions. In the end, I developed five or six main points of interest.

To categorize the photos, I first coded each photo according to the meaning or content that the participant, the photo-taker, had ascribed to it. These codes were derived from the information sheets that the participants completed. The information sheets served the important purpose of requiring participants to record basic information about each photo as well as their intentions and feelings about each photo. These information sheets, however, were fairly brief and at times did not provide sufficient information for coding. In these cases, I referred to the narratives that went with the photos for more details. Because I am using a constructivist perspective in my study, it was important for me to base my interpretative decisions on the data provided by the participants.

This process resulted in 80 codes for the 58 photos. Thus, some photos had more than one code. I then grouped similar codes together into 14 categories. I further reduced the 14
categories to four main categories. Three of the categories dealt with Chilean cultural differences. The fourth category was not related to the Chilean cultural differences and I decided to exclude the two photos and narratives in this category from further analysis. Next, I wrote up the results. The act of writing made me reconsider some of the categorizations. It also clarified my thinking, thus extending the act of analysis.

The third step in direct analysis results in “descriptive specificity that serves to both test initial findings and provides precision to our descriptions of those findings” (Collier, 2001; p. 43). To gain a better understanding of the details and specifics of the photos, I devised a series of questions to ask of each photo. The questions follow.

- How many photos are there?
- What is the physical object or focus of the photo at face value?
- How many photos were taken outdoors? How many indoors?
- Are people present? If so, are they recognizable?
- How many of the photos are posed? How many are of naturally occurring settings?
- Is a cultural difference apparent without knowledge of the photo’s code or information sheet?
- Is a cultural difference apparent with knowledge of the photo’s code or information sheet?
- Are discernable words or graffiti present?

These questions were grounded in my impressions from open viewing (step a), the categorization process (step b), and from the research question related to students’ experiences of cultural differences. To carry out this process, I gathered all of the photos together in a stack and asked each question of each of the photos. I kept track of the answers in a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet. I sorted through the photos and the information sheets multiple times, looked at the photos closely for details, and once questions were answered, tallied up responses. At times, the
process of categorization (step b) and the detailed analysis (step c) blended together; asking questions of the photos would spur my interpretations related to categorization and vice versa. So while these two steps are presented separately here, in reality they were more fluid processes and I shifted back and forth between the two.

The final step in direct analysis involves reviewing the photos as a whole. To do this, I again laid the entire group of photos on a table. I looked for overall significance and meaning. At first, I did not notice much; the photos represented a collection of everyday objects and vistas that meant very little to me with no context. Then I decided to view the photos according to the categories that resulted from step b. After doing this, I began to see overall patterns in the photos, particularly that some participants’ photos dominated certain categories. This allowed me to make conclusions about the kinds of cultural differences that some participants were interested in over others. I also was able to note patterns in the photos themselves, such as whether the objects of the photos were directly representative of the cultural differences or if they were more abstract in nature.

**Analysis of photo-narrative cases**

While completing the structural and visual analyses, it became clear that the photos and the narratives formed integrated photo-narrative sets. The participants’ narratives did not exist without the photos, nor did the photos alone provide deep insight to the participants’ constructed meanings of cultural differences. Thus, it was important to analyze the photos and the narratives together to interpret their content and relationship. Due to the large number of photos and matching narratives (n=47), I selected 15 critical photo-narratives for interpretation. To select the critical cases, I relied upon the results of my structural and visual analyses and the concept of visual semiotics as described by Van Leeuwen (2001). The selection of cases is based upon the
idea that the selected cases “will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (Stake, 1994; p. 237).

Selection of critical photo-narratives: Van Leeuwen (2001) discusses the presence of denotative signifiers in photos. Signifiers consist of the object of the photo, i.e. the what or the who of the photo. These objects often have cultural meaning or attributes. My visual analysis resulted in three categories of photos as related to Chilean culture. I sorted the photos on a table into these three categories – objective culture, subjective culture, and a combination of both objective and subjective culture. I looked over the photos to identify any cultural signifiers.

For photos dealing with objective culture, I was able to quickly identify more than five photos with cultural signifiers, such as school children dressed in traditional Chilean clothing, a Chilean flag, or a bus typical of Chile. I did not, however, want to over-represent objective culture photos in my collective case, so I turned to the results of structural analysis to narrow down the selection of photos. I reviewed the complicating action and evaluation clauses in the photos’ accompanying narratives to determine which were most developed or had the most content for analysis. I also made sure I did not select photos from just one participant per category. In the end, I selected four objective culture photo-narratives as critical cases.

I repeated this process to choose the photos from the two remaining categories; however, it was more difficult to find obvious cultural signifiers in these photos. This was not surprising as subjective culture is more difficult to directly see or represent on camera than objective culture. I thus relied more heavily on the content of the narrative clauses to select the remaining 11 critical cases. These cases distributed more or less evenly between the remaining two categories.

Interpretation of photo-narratives: I formulated two guiding questions to interpret the relationship between the 15 photos and their accompanying narratives. These questions were:
• How do the objects of the photos and the content of the narratives relate to one another?
• What roles do the photo and the narrative play in the creation of meaning related to cultural differences?

I also analyzed the content of the photo-narratives to gain more understanding of how participants experienced cultural differences. This content was mainly present in the evaluation and complicating action clauses identified through structural analysis. I formulated three guiding questions for this interpretation:

• What is the participant’s stance vis-à-vis the cultural difference?
• How did the participant encounter the cultural difference?
• What role did the participant play in his/her learning about the cultural difference?

I asked these two sets of questions of each photo-narrative case, first answering one set of questions for the entire collective case and then answering the next set. I kept track of the responses using two tables in Microsoft Word®. This was a time-consuming process as I examined each narrative and its accompanying photo together to answer the questions. I often sifted through the cases to see how they compared or differed. The finished tables were filled with quite a bit of text, so I created a second set of tables that more succinctly summarized the results. The summary tables allowed me to look for patterns in the data and draw some preliminary conclusions. I wrote up these conclusions in my field journal.

Due to the focus on content and the participants’ roles vis-à-vis their learning, this process resembles what Riessman (2008) refers to as thematic analysis of narratives. The guiding questions and the concept of integrated photo-narrative sets, however, are my own.

**Analysis of Reflective Journals**

Four participants submitted reflective journals on situations when they did and did not exhibit tolerance, flexibility or adaptability when encountering Chilean culture. Thus, I collected a total of eight reflective journal entries. The journals ranged in length from 238 to 739 words.
This data provides insight on participants’ informed frame of reference shift (Deardorff, 2006), which influences their ability to engage in effective and appropriate intercultural communication and behavior. As such, the journals help respond to the second research question, “What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?” The journal data also pertain to the first research question in regards to participants’ experiences of cultural differences; participants had to experience some kind of cultural difference in order to exhibit (or not) tolerance, flexibility or adaptability. I used structural analysis (Labov, 1997) and thematic analysis to analyze the journals.

**Structural analysis of narratives**

Each of the eight journal entries was written in narrative form and functioned as a single narrative. All were written in response to the same two questions that I had provided participants and because they were written in D-I-E format, they all contained a description of an intercultural situation, or a complicating action, and an evaluation of that situation. Since there was no need to identify narratives in a larger body of text, nor to delimit narrative boundaries (as I had done with the photo narratives), I simply printed the journals and coded them as a means to better familiarize myself with their content.

Structural analysis of the journals followed a process very similar to that for the narratives from the photo interviews. I read and re-read the journals and marked the beginning and end of clauses by hand on hard copies. Again, as it was an interpretive process, I sometimes changed my initial identification of the boundaries of the clauses. I made memos in my field journal about the function and content of the various clauses for each participant’s narratives. Then, I transferred my hand written structural analysis to tables in Microsoft Word®. Finally, I reviewed my memos about each participant’s narratives and the tables to write up overall structural findings for the journals.
Thematic analysis of narratives

To more closely analyze the content of the journals, I undertook inductive thematic analysis (Cresswell, 2008). I had already coded the journals to familiarize myself with their content, but I decided to re-code them by paying specific attention to students’ experiences of cultural differences and their perceptions of their communication and behavior. First, I noted the cultural differences that were the foci of the journal entries. The eight journals discussed five different topics or cultural differences. Thus, four of the journals discussed the same cultural difference. These four journals were from three different participants.

To code for participants’ experiences of cultural differences, I honed in on the content of the evaluation clauses. Structural analysis had informed me that these clauses were most likely to contain participants’ feelings, opinions, and interpretations of cultural differences. I did not ignore the other clauses, however, as structural analysis had also revealed that complicating action clauses, and occasionally resolution clauses, can contain brief evaluations and interpretations. Most of the codes consisted of in vivo words or phrases pulled directly from the journals. This process resulted in 34 codes for the “intolerant” journals and 25 for the “tolerant” journals. I sorted and grouped the codes in a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet and eventually reduced them to three themes.

Coding for participants’ perceptions of their communication and behavior was more difficult than coding for cultural differences as not all of the journals dealt explicitly with the participants’ own interactions. Some journals were based upon observations of cultural differences. Also, not all participants assessed their intercultural actions. Through a close reading and coding of the text, however, two themes came forward that help to understand participants’ perceptions of their intercultural communication or behavior.
Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews

Seven participants completed a semi-structured interview about their intercultural competence; specifically their communication, behavior, and learning. The data in these interview texts related to the second research question, “What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?” and the third question, “What activities do students perceive as promoting their intercultural learning while studying abroad?” For the second question, I undertook structural analysis and thematic analysis of the narratives in the interview text that related to the participants’ intercultural communication and behavior. For the third question, I thematically analyzed data related to students’ perceptions of activities that had promoted their intercultural learning.

Structural analysis of narratives

Structural analysis (Labov, 1997) of this set of narratives followed a process similar to that for the narratives from the photo interviews and the journals. The audio recordings of the seven interviews were transcribed by a transcription service. When complete, I reviewed the transcripts against the audio recordings to double check for accuracy. Then I printed the transcripts and coded them with special attention to data related to the research questions. I also preliminarily identified participants’ extended turns at talk as possible narratives.

I defined a narrative for this data set as a topic-centered, episodic turn at talk (Reissman, 2008) related to participants’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior. I decided that a narrative must include the narrator’s perceptions, opinions or insights on his/her communication or behavior. In terms of Labovian analysis, this definition implied that the only clause necessary to form a narrative was an evaluation. I realized, however, that the presence of complicating actions in the narratives, describing a specific incident of intercultural behavior or
and communication, would be very helpful for gaining a rich understanding of participants’ perceptions.

I identified the boundaries of the individual narratives by reviewing the extended turns at talk more closely. I eliminated those that did not deal directly with intercultural communication and behavior or that did not have evaluation clauses. I then cut the narratives out of the interview text and pasted them into a new Microsoft Word® document. There were 41 narratives. I printed the narratives and identified the Labovian structural clauses in the same way as I did for the photo narratives and journals; marking the clauses on hard copies and then transferring the information to tables in Microsoft Word®. I made notes in my field journal about the function and content of the various clauses. After I finished analyzing the narratives, I reviewed my memos and wrote up overall findings that discussed the structural patterns and drew conclusions for the set of narratives.

**Thematic analysis of narratives**

I carried out inductive thematic analysis (Cresswell, 2008) to gain a better understanding of the content of the 41 narratives. I printed the narratives in the table format that resulted from structural analysis. I then read through each narrative and identified sections where participants’ discussed their intercultural communication and behavior. I identified instances where they discussed appropriate and effective communication and behavior as well as inappropriate and ineffective communication and behavior. The evaluations of their behavior were typically located in the evaluation clauses, so I reviewed that text first. Then I focused on the content of the complicating action clauses to identify the intercultural situation or interaction that they had evaluated.

Through this process I identified 63 instances where participants discussed their intercultural communication and behavior. Of the 63, 24 were situations that participants thought
they had unsuccessfully (i.e. inappropriately or ineffectively) communicated or behaved and were situations that they had been successful (i.e. appropriate or effective). I then took a closer look at these 63 situations. I coded each situation for three aspects: a) the actual communication or behavior, b) the participant’s perception(s) of his/her communication or behavior, and b) why the participant felt that he or she had communicated or behaved in that manner. I entered this information in a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet and separated the data by successful and unsuccessful situations. I sorted and reduced the codes for intercultural communication and behavior to four main categories, keeping the three codes for each situation together. Each category was then divided into two smaller categories – one for successful interactions and one for unsuccessful interactions. I summarized the perceptions and explanations (codes b and c above) for each category and then compared and contrasted these summaries across categories. This resulted in several themes related to participants’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior.

**Thematic analysis of data on intercultural learning activities**

While coding the seven interviews, I made note of the sections that contained data related to the activities that participants perceived as promoting their intercultural learning. Most of this data was toward the end of the interviews, which is when we discussed this topic, but it occasionally came up at other points. To analyze this data, I carried out thematic analysis using a combination of what Grbich (2007) refers to as the “block and file” and “conceptual mapping” approaches (p. 32). In the block and file approach, you code large sections of data and keep them together. Because of their size, however, these sections can become awkward to analyze and can be redundant. Conceptual mapping is an opposite approach that leads to a summary or streamlined view of the emergent themes.
I entered the pertinent codes from the transcripts into a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet according to participant. Data fell into two types of codes – Activity Codes (n=26) and their associated Descriptive Codes (n=131). The Activity Codes related to the intercultural learning activities in which participants engaged. These codes were the start of a concept map. The Descriptive Codes, representing the block and file approach, fleshed out the Activity Codes by providing content and context to when and how participants learned interculturally.

I sorted the Activity Codes so that they were grouped by similar types of activity. I sorted and re-sorted them to better understand patterns across participants. In the end, I devised one overarching theme and four sub-themes related to the activities that participants perceived as promoting their intercultural learning. I created a concept map of the results to visually portray the themes and their relationships. I drew upon the Descriptive Codes associated with the Activity Codes to explain the concept map.

Research Quality

In positivist studies, research quality is assessed through the constructs of internal validity (the congruence between research findings and reality), external validity (generalizability), and reliability (the extent that findings can be replicated) (Merriam, 2002). Constructivist researchers, however, have developed slightly different criteria for assessing research quality that better align with qualitative epistemologies (Patton, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) equate credibility with internal validity, transferability with external validity, and dependability with reliability. Credibility refers to the likelihood that credible research findings will be produced. Transferability enables a reader to decide whether findings can be transferred to another context. Dependability assesses the research process; i.e. the steps that led to the findings. These three criteria “provide means for shoring up and demonstrating the trustworthiness of inquiry guided by the naturalistic paradigm” (p. 290). My study bolstered its credibility, transferability, and
dependability through triangulation, member checks, reflexivity, thick description, and an audit trail.

**Credibility:** The use of multiple methods, also referred to as triangulation, is advantageous for the research process (Casey & Murphy, 2009). It increases validity (Denzin, 1989), overcomes weaknesses of single methods (Denzin, 1989; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966), allows for completeness of data (Jick, 1979), and improves knowledge production (Flick, 2002). Denzin (1989) identifies four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory, and methods. In my study, triangulation took place in terms of data sources and data analysis. I used three methods (semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and photo elicitation) to collect data and three methods (themetic, structural, and visual analysis) for data analysis.

Member checking, the review of raw data and tentative findings by study participants, is another mechanism for enhancing credibility. Through member checking, researchers gain feedback on whether participants’ perspectives are appropriately represented and reconstructed (Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 2002). For my study, I sent the two interview transcripts to each participant, but none of them responded.

While the purpose of constructivist research is to understand participants’ perspectives, the researchers themselves are also part of the research context. As such, researchers’ values, assumptions, and experiences influence the way in which the study is conducted (Hatch, 2002). Researchers should maintain a reflexive stance to “keep track of one’s influence on a setting, to bracket one’s biases, and to monitor one’s emotional responses” (p. 10). A subjectivity statement assists researchers to clarify and explain their position vis-à-vis the study (Merriam, 2002). The subjectivity statement for my study appears in the next section of this chapter.
During data collection and analysis, I referred to this statement often and reflected upon the influence of my values and assumptions on the research process in my field journal.

**Transferability:** Thick description of written findings allows readers to evaluate whether a study’s findings are transferable to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). During data collection, I placed emphasis on gathering detailed stories about participants’ experiences. These details transferred to the findings through quotations from the interviews and journals and through samples of photos (see Chapter 4). Approximately one-third of my findings consist of raw data, providing an in depth view of the participants’ perspectives.

**Dependability:** Completing an audit trail is a useful technique for strengthening a study’s dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). An audit trail is an accounting or description of the research process that details the methods undertaken during data collection and analysis. To create an audit trail for my study, I kept a log to record decisions and procedures related to collection and analysis. This information was incorporated into earlier sections of this chapter.

**Subjectivity Statement**

The impetus for investigating intercultural competence for my dissertation study stems from my intellectual interests in foreign languages and cultural anthropology. These interests originated in middle school, when I started studying French and Spanish, and were sustained through my undergraduate and graduate studies. At first I was fascinated with learning other languages. Later, I became curious about other cultures and how to interact successfully in intercultural situations.

As a child, I lived in London with my family for two years. Later, I studied abroad several times in Europe and Latin America as an undergraduate and graduate student and worked for one year in Costa Rica as an English teacher. My undergraduate degree is in Spanish with a minor in
Anthropology and my master’s degree is in Latin American Studies with a specialization in Anthropology. For the past 12 years, I have worked in international education and higher education administration in relation to Latin America. I interact frequently with individuals from other cultures and travel abroad at least twice per year for professional and personal reasons. I have made about 30 trips to Latin America and the Caribbean for work, study, and travel. I am fluent in Spanish and speak Portuguese at an advanced level.

My academic and professional background strengthens my ability to interpret how others experience cultural differences and develop intercultural competence. I believe, however, that each person has his/her own experiences and knowledge. Thus, everyone has an individualized intercultural learning process. To remain open to and aware of the participants’ intercultural learning, I critically reflected upon my assumptions, experiences, and biases related to intercultural learning in my field journal throughout data collection and analysis.

My ability to carry out my study was further strengthened by my training in qualitative research. During my undergraduate studies, I completed two courses dealing with anthropological research methods. During my master’s and doctoral programs, I took six courses dealing with qualitative data collection, analysis, and research design. My master’s thesis in Latin American Studies, an ethnographic study, involved ten weeks of data collection in Mexico using semi-structured interviews and participant observation. As a doctoral student, I have gained experience in collecting data through semi-structured interviews and in analyzing data with grounded theory and critical discourse analysis. I have kept detailed field journals during all of my research activities.

I approached my dissertation study as an intellectual exercise, but it also led me to interrogate my own intercultural competence. I engaged in my own meaning-making process as
a reflection of my personal and professional trajectory. Acknowledging my relationship with the research topic allowed me to critically examine the role that my own thoughts and experiences played in data collection and analysis.

**Limitations**

There are several limitations of my study. The ability to collect rich, qualitative data for this study was dependent upon my recruiting interested students and then, developing a rapport with the participants so that they felt comfortable discussing their intercultural experiences. At the beginning of my study, I struggled to recruit participants. I contacted six study abroad programs and most would not allow me to access to their students. Furthermore, I designed the data collection process to encourage participation and the development of rapport, but attrition did occur due to the need for participants to remain engaged in the research process for approximately four months. Also, not all of the participants completed each phase of data collection.

There were also limitations associated with my data collection methods. Interviews are a widely accepted method for collecting qualitative data (Patton, 2002), but I did experience some minor difficulties related to the logistics of carrying out interviews and with transcription. It was hard to find quiet locations for interviewing in public places and one of the transcriptionists I hired completed inadequate work with the photo elicitation interviews, leaving out large sections of text. So, I had to re-transcribe these interviews. For reflective journaling, I provided participants with detailed guidelines for what to write about, but not all participants completely fulfilled these guidelines. I counteracted the weaknesses of a single method by triangulating data collection methods (Denzin, 1989). Triangulation was extremely beneficial to my study, but it did require additional preparation for data collection and it implied the use of more than one
method of analysis. It was challenging to keep track of the various stages of analysis and to then integrate the results into a set of neatly “packaged” findings.

Narrative analysis requires the researcher to elicit narratives from participants. I crafted a data collection process that invited participants to tell stories (Riessman, 2008), but some participants were more likely to construct narratives than others. Those participants who did not tell as many stories, or who told less detailed stories, may have been under-represented in the analyzed data. In addition, the act of analyzing narratives posed some drawbacks. It took a long time it took to complete analysis (Riessman, 2003) and it was difficult to balance the analysis of individual narratives with analysis and interpretation of the data as a whole (Phoenix, Smith, & Sparkes, 2010).

Finally, some of the participants in this study were undergraduate students studying abroad for a semester through Preston College, a private, liberal arts college well-known for its foreign language and international studies programs. Due to the college’s reputation in these areas, students enrolled at Preston or in its study abroad programs may constitute a population that is pre-disposed or highly interested in international issues. As such, they may have been very motivated to gain intercultural competence; perhaps more motivated than most U.S. undergraduates. Also, three of the seven participants had previously studied abroad. These participants may have had higher levels of intercultural competence than the average U.S. undergraduate. The development of intercultural competence, however, is an ongoing, individualized process and one may never become completely interculturally competent (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, there was value in the participants’ diversity of experiences. Moreover, it is evident that the participants did not exhibit consistently high levels of intercultural sensitivity and competence. Instances of ethnocentrism and intercultural insensitivity were
evident in the data. Thus, I concluded that the Preston students were appropriate to include in
my study.

Summary

Students’ narratives of their experiences of Chilean culture provided a rich data source for
investigating the process of developing intercultural competence. Using a constructivist
approach, I collected data over a four month period using photo elicitation, reflective journaling,
and semi-structured interviews. Then, I used structural, thematic and visual analyses to examine
how participants constructed their intercultural knowledge and experiences. My study’s
trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation of data collection and analysis methods,
member checks, reflexivity, thick description, and an audit trail.
Table 3-1. Participant information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Spanish Proficiency</th>
<th>Previous Study Abroad</th>
<th>Carnegie Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Bac/A&amp;S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>International Social Science</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>RU/VH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>International Social Science</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>RU/VH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>International Social Science</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Latin America &amp; Asia</td>
<td>RU/VH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>RU/VH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavin</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>International Social Science</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bac/A&amp;S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haliegh</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Europe &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>RU/H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bac/A&S = Baccalaureate College – Arts and Sciences; RU/VH = Research University (very high research activity); RU/H = Research University (high research activity). aNames are pseudonyms.

Table 3-2. Summary of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photo elicitation</td>
<td>August to mid-September</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo interviews</td>
<td>Late September</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Early November</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Timing refers to 2010.
Table 3-3. Summary of data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Analysis Method</th>
<th>Number of Data Sets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photo elicitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>Structural analysis</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>Direct visual analysis</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo-narrative cases</td>
<td>Interpretative guiding questions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective journals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>Structural analysis and thematic analysis</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>Structural analysis and thematic analysis</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural learning data</td>
<td>Thematic analysis</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Direct visual analysis (Collier, 2001); structural analysis (Labov, 1997); thematic analysis of journals and semi-structured interviews (Cresswell, 2008); thematic analysis of intercultural learning data (Grbich, 2008).
Table 3-4. Example of structural analysis of a narrative of cultural differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>We were just buying vegetables. There are a lot of different fresh vegetables and fruit that people bring from the countryside and farmers sell them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>That’s actually really nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>because the farmers’ markets here are cheaper than the supermarkets where as in the U.S. it’s opposite. But it’s cheaper, it’s fresher, you have a wide selection,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>there’s no reason why to buy from the bigger stores and I think that’s really great. I love vegetables. But something I’ve noticed is that Chileans don’t seem like they really like to eat vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>Instead they just eat a lot of bread, a lot of meat. In my house my mom cooks well and she knows that I really like vegetables so we eat that frequently, but I know a lot of my friends’ houses they’ll only have bread and you know meat or spaghetti or something similar like that and a lot of the times they rarely ever have salads and most of the food is very light like white instead of you know all different colors like dark green;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>the type of diet that you’re supposed to have. Amongst ourselves we’ve just been wondering how it is that Chileans eat the way they do? Like I personally cannot eat bread every single meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>and a lot of people here do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>That just astounds me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>and yet people are thinner than they are in the U.S. and it doesn’t seem like they do that much exercise either.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>So I don’t know how, you know. Also the ideas about nutrition seem to be different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>Like my host mom told me that bread is very healthy for you and it comes with different types of vitamins and minerals and it sustains you very well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>That’s not how I generally think about bread, so I don’t know if it’s just what she was taught or if their bread is maybe different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The purpose of my study was to investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions about developing intercultural competence while studying abroad for a semester in Chile. Three research questions guided my research:

1. How do students experience cultural differences while studying abroad?
2. What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?
3. What activities do students perceive as promoting their intercultural learning while studying abroad?

This chapter presents the results of analyzing the data that I collected through photo elicitation, reflective journaling, and semi-structured interviews; as described in Chapter 3. The photo elicitation results pertain to how students experience cultural differences. Findings from the reflective journals relate to this same issue, but they also shed light on students’ perceptions of their communication and behavior. The semi-structured interviews provide the majority of findings related to students’ perceptions in addition to those for the activities they perceive as promoting intercultural learning.

There are four sections in this chapter. The first three sections deal with the three sets of narrative that I collected – the photo-narratives of cultural differences from photo elicitation, the narratives of cultural adaptation from the reflective journals, and the narratives of intercultural competence from the semi-structured interviews. A common thread among these sections is that they each begin with a discussion of the organization of the narratives, which constitute the results of Labovian structural analysis. After discussing the results of structural analysis, I move on to explain the results of my following steps in data analysis for each set of narratives; such as photo analysis, guiding questions, and thematic analysis. The fourth and final section of the chapter pertains to the results of thematically analyzing the intercultural learning data from the semi-structured interviews.
There are times throughout the chapter when I step back from presenting results to synthesize what the results in that section reveal and to discuss how the results relate to existing literature. I synthesize and discuss the results as the chapter progresses because of the considerable amount of data in my study, the somewhat technical nature of certain results, and the fact that the results cover a wide range of topics. In the final chapter of my dissertation, I pull these syntheses together to discuss the major findings of my research. These findings include a) understanding intercultural competence through narrative inquiry, b) how students’ discern cultural differences, c) the role of personal agency in developing intercultural competence, and d) social interaction as a means of intercultural learning. Table 4-1 provides an overview of my study; including the data collected, the pertinent research questions for each dataset, the relationship to the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006), analytic methods, and findings.

Photo-Narratives of Cultural Differences

Organization of Narratives of Cultural Differences

I used structural analysis (Labov, 1997) to understand the organization or structure of participants’ narratives about Chilean cultural differences. In particular, I investigated the ways in which the narratives’ structure reflects participants’ intercultural sensitivity. In the upcoming section, I describe the organization of the participants’ photo elicitation narratives by drawing upon examples from the interview text. This description familiarizes us with the narratives’ content, but most importantly it shows how participants’ organization of their stories informs our understanding of how they experience cultural differences. An example of my structural analysis of a narrative of cultural differences appears in Table 3-4.

Participants’ stories about Chilean cultural differences start with brief orientation statements. These statements mention the cultural differences pictured in the photos and
describe when and where the photos were taken. Participants provide just enough information to set the context of their story. Gavin orients his experience of watching a children’s performance of traditional Chilean dances, “This was on either the 17th or 18th [of September] for the bicentennial celebrations and what they did is they displayed different facets of Chilean culture through different dances.” Likewise, Ellen explains the photo she took at La Moneda, the Presidential Palace in Santiago, “This is a picture that I took on the inside of La Moneda. This is the fountain that you see once you walk in. We went there during the first few weeks that we were here. It was part of the [study abroad] program to see it.”

Some participants introduce their narratives of cultural differences with a summary of the topic of their story. These brief abstract statements, although infrequent, appear near the beginning of the narratives. Chris introduces the differences between U.S. and Latin American Catholicism by stating, “So this picture is something that I suppose isn’t extraordinary for the Latin American context, but it’s very different from the Catholicism that I know.” Meanwhile, Ellen summarizes her interests in Chilean women’s roles, “The thing that has caught by attention is the role of women in Chile and Santiago, in particular their role in the family, machismo, and how women are treated in general.”

The brief nature of participants’ orientations and their infrequent use of abstract statements likely reflect the structure of the photo elicitation activity. The information sheet that participants completed prior to the interview explained where each photo was taken and provided “abstract-like” information, such as the object of the photo and why the object made them curious or drew their attention. Since these sheets were submitted to me prior to the interview, the participants knew I was familiar with the information and they may have felt no need to repeat it during the interview. Also, using photos to elicit narratives eliminates some of the need
for background information as the photos themselves serve as self-explanatory visual orientations. This is particularly true for a viewer/listener like me who was familiar with the cities where data collection took place. In many cases, I recognized the subjects of the photos prior to the interview. Also, several of the narratives that had little to no orientation information were accompanied by photos showing ubiquitous features of Chilean society. Micros (buses), stray dogs, and graffiti are so prevalent in Chile that anyone who has spent time there requires little to no orientation to what they are or where they occur.

Participants’ descriptions of the cultural differences they encountered while abroad comprise the plot of their stories. These statements, which occur in all of narratives, provide details of participants’ observations of and interactions with cultural differences as well as their comparisons of Chilean and U.S. culture. Ellen, for example, describes what she has learned about Chilean gender roles,

Ellen. When I first got here our program director told us how she loves to cook and how her kitchen is hers and no one else is allowed to use it. She’s very proud of it. And then my Chilean mom always cooks and does the dishes. I’ll get up to do the dishes and she says, “No, leave it. I’ll do it.”

Diane compares how Chilean and American women dress and wear makeup, “You’ll never see a girl here that looks like she just woke up. She’ll definitely make herself up, definitely put on a lot of makeup and do her hair. In the States you’ll see people in their pajamas sometimes.”

Participants evaluate the cultural differences they have experienced. These evaluations, present in all of the photo elicitation narratives, ascribe meaning to participants’ intercultural experiences by disclosing their reactions, thoughts, and feelings. Participants express emotions of disbelief, interest, incredulity, discomfort, irritation, sadness, curiosity, wonder, and happiness, among others, in their stories. Ellen comments on the prevalence of public displays of affection in Chile,
Ellen. For example, there’s a lot of public affection, people make out in entryways, in cafes, on the grass, everywhere basically and people don’t care at all if you’re just standing right next to them. Even if we know to expect it, it’s still pretty shocking for most of us, for the people on my program.

Diane, on the other hand, explains how she felt when she realized that she was dressed too informally for an education event that she attended,

Diane. I felt so awkward because I didn’t know it was a formal event… I don’t think I was wearing jeans, but I think I was wearing trousers or something, student clothes, and then I walked in and, “Oh no!” I didn’t know that this was going to be a formal event.

Participants’ evaluations of cultural differences ultimately provide insight on their intercultural sensitivity. These statements convey how participants make sense of the cultural differences they have observed and encountered. Gavin discusses an outdoor market, a common way to shop for food in Chile,

Gavin. I thought it [the market] was interesting because it’s very different than what we do in the United States. It’s crazy. There are people walking all over the place. The vendors are just yelling like crazy people, trying to sell whatever they are selling. All the prices are changing. There’s tons of money changing hands. Apparently it’s pretty sketchy too in terms of a lot of pick-pockets going through there because there’s so much money changing hands. They usually just like grab some and then get lost in the crowd. That is why I said [on the information sheet] that my emotions were that I need to take this picture quickly so someone doesn’t grab my camera. That thought was going through my head. I just think it is very different than the U.S. when you walk in a supermarket with nice music, very clean, very orderly. They have those here too…. It’s just not whatever I’m used to because this is crazy walking through there [the market], but anyways.

Markets in Chile and other parts of Latin America are known for petty crime, but Gavin’s description of the market using words like “sketchy” and “crazy” suggests that he does not fully accept the difference of shopping in an outdoor market over the familiar experience of shopping in a clean, orderly grocery store. In terms of the DMIS (Bennett, 1993), Gavin exhibits an ethnocentric orientation about outdoor markets. Those evaluations that are neutral in tone exhibit a more ethnorelative orientation to cultural differences. In these statements, participants
express that certain things may be different in Chile, but they are no better or worse than the U.S.

Brian reveals his impression of graffiti in Chile versus the U.S.,

Brian. Where I live in the States…you see graffiti sometimes drawings, but here [in Chile] it seems to have a different weight to it, a different importance, a different message and that takes it to a different level where feelings are important almost. For example…one that I saw had a message about the Mapuche people and the hunger strike and all that…to think how many people pass it every day and see it and think, “Oh yeah they’re the Mapuche prisoners. We really should think about that,” or “No, they deserve to be in prison.” It makes you think about whatever’s on there [the walls].

My discussion of participants’ descriptions and evaluations of cultural differences implies that the two types of statement are distinct – descriptions as straightforward, neutral discussions of cultural differences and evaluations as subjective reactions to these differences. In fact, the two types of statement are closely related, at times intertwined, and difficult to distinguish. Participants move back and forth between plot descriptions and evaluations in quick succession and often within the same sentence. An excerpt of Diane’s story about dating, referred to as pololeando, illustrates this.

Abstract: It’s more common to have a boyfriend than to be single here,
Plot description: which is really different from the U.S. where at the university setting at least it’s more normal to be single than to have a boyfriend.
Evaluation: So it’s very interesting.
Plot description: The couple is always together, they show a lot of love out in the open.
Evaluation: Very, very different.
Plot description: My host sister’s boyfriend comes for lunch almost every day and they spend a lot of time together.
Evaluation: It’s just a very different culture. I wanted to take a picture of them [a couple] because I had this in mind. I have to take a picture of pololeando [dating] because it’s a huge part of the culture, but it’s interesting because
Plot description: even if they are a serious couple, couples here are very serious, and they’ve been dating for like four, five years or more they still…at least
my host sister, she still lives at home. I’ve never heard her think of moving out and moving in with him. It’s not even that it’s not an option, she doesn’t even think about it. It’s just not on her mind.

Diane’s story portrays an ethnorelative view of dating in that she acknowledges and respects the differences between dating practices in the U.S. and Chile.

The blurring of plot descriptions and evaluations also occurs when participants use words in their descriptions, typically adverbs or adjectives, that express an opinion. Chris, for example, talks about a preacher that came on a bus in Santiago, “I was on a bus one day when a preacher got on and he passed out prayer cards. We had about 40 minutes to the nearest metro stop. He just went into it and he actually gave a very moving sermon.” Chris’ use of “actually” indicates that he was not expecting a sermon by an itinerant preacher to be moving. This word choice may reflect Chris’ experiences with similar situations in the U.S. or it may reflect his expectation that moving sermons typically take place in a more formal, religious environment. Regardless, Chris’ use of a single adverb in his plot description implies that he evaluates religious differences in Chile from a fairly ethnocentric perspective.

Evaluation statements, as well as the blurring of plot descriptions and evaluations, are participants’ attempts to resolve the internal tensions (McVee, 2004) they have experienced as a result of their intercultural encounters. Interacting with cultural differences causes participants to feel alienated or out of balance (Bennett, 2008) and evaluations serve as a means for them to express and deal with these feelings of disequilibrium. Due to the intense nature of the tensions they feel, it is difficult for participants to calmly and rationally explain a cultural difference and then provide a separate evaluation. Participants need to react to the cultural differences they have encountered in a more immediate fashion. The result is a non-linear narrative that blurs plots and evaluations.
Participants end their stories of cultural differences with resolution statements. These statements are present in almost all of the narratives. Brian, for example, finishes his narrative on graffiti with “It’s kind of just a subtle message that’s always there in the background, it’s on the wall and people are passing it all the time.” The language used in resolutions often has an evaluative slant. Frederick, who finishes his story about riding *micros* with, “I take the bus in Springfield, but it feels a lot better here [in Valparaíso],” has decided that the differences in riding buses in Chile are positive in nature. Resolution statements, however, do not always indicate that participants have resolved or come to a definitive conclusion about their encounters with the cultural differences. In these cases, the term “resolution,” which comes from Labov (1997), is a misnomer. Chris closes his explanation of an encounter he had with Chilean children who used American swear words, “It was really strange, a very weird situation, a strange situation.” Unlike Frederick, Chris is still grappling with the cultural difference he has noticed. He questions why Chilean children use American swear words, his role as a representative of U.S. culture, and the influence of U.S. popular culture on Chile. Ultimately, he remains confused because he has not resolved the difference.

The evaluative nature of the narratives’ endings shows that participants have, at the very least, noticed cultural differences and engaged with them in some emotional or intellectual way. If participants were not interculturally engaged, they would not have noticed the difference in the first place, nor they would they have formed an opinion about it. Evidence of engagement is important since perceiving cultural differences is the starting point for developing intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993). Furthermore, evaluative endings are a final attempt by participants to resolve the tensions and disequilibrium they feel as a result of interacting with cultural differences.
Participants use codas to tie their narratives back to the context of the photo elicitation activity. These phrases remind us that the narratives were created in response to the photo elicitation guidelines that asked participants to take photographs of aspects of Chilean culture that have drawn their attention. Gavin sums up, “So I guess it [religion] is a part of the culture that I wanted to represent in this picture.” Codas, however, are rare; only a handful appears in the entire set of 56 narratives. I posit that so few codas appear in this set of narratives because most participants have already finished their stories with their resolutions statements. Also, Gavin is the participant most likely to use codas, so they may be a feature of his personal storytelling style.

Orientation statements, plot descriptions, evaluations, and resolutions are most commonly used by participants to organize their stories of cultural differences. Plot descriptions and evaluations, which are often difficult to differentiate from one another, provide information about what cultural differences participants have noticed and how they have experienced them. Evaluations, which appear as stand-alone statements, as narrative endings, and as parts of plot descriptions, indicate participants’ intercultural sensitivity. They provide insight on whether they perceive cultural differences from ethnocentric or ethnorelative perspectives according to the DMIS (Bennett, 1993). Evaluative statements also show that participants have engaged with cultural differences. This is noteworthy since the ability to perceive cultural differences is the starting point for developing intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993). Finally, evaluations serve as a means for participants to try to resolve the tensions they experience from interacting with cultural differences. The prominent role of evaluations in this set of narratives fits with the assertion that an evaluation signals the importance of the story and how the narrator would like it to be interpreted (Wiles, Rosenberg, & Kearns, 2005). Finally, participants’ narratives of
cultural differences were created in response to my study’s data collection procedures. As a result, the structure of the narratives, particularly the abstracts and orientation statements, reflects the guidelines and format of the photo elicitation activity. Next, I turn to the results of analyzing the photos that accompany the narratives.

**Photos of Cultural Differences**

I used Collier’s direct analysis technique (2001) to analyze participants’ photos of Chilean culture. In the upcoming sections, I provide an overview of the photos’ content and characteristics. Then, I discuss how the participants construct meaning with the photos and what this reveals about how they discern cultural differences. Lastly, I interpret the findings in light of participants’ development of intercultural competence.

**Overview of the photos**

Photos taken of outside environments make up the great majority of the 58 photos that participants submitted. These outdoor photos mainly feature urban areas and are characterized by typical aspects of cities; such as buildings, roofs, roads, concrete, brick, buses, sidewalks, poles, flags, trees, tiles, smog, signs, and graffiti. About a third of the photos taken outdoors are panoramic in nature, while two-thirds have a particular subject or focus. Most of the photos are of naturally occurring subjects; just three photos are posed. A little more than two-thirds of the photos have people present in them and of these, most are unrecognizable figures or groups.

The subject or focus of the individual photos fit into 12 broad categories. They are: advertisements, buildings, city or street scenes, cityscapes, documents, graffiti, interior scenes, landscapes, outdoor markets, people, public transportation, and statues and sculptures. City or street scenes, cityscapes, graffiti, and statues and sculptures comprise just more than half the photos. Table 4-2 lists the categories and the number of photos in each. Based upon these categories, the participants appear to be primarily interacting with Chilean culture “in the street”
or the outside world. This is most likely a reflection of the IRB requirements that limited participants from taking photos of individual people. Thus, I instructed participants to take photos of public scenes or public behavior.

When viewing the photos at face value, it is difficult to perceive the cultural differences that participants intend to highlight. Unique aspects of Chilean culture do not readily “jump out” and indeed, the 12 categories occur in a multitude of cultures. To an American, the photos may not have much intercultural meaning since many of the subjects are not entirely unfamiliar or foreign at first viewing. To better access the aspects of Chilean culture that participants found interesting or that they were curious about, I found it necessary to consider the stories that accompany the photos. I needed knowledge of the stories that the photos “give birth to” (Collier, 2001; p. 46) or what Banks (2001) refers to as the photo’s external narrative. Next, I present findings from content analysis of the photos, based upon data from the participants’ information sheets.

**Content analysis of the photos**

My analysis of the content or meaning that participants ascribed to their photos resulted in three themes related to how they discern cultural differences: subjective cultural differences, objective differences, and a mixture or blend of subjective and objective differences (Table 4-3). The subjective culture photos deal with “the psychological aspects of culture” (Stewart & Bennett, 1991; p. 2), such as communication, values, stereotypes, and social relationships or roles. Objective culture photos feature celebrations, city life, and miscellaneous issues that deal with the institutions and artifacts of culture (Stewart & Bennett, 1991). The blended photos mix or blend objective and subjective culture. These photos focus on cultural symbols, social issues, religious issues, cultural comparisons, and behavior.
In my study, participants sometimes experienced situations involving several cultural differences. These differences did not fit easily into either subjective or objective culture because they were not purely one or the other. As such, I determined that the dichotomy of objective and subjective culture was not adequate for coding all of the photos. I created the “blended” code that combined the two aspects of culture. The intercultural relations literature does not use the term “blended” to refer to aspects of culture, but it does discuss that society is composed of both objective and subjective culture (Bennett, 1998). Moreover, Simmel’s tragedy of culture proposes that objective culture is increasingly “intertwined” (Ritzer, 2007; p. 51) with other aspects of society. The blended culture theme reflects these lines of thought. To better illustrate the three themes associated with the participants’ photos, I next discuss an example from each category in more detail. I also delve into the theme of blended culture a bit more.

Frederick’s photo of the view of his host family’s backyard represents a photo in the objective culture category (Figure 4-1). Frederick did not complete the photo information sheet, so in order to code this photo I turned to his narrative.

Frederick. This is cool. This is actually inside my yard. The staircase you were looking at [in another photo] is on the other side of that wall down there, but this is inside and there’s a fence there and a fence here and some other people living here. I just thought this is cool as far as like a backyard and just like the life in Viña, or Valpo for that matter, but Viña especially. Fruit trees here, clothing hanging on lines, big fluffy angry dog barking at me as I’m taking the picture. You can just see over to some historical buildings out here, palm trees and the sea. So the Pacific Ocean is just kind of an ever present part of life, which I totally dig. It’s really awesome.

After reading the narrative, I coded the cultural differences that interested Frederick as “presence of ocean in everyday life” and “typical city vista.” I later reduced these codes to a broader sub-theme called “city life.” I ultimately coded the photo as objective culture since the physical aspects of a Chilean city or landscape (i.e. trees, ocean, backyards) are fixed artifacts (Stewart & Bennett, 1991).
Diane’s photo of an educational event for elementary school children fits in the subjective culture theme (Figure 4-2). Diane explained on her photo information sheet why this situation drew her attention,

Diane. This photo is an event for a program for low income children that live in rural areas. It drew my attention because it shows a hierarchy. The truth is that the presentation was very strange to me because of its formality. All the children and their parents were seated pretty far away from the directors of the program or people with high positions.

I initially coded this photo as “formality and hierarchy of educational event,” and later reduced it to the sub-theme of “values.” Values and other psychological aspects of culture are subjective in nature (Stewart & Bennett, 1991), so I finally categorized this photo there. While the photo is of the auditorium where the educational event took place, the meaning of the photo has little to do with the auditorium itself (an objective artifact), but instead deals with the subjective values that influenced the format of the educational event.

Ellen’s photo (Figure 4-3) of vegetables for sale at market is an example of a blended cultural issue. Ellen was curious about Chilean eating habits. Her information sheet stated, “It seems that a lot of Chileans do not eat many vegetables even though they are cheap and plenty. I do not understand how they maintain their health.” I coded this photo as “Chilean eating habits/diet and impact on health” and later reduced it to the theme of “behavior.” Behavior is something that is predicated upon subjective values, but is also influenced by objective constructs. Ellen’s experiences in Chile informed her that Chileans consume a lot of bread and meat (see Table 3-4 for her narrative). She is interested in figuring out why Chileans do not eat more vegetables, especially since they are so cheap. She wonders if Chileans are simply “taught” to eat bread and meat, but is really left undecided as to why they have the diet they do. She has considered a subjective explanation, that Chileans are taught to eat a certain way or believe certain foods are healthy, and an objective explanation, the cost of vegetables. As an
aside, Ellen’s observation that Chileans eat a lot of bread is quite accurate. Chileans are reportedly the second largest consumers of bread in the Western Hemisphere (Hennicke, 2008). There may be other explanations for the Chilean diet that Ellen does not consider. For example, bread in Chile is baked daily at grocery stores and is available hot every hour. Chileans’ consumption of bread could be influenced, or the very least reinforced, by the objective practices of grocery stores. Who after all can resist buying warm, tasty bread? More likely, however, is that Chilean bread is healthy. In 2000, the Chilean Ministry of Health mandated the addition of folic acid to the wheat flour mix used in baking bread (Hertrampf & Cortés, 2004). Indeed, Ellen’s narrative mentions her host mother’s comments about bread being healthy and containing vitamins and minerals. Finally, the prevalence of meat consumption in Chile has deep cultural and historical roots and that has brought about the “affirmation or contestation of social hierarchies” (Orlove, 1997; p. 242). The Chilean habit of eating meat that Ellen noticed is likely a reflection of the country’s unique history.

The above discussion exemplifies that participants are trying to figure out complicated cultural differences that blend both objective and subjective issues. In addition, this discussion illustrates of the deep cultural knowledge necessary for developing intercultural competence, as suggested by the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006). Ellen’s photo-narrative, which deals ostensibly with diet and nutrition, also pertains to Chilean history, consumer behavior, and national health policy. Moreover, the photo-narrative demonstrates the curiosity required to unravel and interpret cultural practices.

When examining Ellen’s photo and narrative in detail, I noted that her photo does not really picture Chilean eating habits; rather it is a photo of vegetables for sale at market. Without Ellen’s information sheet or knowledge of her story, it would have been impossible for me to
code the photo’s content from her perspective. I could have created any number of codes for her photo; such as, outdoor markets, vegetable crops, or the price of vegetables. Doing this, however, would not have fit with my study’s constructivist perspective that privileges participants’ meaning. The relationship between the photos and their accompanying narratives, and the role that each plays in meaning-making, is a discussion that I take up in some detail in a later section of this chapter. Next, I examine the representativeness of the photos and what this implies for objective, blended, and subjective meaning.

**Reviewing the photos for patterns of meaning**

Reviewing the photos, the final stage of visual analysis (Collier, 2001), revealed additional findings related to how participants’ discern cultural differences. During reviewing, several patterns became apparent in regards to the degree to which a photo’s subject actually pictures the cultural difference the participant wished to highlight. It also became clear that photos from certain participants dominate specific themes (objective, subjective or blended).

The subjects of the photos in the objective category are, on the whole, directly representative of the cultural difference about which the participant is curious. Diane, for example, has observed the high number of stray dogs in Chile. Her photo shows a stray dog crossing a street. I coded this photo as “prevalence of stray/abandoned dogs in streets” (Figure 4-4). That objective-themed photos are fairly direct representations of cultural differences is not surprising. Objective culture, consisting of the physical aspects of culture, can be directly observed (Stewart & Bennett, 1991) and thus would be fairly easy to photograph.

Of the 33 codes for the 28 photos with objective themes, 24 (72%) are from photos taken by Frederick and Gavin, six (18%) are from Diane, and three (10%) are from Brian, Chris, and Ellen. (Note that some photos had more than one code and these codes could be in two different categories. For example, four of Diane’s photos with objective codes also had subjective codes.)
A similar pattern emerges when comparing the number of photos that each participant has with an objective code against the total number of photos that they submitted for my study. Frederick and Gavin have a large proportion of their photos in the objective category, while Diane, Brian, Chris and Ellen have less (Table 4-4).

The subjects of the photos in the subjective category tend to be abstract representations of cultural differences. When viewing these photos it is difficult to decipher the cultural difference that draws the participants’ attention. For example, Ellen’s photo of a large wall painted with a graffiti-like mural represents her questions about how and in what ways Chileans are conservative (Figure 4-5). There is no clear connection between the mural and conservative values. In fact, before examining her information sheet, I coded this photo as “graffiti.” I later coded it with the sub-theme of “how and in what ways Chileans are conservative” and then with the theme of “values.” Subjective aspects of culture are hard to observe (Stewart & Bennett, 1991), so the fact that the photos do not directly represent subjective aspects of culture makes sense. It is difficult to capture subjective differences with a camera. The photos in the communication theme are an exception to the rule in terms of abstract representation. These photos all deal with written communication and feature words in some way – graffiti, an advertisement, a billboard etc.

Photos from certain participants also dominate the subjective category. Of the 20 codes for the 17 subjective photos, 15 (75%) are for photos by Brian, Diane and Ellen, while five (25%) are from Chris, Frederick, and Gavin. Roughly half of all of Brian’s Diane’s, and Ellen’s photos are in this category. Frederick, Gavin, and Chris each have just one or two (Table 4-3).

The photos in the blended category are more mixed in terms of visually representing (or not) the cultural differences noticed by the participants. The photos dealing with religious issues
all picture religious objects; for example, photos of the Virgin Mary, prayer altars, churches etc.
The photos of cultural symbols feature objective cultural artifacts (for example, flags, souvenirs, sculptures). These photos, though, are not about the artifacts per se, but rather about the cultural concepts or values that they represent. Access to the accompanying narratives is necessary for coding. Photos representing behaviors are also hard to interpret without access to the corresponding story because the images are fixed in time; a behavior is easier to recognize if observed in action. There are 23 codes for the 21 photos in the blended category. Of these codes, 17 (74%) are from Chris, Ellen, and Diane and six (26%) are from Brian, Gavin, and Frederick. Chris, Ellen, Diane, and Brian have roughly half of their photos in this category. Gavin and Frederick have a much lower proportion (Table 4-3).

**Synthesis:** The findings resulting from direct analysis (Collier, 2001) contribute fruitful information for discussing the participants’ development of intercultural competence. It is now clear what types of cultural differences drew the participants’ attention – objective, subjective, and blended. More importantly, however, it is apparent that not all participants notice the same kinds of differences. Two of the participants were mainly interested in objective cultural differences, while the remaining four were focused on subjective and blended aspects of culture. This is an important pattern because an understanding of subjective culture “is more likely to lead to intercultural competence” than an understanding of objective culture (Bennett, 1998; p. 3). “Understanding objective culture may create knowledge, but it doesn’t necessarily generate competence” (p. 3). Thus, those participants who were drawn to subjective and blended differences may have higher levels of intercultural competence than the objective-oriented participants. Since developing intercultural competence is an ongoing process (Deardorff, 2006),
however, this does not imply that objective-oriented participants will not continue to develop their intercultural skills and become more interculturally competent.

Certain study abroad program characteristics are believed to create an environment conducive to the development of intercultural competence (Dwyer, 2004; Engle & Engle, 2003). Participants in my study were recruited from programs with characteristics that encourage the development of intercultural competence, i.e. instruction in the host language, living in a homestay, and studying abroad for a semester. My results show that while the programs’ structure likely provided a good foundation for developing intercultural competence, structure alone may not have been sufficient for all students to develop intercultural competence.

Cognitive development theory may explain why some participants noticed certain kinds of differences over others. This theory informs us that most undergraduate students are not yet at the generative knowing stage and thus may have difficulty deciphering that knowledge is relative and dependent upon context, experience and other knowledge (Love & Guthrie, 1999). In the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006), an informed frame of reference shift allows for adaptability, flexibility, an ethnorelative view, and empathy. An undergraduate student may have difficulty shifting to an ethnorelative view if he/she has not entirely accepted that reality is “predominantly ambiguous, complex, and not completely knowable (Love & Guthrie, 1999; p. 79). Students at lower levels of cognitive development may require more support and structure for their learning (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). This fits with the assertion that study abroad programs need to intervene in students’ intercultural learning through curriculum, cultural training, and mentoring (Savicki, 2008; Vande Berg, 2007; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Overall, study abroad program personnel need to be aware that students on their program may have varying degrees of cognitive development. I posit that the objective-
oriented participants in my study would have benefitted from more support for their learning or perhaps a different kind of support than was provided, so that they could have more effectively discerned subjective cultural differences.

In the next section of this chapter, I take a closer look at how participants experienced cultural differences. I also explore the photo-narrative relationship. For this, I turn to the results of interpreting the photo-narrative cases.

**Interpretation of Photo-Narrative Cases**

The photos and the narratives collected through photo elicitation form integrated photo-narrative sets. I analyzed 15 of these sets to more fully comprehend their content as well as the relationship between the photos and the narratives (Table 4-5). The results provide deeper insights into how participants experience and make sense of cultural differences. They also reveal the function of the narratives and the photos in the participants’ sense-making process.

**Photo-narrative content**

To gain a deep understanding of the content of the photo-narrative cases, I interrogated each case with three questions:

- What is the participant’s stance vis-à-vis the cultural difference?
- How did the participant encounter the cultural difference?
- What role did the participant play in his/her learning about the cultural difference?

The answers to these questions lead to conclusions about the participants’ engagement and learning. Table 4-5 provides a summary of the results discussed below.

**Participants’ stances vis-à-vis cultural differences:** Examining participants’ stances vis-à-vis the cultural differences in their photo-narratives offers perspective on their reactions and opinions, in particular how they emotionally and intellectually experience cultural differences.

For the objective cases, participants exhibit neutral or positive reactions to cultural differences. Gavin discusses the historical development of Valparaíso, “Apparently I thought it was
interesting because supposedly when the city first started, that’s where the water came up to [in front of the church].” Meanwhile, Frederick states that the micros are “just a cool part of the culture. It’s always a lot of fun [to ride them].” Both participants find their intercultural encounters to be worthy of remark, but they do not appear to be very emotionally or intellectually invested in the discussion. Chilean culture is “cool” and “interesting.”

The blended cultural cases, however, show emotional, even visceral reactions to cultural differences. Participants use words such as “flabbergasted,” “astounded,” “fascinating,” “frustrated,” and “very different” to describe their experiences. Chris had a difficult experience with the Chilean bureaucracy and paperwork required to validate his immigration documents. This caused him to reflect,

Chris. The prospect of having the government know so much about you, it’s bizarre, that was very strange. I came back one night and I was just flabbergasted by doing all this to carry papers and they [my host parents] didn’t understand why I would feel a little frustrated or creeped out by the idea of having to carry papers all the time.

There is a sense of intellectual engagement with cultural differences in the blended cases. Brian was struck by the role of poet Pablo Neruda in Chilean popular culture (Figure 4-6). He states,

Brian. I found it very interesting the role of Neruda in Chile and just the power that he has, the kind of connecting power that people seem to kind of rally round him. He’s such a national figure. People talk about Chile being a country of poetry because of him and Gabriela Mistral and it’s kind of this common thing you can bring up with anybody and they’ll say, “Oh yeah Neruda.”

With subjective cases, participants recognize that cultural differences exist, but their level of acceptance of them varies. Participants describe their cultural encounters as “different.” This implies that they accept the way things are in Chile, albeit not like the U.S. In other instances, though, it appears that participants have not come to terms with the cultural differences and may not be fully ready to accept them. For example, Ellen is uncomfortable with gender roles in Latin America. She resolves her narrative with, “The husband will just sit there and do nothing
while she [the wife] takes the dishes and it is supposed to be completely normal.” Ellen’s use of “supposed” implies that she does not think it is normal for men to be uninvolved in domestic chores. She cannot accept this as appropriate behavior.

**Encountering cultural differences:** Participants encountered the cultural differences they discussed in the photo-narrative cases in three ways. They a) observed the differences, b) personally experienced the differences through their own interaction or participant observation, or c) personally experienced the differences and then had them reinforced by conversing with a Chilean, i.e. a cultural insider. Examples of each type of cultural encounter follow.

Frederick observed a concrete wall topped with shards of glass when walking by it each day near his house (Figure 4-7). He did not go out of his way to see the wall. It is something he noticed on the street where he lived and in other streets during his daily routine. Chris, on the other hand, personally experienced the tension between modern values and traditional social and religious values through attending church and visiting a holy site in Santiago (Figure 4-8). His intentional interactions and personal interests led him to draw conclusions about the issue. He stated, “For the older generation, this was still a holy site. For the younger generation, it had lost all of its sacred meaning and it had become a place for the profane.” Finally, Diane experienced the culture of partying and *pololeando* (dating) among Chilean youth firsthand (Figure 4-9) and then reinforced her impressions when conversing with her host mother. “My host mom will always ask me [the morning after going out to a club], ‘Oh, did you hook up with someone last night?’ It’s just very accepted. I mean that’s what you are really supposed to do when you go out.”

Among the 15 photo-narrative cases, the three types of cultural encounter were evenly split; five participants observed the cultural differences, five personally experienced them, and
five experienced and then interacted with a Chilean about them. A different pattern emerges, however, when you view these encounters through the lens of objective, subjective and blended cultural differences. The four cases dealing with objective cultural differences were observed or personally experienced by participants. The six cases dealing with blended cultural differences were encountered through personal experience or experience plus reinforcement by a Chilean. The five cases of subjective culture were noted all three ways – two through observation, two through personal experience, and one through experience plus discussion with or reinforcement by a Chilean.

**Participants’ roles in learning about cultural differences:** Participants played different roles in their intercultural learning; some participants actively sought out intercultural knowledge while others were more passive about acquiring knowledge. Active learners were those who interacted and engaged with cultural differences in some depth, either through personally experiencing the differences or through participant observation. Passive learners observed cultural differences, but they did not engage with them. Moreover, whether a participant was passive or active learner led to differences in how he/she made sense of these differences. Passive learners described and evaluated their experiences, while active learners described, evaluated, and interpreted their experiences. Knowledge about objective and subjective issues tended to be acquired passively, while learning about blended issues was an active process.

Three of the four objective cases deal with issues that the participants passively observed through their everyday routines without specifically seeking them out. In the fourth case, the participant showed more active learning in that he engaged in the activity himself. In all cases, the participants described the cultural issue and provided an evaluation of it. The participants did not attempt to interpret the cultural difference, such as explaining why it might exist or why it is
different from the U.S. Frederick’s reaction, for example, to the prevalence of security walls (Figure 4-7) is that they “describe Chile very well….It’s really protective I guess.” He does not attempt to explain why the walls are so prevalent or might be necessary. Gavin’s narrative about his photo of a Catholic Church (Figure 4-10) is similar. “I think on the larger level it just represents to me how big the Catholic Church here is. I’m not sure the exact percentage of Catholics that live here, but it’s ridiculously high.” In my follow-up questions to his narrative, Gavin states that his host family has become disillusioned with the Catholic Church and no longer attends mass, and that he has noticed no evidence of the Catholic religion in his classes at a Catholic university. He does not attempt to interpret these issues in light of his statement that Chile has a high percentage of Catholics, nor does he really consider what it means to be Catholic in Chile.

With blended issues, participants were mainly active learners. They learned about and engaged cultural differences outside their daily routines as study abroad students. They were able to describe, evaluate and interpret (to some extent) what they encountered. Ellen’s discussion of Chilean eating habits, discussed earlier, is an example of this. She has noticed differences in eating habits and attempts to explain why they exist, though she is not completely satisfied with her explanation. Chris’ photo-narrative of the social attitudes toward the struggle of the Mapuche, an indigenous group in Chile, provides another example (Figure 4-11). For Chris, the Mapuche issue comes up on three occasions – while on a visit to the Museum of Pre-Columbian Art, at a tour of La Moneda, and at his internship at a non-profit organization. He has discussed the issue with Chileans and comes to his own conclusions about the situation, drawing comparisons with the U.S. and to other Latin American countries. His interpretation of the situation appears in the following excerpt,
Chris. It’s challenging to legitimize the [Mapuche] culture, but delegitimize the people’s demands. The effect is to sort of make the Mapuche this cultural icon that you see on coins or you see in museums, but the people themselves aren’t respected. Respecting the Mapuche culture, but not the Mapuche people is almost a way of just subordinating them. And it’s something of course that we do in the United States with our own Native American culture and with every minority culture in the United States there is that tendency, but it seems very strong here.

The one exception to participants being able to describe, interpret, and evaluate blended cultural differences is Gavin’s photo-narrative about outdoor markets, described previously in the structural analysis section. He is able to describe and evaluate his experience at the market, but he does not fully interpret it and he exhibits an ethnocentric perspective (Figure 4-12).

In the subjective cases, participants were mainly passive learners. In four of the five instances, they learned about the differences through observation or hearing conversations among Chileans. In the fifth case, the participant had a personal experience interacting and conversing with a Chilean about the difference, making her an active learner. The passive learners were able to describe and evaluate the intercultural situations, but they did not really interpret them in light of Chilean culture. This lack of interpretation is somewhat different from that in the objective cases, as the participants in the subjective cases were at least intellectually engaged with issue. They seemed interested in trying to figure things out, but they had not taken the next step to interpretation. For example, Brian is intrigued with the prevalence of graffiti on walls throughout the city and the effect of this graffiti on passersby (Figure 4-13). He is aware that not all people will react to the graffiti in the same way, which is an important attitude for developing intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). He has not, however, taken the step to interpret why Chileans use graffiti as a means of communication and what purpose it might serve.

**Synthesis:** The use of guiding questions to interpret how participants experienced cultural differences led to some intriguing results (Table 4-5). The objective photo-narratives are
characterized by passive learning through observation and personal experience. Participants described and evaluated cultural differences, but they exhibited a certain lack of engagement and expressed fairly neutral evaluations. Subjective photo-narratives mostly exhibit passive learning carried out through observation and personal experience. Participants described and evaluated cultural differences and they seemed intellectually engaged in trying to figure out Chilean culture. They evaluated their experiences as “different” and may have viewed them from an ethnocentric perspective. Blended photo-narratives showed the most active learning. Participants learned about cultural differences through personal experience or personal experience plus reinforcement by a cultural insider. They were emotionally affected by cultural differences and were intellectually engaged in describing, interpreting and evaluating the differences.

The experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) may account for these results. To learn from their intercultural encounters, participants need to grasp an experience and then transform it. Grasping the experience is accomplished through concrete experience or abstract conceptualization, while transformation results from reflective observation or active experimentation. In addition, each participant has his/her preferred learning style. Photo-narrative cases where participants describe and evaluate cultural differences, but do not interpret them, may lack the transformation necessary for learning. Or, the participants may not have fully grasped the experiences in the first place and thus are not able to interpret or reflect upon them deeply (Moon, 2004). Participants describing subjective cultural differences, for example, have recognized that subtle cultural issues exist, but they may not have had sufficiently complex interactions with Chileans (Hammer et al., 2003) to allow them to fully grasp these differences. With an incomplete understanding of the situation, they struggle to interpret what the
intercultural differences mean and cannot move beyond an ethnocentric stance. On the other hand, participants from the objective cases have experienced or conceptualized cultural differences, but they have not transformed the differences effectively. In fact, most of the issues that participants portray as objective in nature could be transformed into subjective and blended issues upon deep reflection. These participants may need more support to reflect upon their experiences (Moon, 2004; Savicki, 2008; Vande Berg, 2007). Blended cases probably exhibit the most successful experiential learning cycle. In these cases, participants have fully grasped the cultural differences and have transformed them. Therefore, they view cultural differences as complicated mixtures of subjective and objective issues through an ethnorelative lens.

It is important to consider how the photo elicitation activity itself might have influenced the results. The collection of photo elicitation data was carried out during the first two months of the semester abroad. At this time in the semester, participants may not have had sufficient opportunity to interact with Chilean culture in complex, meaningful ways (Hammer et al., 2003). By a later point in the semester, participants might have completed the full experiential learning cycle or gone through it a few more times. In addition, the structure of the photo elicitation activity may not have meshed with participants’ individual learning styles (Kolb, 1984). Some participants, for example, might have preferred a group project dealing with cultural differences instead of the individualized photo elicitation activity.

**Photo-narrative relationship**

To fully comprehend the photo-narrative relationship, I interrogated each photo-narrative case with two questions.

- How do the object of the photo and the content of the narrative relate to one another?
- What roles do the photo and the narrative play in the creation of meaning related to cultural differences?
Responses to these questions provide an in depth understanding of the relationship between photos and narratives and how the two forms of data contribute to the participants’ creation of meaning.

**Relation of objects of the photos and the content of the narratives:** To interpret the photo-narrative relationship, it was useful for me to view the cases as existing on a continuum with objective and subjective situations on opposite ends and blended cases in the middle. At the objective end of the continuum, the photos directly illustrate the content of the narratives. Gavin’s narrative about traditional dances in Chile is illustrated by school children dancing the Chilean national dance (Figure 4-14), while Frederick’s story about riding micros is coupled with an interior shot of a micro (Figure 4-15). As the continuum moves towards blended and subjective cases, the objects of the photos tend to become less representative of the specific content of the narratives. As a consequence, the photo-narrative relationship becomes increasingly indirect. Diane’s photo of a couple kissing in the distance represents the pololo (boyfriend-girlfriend) relationship, but her story is not about the specific couple she photographed (Figure 4-9). Instead, the couple serves as a symbol of the differences in dating culture that she has noticed. Ellen’s photo of a woman shopping for vegetables (Figure 4-16) at an outdoor market is paired with her narrative related to women’s roles in Chilean society. The woman, engaged in a domestic activity, is not a character in Ellen’s story. Rather, the woman represents Chilean women’s roles as a whole.

The photos on the objective end of the continuum are the cultural differences discussed in the narratives, while the photos toward the blended and subjective parts of the continuum are starting points for the discussion of cultural differences. The blended and subjective differences are conceptually much larger and more complex than the pictured object(s) and are difficult to
represent in a concrete two-dimensional photo. Therefore, the less direct the photo-narrative relationship, the more important the narrative in contributing to meaning.

I came to a similar conclusion by examining how and in what ways the narratives refer to the photos. All of the narratives briefly refer to the existence of the photos, but they do not describe them in any real detail. Despite this, one cannot read a narrative without perceiving that a photo is part of the story. Thus, the narratives are tied to the existence of the photo; the narratives exist because the photos exist. The photos, however, are not necessarily tied to the narratives. They exist in and of themselves without an accompanying narrative. One could view a photo and have no idea that a corresponding narrative exists. Without access to the narrative, a viewer ascribes his/her own meaning to the photo. It is only through reading the narrative that we gain knowledge of the participant’s constructed meaning. As the continuum progresses from objective to subjective cases, the information conveyed in the narrative becomes more and more important for understanding participants’ experiences of cultural differences.

**Roles of the photos and the narratives in the creation of meaning:** The interpretation of the 15 photo-narrative cases revealed that the photos contribute to meaning in three ways. The photos: a) visually represent the content of the narratives, b) provide supplementary information not discussed in the narratives, or c) symbolically or abstractly represent the content of the narratives. Photos that fall into category A affirm meaning about cultural differences, while those that fall into C are symbolic of cultural differences. In the previous section, I discussed how photos can both visually affirm and symbolically portray meaning conveyed by the narratives. I have not yet touched upon how a photo can provide supplementary meaning (category B), so I do that next.
The narratives often lack the detailed orientation information that would set the context of the story. Photos fill in these missing details, supplementing the narratives’ content. Chris’ narrative about the tension between modernization and traditional social and religious values is accompanied by a photo of a statue of the Virgin Mary on San Cristobal Hill overlooking Santiago (Figure 4-8). He refers to the Virgin Mary in his narrative and describes some aspects of the hill, but he never mentions that there is a statue of the Virgin Mary on the hill. The photo provides this key piece of information.

Chris. The interesting thing is that the San Cristobal Hill is really a pilgrimage site. It’s where the Virgin Mary came. It’s one of the appearances of the Virgin Mary before man. It is a sacrosanct place. It’s a holy place and there are telephone towers on the side. There are about five or six. This is probably one of the holiest sites in Chile because this is like our Lady of Guadalupe. I mean this is the Virgin Mary coming down to earth before man. And yet it’s sort of Our Lady of the Telephone Tower. There are telephone towers everywhere.

Narratives contribute to meaning about cultural differences in three ways. They a) contribute participants’ emotions and evaluations, b) provide supplementary information not pictured in the photos, or c) imbue the photos with new meaning. All of the narratives contribute the participants’ emotions and evaluations about cultural differences (category A). This kind of information is impossible to discern from the photos themselves. The results of the structural analysis of the narratives as well as the results about participants’ stances vis-à-vis the cultural differences provide considerable evidence of this.

The narratives’ contribution of supplementary meaning (category B) is illustrated by Frederick’s photo-narrative about a concrete wall with broken glass on top of it (Figure 4-6). The photo shows the concrete wall, but his narrative adds the information that walls and other security measures are prevalent throughout Valparaiso. He states, “It is one of the things that just struck me when I first got here. There are walls everywhere and there is barbed wire and glass and nails everywhere.” I first noted that narratives provide supplementary information not
pictured in the photos when analyzing the content of the photos. It was not until interpreting the photo-narrative relationship, however, that I noticed a pattern to this phenomenon. All of the objective cases and about half of the blended cases have narratives that provide supplementary information.

Content analysis of the photos also led me to consider that narratives can imbue the photos with new meaning (category C). The subjective cases and about half of the blended cases have narratives that impart additional layers of meaning; meaning that goes beyond the object pictured in the photo. Brian’s photo-narrative about the fish sculpture at Neruda’s home, Isla Negra, is an excellent case in point. In addition, it is a good example of how the photo’s external narrative (Banks, 2001) cannot be understood without its accompanying narrative, supporting my assertion that the photos and narratives are integrated photo-narrative sets, as opposed to separate pieces of data. I discuss this case in some detail next. The narrative is provided below. See Figure 4-6 for the photo.

Brian. Well so this is the fish that’s kind of symbolic of Neruda and his work. I guess he designed it, he drew it and then someone else made this sculpture. But all over la Isla Negra and all over his house, is this symbol and then on his gravestone. It’s kind of iconic of him. I don’t know I’ve just been…I found it very interesting the role of Neruda in Chile and just the power that he has, the kind of connecting power that people seem to kind of rally round him, and he’s such a national figure. Everybody…people talk about Chile being a country of poetry because of him and Gabriela Mistral and it’s kind of this common thing you can bring up with anybody and they’ll say, “Oh yeah Neruda.” At least that’s been my experience because I like Neruda’s work a lot and so I speak up and say, “What do you think about Neruda?” and people are like, “Oh yeah he’s great.” At least that’s been my experience because I like Neruda’s work a lot and so I speak up and say, “What do you think about Neruda?” and people are like, “Oh yeah he’s great.” But it’s more than his poetry because people talk about how great he is regardless of his work. It’s like to have a figure like that, that the whole country…it kind of brings everybody together and that’s a feeling I get at least is that he’s a person that everybody…it’s kind of like he’s a concept more than a person. It’s like people…that idea of Neruda, idea of something Chilean, something that’s theirs, people really kind of like that a lot and rally behind it. So to see something like this, that to me if I hadn’t known the story behind it, it would just be this kind of funny looking sculpture and by seeing through the eyes of a Chilean it’s this you know strong…to me a strong cultural
kind of unifying force. To me that’s very…culture gets interesting when you think about that looking through my lens it’s one thing and through their lens it’s something completely different and it’s something much more profound and really attached to all this history. It has all these other connotations.

To start the discussion, I am going to imagine that I am not familiar with the sculpture in Brian’s photo and have not read his accompanying narrative above. As such, I do not recognize the sculpture. I am, however, familiar with sculptures in general and might assume that the photo deals with Chilean art. If I am familiar with the sculpture, which represents the symbol that Neruda chose to represent himself, I might assume the photo is about Neruda or his poetry. After reading the narrative, I realize that Brian’s constructed meaning of the photo (i.e. his external narrative) has nothing to do with Chilean art. And while Brian is interested in Neruda, he is mainly interested in Neruda’s role as a Chilean national icon. Brian uses the photo as a starting point for discussing cultural symbols in general and how they are difficult to recognize, much less interpret, without some sort of cultural context or understanding. As a reader I can now take the narrative a step further by considering how many symbols I might not recognize when visiting a foreign country or even within my own country when experiencing a cultural milieu other than my own.

In the end, Brian’s narrative has led me to view the fish sculpture with new meaning; a meaning that is more abstract than its official representation of Neruda. The sculpture now represents cultural symbols writ large and the role that symbols play in understanding subjective culture. The narrative has imbued the photo with a second layer of meaning about the role of cultural symbols. Recognizing and understanding cultural symbols is at the heart of developing the specific cultural knowledge required for intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

**Synthesis:** In the preceding section, I discussed the relationship between the object of the photos and the content of the narratives. The representativeness of the photos is linked to the
types of cultural differences they are intended to depict. The photos on the objective end of the continuum depict the actual cultural differences discussed in the narratives, while the photos toward the blended and subjective parts of the continuum are symbolic starting points for the discussion of cultural differences. As the continuum progresses from objective to subjective cases, the information conveyed in the narratives becomes more and more important for understanding participants’ experiences of cultural differences.

It is interesting to compare how these results relate to those of photo analysis. I first noted the degree to which the photos do or do not visually represent cultural differences when completing the reviewing step of photo analysis. The reviewing results and the results of the guiding questions both conclude that, on the whole, the representativeness of the photos is related to the types of cultural differences they are intended to depict. Examining this pattern in the photo-narrative relationship in the 15 cases, however, added a deeper level of understanding by revealing the implications for meaning-making. The less direct the photo-narrative relationship, the more important the role of the narrative in conveying meaning. This is an example of how triangulation of analytic methods can confirm results as well as lead to complementary insights.

The photos and narratives confer specific types of meaning. The photos: a) visually represent the content of the narratives, b) provide supplementary information not mentioned in the narratives, or c) symbolically or abstractly represent the content of the narratives. Meanwhile, the narratives a) contribute participants’ emotions and evaluations, b) provide supplementary information not pictured in the photos, or c) imbue the photos with new meaning. The meanings contributed by the photos and narratives are complementary in nature. For each case, the two forms of data function as an integrated whole to construct the photo-narrative’s
storyline. In some cases, such as Brian’s photo-narrative about Neruda’s sculpture, a new story is created that reaches beyond the limits of the photo-narrative. Now, I leave the photo-narratives behind to discuss the participants’ reflective journals.

**Narratives of Cultural Adaptation**

I used structural analysis (Labov, 1997) to understand the organization of participants’ reflective journals about adapting to cultural differences while studying in Chile. During analysis, I paid close attention to how the narratives’ organization reflected participants’ cultural adaptation and what this implied for their intercultural sensitivity. I also considered how the structure of the journals differed from that of the photo elicitation narratives. In the upcoming section, I describe the organization of the eight journals by drawing upon quotes from the journal text. An example of my structural analysis of one of the cultural adaptation journals appears in Table 4-7. After discussing the structural analysis findings, I present the results of thematically analyzing the content of the journals.

**Organization of Cultural Adaptation Narratives**

Participants start their journals of cultural adaptation with introductory statements that briefly summarize the content of their narratives. In most cases, these abstract statements consist of the first few sentences of the stories. Gavin opens, “I think the times when I exhibit the most tolerance with Chilean society are in the academic setting,” while Diane writes, “The situation that I’m going to describe in which I’ve exhibited flexibility is related to the situation in which I haven’t exhibited flexibility.” Chris’ introductions, on the other hand, consist of titles for each journal. The title for his journal about exhibiting tolerance and flexibility of Chilean culture is, “My good response: machismo and friendship.” Brian’s story of cultural tolerance is the only one of the journals that does not contain an introductory statement. Instead, he immediately
starts his story with a plot description. Brian typed the journal guidelines at the top of his journal entry, so perhaps he thought introductory information was unnecessary.

Orientation information, such as the time and place of events, is fairly scarce in participants’ journals of cultural adaptation. When provided, such information is embedded in plot descriptions. Phrases like “when arriving to,” “when I first got to Chile,” “last Friday,” and “in the first few weeks of classes” are used by participants to set the scene for the plot. These short phrases indicate that participants have adapted (or not) to a cultural difference over a period of time. In fact, several journals describe a series of interactions or observations throughout the semester, as opposed to a single event. Participants’ descriptions of cultural adaptation as a process over a period of time fits with the idea that the development of intercultural competence is ongoing (Deardorff, 2006) and associated with longer stays abroad (Dwyer, 2004).

Orientation information provided in the journals differs from that in the photo narratives where specific orientation statements were common and described a particular moment when the photos were taken.

Participants’ plot descriptions detail their intercultural encounters, in particular, their own actions and the actions of others. Participants present this information in a mainly straightforward way. Chris explains, “I got a seven, the highest grade [in my class], on my first International Relations test. The test was very difficult for my Chilean classmates, at least that is what the professor told me at the beginning of class.” Diane discusses classroom practices at her university, “In one of my classes where the teacher passes an attendance list sometimes students arrive to class, stay for a little bit, sign the attendance list, and then leave.” As with the photo elicitation narratives, the use of certain words in plot descriptions suggests participants’ feelings
or opinions. In the following excerpt, Gavin’s use of the word “reluctantly” shows that he may not have completely adapted to the Chilean classroom environment, despite stating that he has.

Gavin. One thing that I have learned to tolerate, however reluctantly, is the apparent disinterest of the students in learning the material presented in class. Students show up 15 to 20 minutes late to class, and while most of the students pay attention and take notes and ask questions, there seems to be a constant background noise of side conversations going on in the class. This absolutely never happens at my college where the students pay much closer attention to what the professor is saying.

The evaluative slant of participants’ plot descriptions in their journals, however, is not as pronounced as in the photo elicitation narratives. This relative lack of evaluation in the journals’ plots may be due to the format of collecting data with journals. The journal guidelines asked participants to separately describe, interpret and evaluate their cultural adaptation process. Also, they had the opportunity to plan, write, and then re-write their responses. This reflective writing process allowed participants to process or work through some of the tension they felt from cultural adaptation (Wagner & Magistrale, 1995). Thus, the journals’ plot descriptions are mostly straightforward and linear, with fairly separate plot descriptions and evaluations. The photo elicitation interviews, on the other hand, required that participants be spontaneous in their responses. They attempted to resolve their intercultural tensions orally and in the moment. This resulted in a non-linear organization that intertwined plot descriptions and evaluations. In short, the format of the data collection activity (journals vs. interviews) influenced the structure of narratives produced by participants.

Participants’ evaluation statements, present in all of the journals, contain two types of information that modify or evaluate the plots. First, evaluations provide the participants’ personal reactions, emotions, feelings, and opinions about their cultural adaptation. This is where we gain insight on the participants’ lived experiences of cultural differences. Chris emotes, “I was angry,” and Diane relates, “For the most part I am thrilled with the classes I am
taking here content-wise they are very good, but at times I’m appalled by the behavior of students while in class.” Second, evaluations offer participants’ interpretation, conjecture, or explanation for their feelings and actions. Brian explains how and why he came to terms with the pronunciation of his name in Chile,

Brian. At first this [the pronunciation of my name] bothered me, as I felt it should either be one or the other [Spanish or English], not a mixture of the two, but gradually I began to exhibit adaptability, flexibility, and even enjoyment of this new name. To me, language is undoubtedly one of the deepest pieces of culture, and therefore the mixture of the two languages is also a mixture of two cultures. To me, the creation of this new name was a true example of an *intercambio*, an interchange between two distinct cultures in which each brings something that makes sense to them, and somewhere in that in-between space, something new is created. I believe I became more tolerant of the “mispronunciation” because I realized it was not really a mispronunciation, but rather a fusion of languages and cultures

Likewise, Gavin writes about why he reacted the way he did to the Chilean classroom environment,

Gavin. In terms of my feelings about the difference in the attention level of the students and their practice of arriving late and talking while the professor is speaking, I would say initially I was simply surprised because this is seen as incredibly rude according to what I am used to. Also, this depends a lot on the individual professor, because I have one professor that is very perturbed by this, and shows it, but students continue to come late. My next emotion was, more than anything, contempt because I feel that they are not giving the effort that they could. In any society, but especially one in which so many do not have access to education, I see it as a terrible waste to not take absolutely full advantage of the opportunity to go to one of the best universities in Chile.

Participants’ evaluations of their cultural adaptation signal their intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993) in regards to the cultural differences at hand, as was the case in the photo narratives. In the previous two quotes, for example, Brian accepts the pronunciation of his name, an ethnorelative position, while Gavin assesses the Chilean classroom through the lens of his experiences in the U.S.; an ethnocentric position.

Participants end their journal entries in a variety of ways. Two of the participants finish their intolerant journals with straightforward evaluations that show their lack of personal
resolution of the situation at hand. Chris describes how he felt after an interaction with a Chilean classmate, “All I could think was, ‘How unbearable, insincere, and what poor upbringing.’” Other participants complete their stories with resolution statements that attempt to interpret why they have or have not been able to adapt. Gavin explains why he is not tolerant of littering in Chile, “I can’t excuse these people based on financial need, because even if you don’t have money, you can still have class, and part of that is taking care of the place in which you and others live.” Finally, Diane ends one of her journals with a coda that returns the narrative to the present. In the last sentence of her tolerance narrative, she considers how her success in adapting to the Chilean classroom environment might affect her after returning to the U.S. “I hope this lax attitude of mine goes away once I’m at Westview because if you’re more than five minutes late [to class] it’s basically considered rude.”

The organization of participants’ journals reflected their processes of cultural adaptation as well as their intercultural sensitivity. In the journals, plot descriptions are the cultural differences to which participants have or have not adapted, while evaluations explain how and why they have or have not adapted. Participants’ evaluations provide the richest data for addressing my study’s research questions, as was the case for the photo narratives. These statements reveal participants’ orientation toward cultural differences. We learn whether U.S. culture is central to a participant’s reality or if he/she can experience cultural differences in the context of Chilean culture (Bennett, 1993). The act of writing reflective journals allowed participants the opportunity to work through some of the tension they felt from adapting to cultural differences (Wagner & Magistrale, 1995). They were thus able to separate their evaluations from their descriptions of cultural differences. As a result, the journals tend to be straightforward and linear narratives, unlike the oral narratives of cultural differences. Finally,
participants embed their orientations in plot descriptions that describe a series of encounters and observations over the course of the semester that led to cultural adaptation (or not). This narrative feature reflects the processual nature of developing intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) and the time it takes to develop interculturally (Dwyer, 2004).

Content of Narratives of Cultural Adaptation

Thematic analysis of the journals (Creswell, 2008) resulted in three themes: a) the cultural differences that participants did and did not tolerate, b) how participants adapted to and experienced these differences, and c) how participants perceived their intercultural communication and behavior. First, I review the cultural differences and then I discuss the latter two themes according to when participants exhibited tolerance, flexibility or adaptability in adapting to Chilean culture and when they did not.

Cultural differences: Participants discussed six Chilean culture differences in their journals. The most common topic was university culture, in particular Chilean students’ behavior in the classroom and a lack of punctuality. Participants also wrote about linguistic issues, the influence of U.S. culture on Chile, littering and garbage disposal, and forging friendships/social relations with Chileans. The cultural tolerance journals dealt with university culture, linguistic issues, and forging friendships with Chileans. The intolerant journals discussed university culture, the influence of U.S. culture on Chile, littering and garbage disposal, and forging friendships with Chileans. Interestingly, Diane and Chris wrote about essentially the same topic in each of their journal entries, but from the two opposing perspectives (i.e. tolerance vs. intolerance). Diane wrote about university culture (when she did and did not tolerate it) and Chris covered social relationships with Chilean peers (when he did and did not have success in interacting with peers). Brian wrote about linguistic issues and the influence of U.S. culture in Chile, while Gavin discussed littering and university culture.
**Intolerance of cultural differences:** Participants’ opinions of the cultural differences that they did not tolerate were overwhelmingly negative. Participants were highly critical of the influence of U.S. culture on Chile, littering and garbage disposal in Chile, forging friendships with Chileans, and Chilean students’ behavior in the classroom. In interpreting why they were not tolerant, participants described the cultural differences as dishonest, absurd, not proper, unbearable, unacceptable, and disrespectful. Diane wrote, “To me, those students that don’t go to class are showing a lack of respect for their fellow students.” Brian reacted to often seeing non-Chileans in advertisements for clothing and beauty products, “I see this kind of situation as having pretty deep roots in the Chilean culture, and it has definitely been hard for me to exhibit tolerance for it. On a very basic level I disagree with the message it sends.”

Participants’ personal reactions about the cultural differences they did not tolerate were equally negative. They experienced deep emotional responses, feeling angry, sad, bothered, frustrated, and incredulous. “It saddens me to see people, out of laziness or simply disinterest, throwing garbage and taking away from the beauty of the area in which they live,” Gavin writes about littering in Chile. Chris meanwhile reveals hurt and anger about his interactions (or lack thereof) with Chilean classmates. “Of course, I don’t have friends in this class. I don’t interest them, maybe because of my frequent participation in discussions. Then, after two months of silence, I was surprised to find so many friends after getting back my test.”

Participants’ personal opinions and emotional responses provoked internal reactions marked by conflict, struggle, and disagreement. Participants questioned and were unable to excuse the cultural differences, which they viewed as problematic and a hindrance. They also exhibited a sense of powerlessness and lack of control. Brian explains why he struggles with the influence of U.S. popular culture on Chile, “It’s hard for me to see how and why another culture
could infiltrate the Chilean one so deeply that even deep issues like conception of beauty changed.” Diane writes about her internal lack of adaption to aspects of university culture,

Diane. At first it was hard for me to think of a situation in which I have not been able to adapt or am resistant to adapting, but I realized that there are many situations in which while other people may think that I’m tolerant and have adapted to that aspect of Chilean culture, internally I have not.

Participants seem stuck in their lack of tolerance for cultural differences. They cannot move beyond the differences, view them in a relative light, or interpret why they exist. In terms of the DMIS (Bennett, 1993), participants exhibit low levels of intercultural sensitivity. This means that they may experience difficulty in engaging in interculturally competent behavior and communication when these differences are apparent.

**Tolerance of cultural differences:** Participants’ experiences of the cultural differences that they did tolerate reflected a sense of before and after. They compared their initial reactions to cultural differences with their reactions as time went on, exhibiting intolerance at first and later showing tolerance. Participants also expressed perspective and discerned context for the issues at hand. Gavin explains how he first viewed Chilean students’ late arrival to class and how his thinking changed, “It would be unthinkable [in the U.S.] to arrive to a class 20 minutes late and interrupt the professor completely to enter the class. So at first [I felt] surprise, until I realized that it was not all that uncommon of a practice.” Brian writes about his acceptance of the mispronunciation of his name, “I came to view that [the mispronunciation] as a tiny, beautiful example of creative cultural exchange rather than a minor daily annoyance.”

In the tolerant journal entries, participants express a transformation in their thinking. This transformation was provoked by a conscious realization that they should reframe their viewpoint about the cultural differences they could not tolerate. This change in approach then led to
adaptation. Diane writes about how she changed her way of dealing with a lack of punctuality for a group project for class,

   Diane. I realized that instead of getting angry, I should just get used to it. So one day we had planned to meet at around 10 a.m. in the morning. I arrived at around 10:15 and still no one. I had brought my laptop so that I could work. I stayed at the library working on my own, and finally I saw someone from my group. Two members of my group, who are also my friends, had arrived around 11:30 and had started working, so I went to join them. I was not angry at them at all that they had arrived so late.

Adapting, however, was not necessarily easy, nor was it always the participants’ first instinct. Chris relates that while he really wanted to argue with his Chilean language partner after a perceived insult, he decided to explain his perspective instead.

   Chris. Of course I was angry after listening to his comments. I wanted to interrogate him to unveil his ignorance about my culture and my emotions, but I simply decided to explain my perspective about the difficulty of integrating into social groups here because I have found nothing but closed doors, which suggest not just the self-satisfaction of the so called cuicas [elites], but also the closed nature of social classes and of Chilean society…In the end, I think it was a successful conversation because I explained my critique of Chilean society, without offending my Chilean acquaintance (not my friend) and without destroying our amiable relationship, which apparently is not a real friendship.

Meanwhile, Gavin appears more worn down by Chilean student behavior rather than fully adapted to it. “I adapted in the sense that I have experienced it [arriving late and talking in class] so many times that it really doesn’t bother me that much.”

   Participants who tolerate cultural differences have moved beyond any negative emotions they may have once had about the differences. They view the differences in a relative light and understand that these differences require new approaches to communication and behavior. In terms of the DMIS (Bennett, 1993), participants exhibit high levels of intercultural sensitivity. This means that they can likely engage in interculturally competent behavior and communication when these differences are in play.
Perceptions of communication and behavior: I mentioned in Chapter 3 that it was difficult to analyze the content of the journals for participants’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior. This was because not all of the journals dealt with the participants’ own communication and behavior and when they did, the participants did not provide a lot of insight on their actions. I did come to some findings, however, and I present them here.

In their journal entries dealing with intolerance, Diane and Chris acknowledged their inability to conform to the social norms of Chilean university students. Both participants provided examples of when they did not buckle under social pressure from their Chilean peers and thus when they did not behave or communicate as would be expected in the Chilean context. Diane discussed an incident where she was the only student who completed the homework in one of her classes. She refused to go along with her classmates’ attempt to convince the teacher that no homework was due that day. Meanwhile, Chris declined to give his correct exam answers to a classmate who wanted to use them for studying; a classmate to whom he had never spoken to previously and who he felt approached him only because of his good grade on the exam. Chris and Diane expressed being upset by what they perceived as insincerity and dishonesty on the part of their Chilean peers. They also seemed a bit confused and frustrated by the fact that their hard work and good grades did not pay off. In these situations, Chris and Diane both acted as they would have in the U.S. university context. They followed their first instinct for how a university student should communicate and behave, but U.S. students and Chilean students behave quite differently in the classroom environment. As it turned out, Chris and Diane did not show high levels of intercultural competence in the Chilean context.
In their tolerance journal entries, Diane, Chris, and Brian discussed how they were able to come to terms with aspects of Chilean culture. In each journal, the participants recognized that they did something right in the Chilean context. Their behavior and communication resulted from changing their thinking. Diane altered her expectations of classmates arriving to meetings on time, while Chris restrained himself from arguing with his Chilean language partner in favor of an alternative course of action. Likewise, Brian started pronouncing his first name as Chileans did. The three participants seemed happy with their interactions, describing them as successful, no longer bothersome, and enjoyable. In each incident, the participants were aware that they had changed their communication and behavior. They discussed a process, even if very brief, during which they thought about what would be their best course of action. Then, they proactively adapted their actions to conform to the Chilean context. In the long run, they exhibited intercultural competence.

The principal theme in the journals as related to communication and behavior is personal agency. The two intolerant journals discussed here, from Chris and Diane, illustrate a lack of agency. Both participants maintained the status quo and did not change their American communication and behavior. They felt compelled to act on their first instinct. Their lack of agency resulted in no external changes in behavior and communication. The three tolerant cases, on the other hand, demonstrate personal agency. In these situations, Diane, Chris, and Brian purposely enacted alternative courses of action to achieve their goals. Their agency resulted in adaptation and external changes in behavior and communication; changes that were more effective and appropriate for the Chilean context.

**Synthesis:** Thematic analysis of the journals showed that participants expressed a sense of perspective and context in their tolerant situations, indicating that they had “turned the corner”
on issues that at one time bothered them. The intolerant situations, however, provoked deep, negative reactions that left participants feeling frustrated and even angry. I posit that the tolerant journals provide real-life examples of the informed frame of reference shift that forms part of the Process Model for Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006). In these journals, participants show adaptability and flexibility in the face of cultural differences. Interestingly, the informed frame of reference shift does not appear to be uniform; the participants do not view all aspects of Chilean culture from an ethnorelative perspective. Also, being flexible and adaptable in one situation does not appear to guarantee such in another. Instead, the shift appears to be situational and contextual. The cases of Diane and Chris, who wrote about the same aspect of Chilean culture in each of their two journals, provide examples of this.

Personal agency plays an important role in the informed frame of reference shift. The tolerant journals indicate that the shift occurs after a conscious internal thought process that leads participants to purposely change their patterns of behavior and communication. The intolerant journals invoke a lack of agency. Participants have not made any changes to their communication and behavior and seem caught up, even stuck, in the negative emotions resulting from their encounters. A variety of academic disciplines have studied agency, such as educational psychology (Koro-Ljungberg, M., Bussing, R., & Cornwell, 2010; Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006), philosophy (Stuart, 2002), teaching and learning (Walter & Gerson, 2007) among others. I would situate my results as related to those of educational psychology and teaching and learning. In particular, personal agency shares some characteristics with the adaptability and flexibility required for intercultural competence, thus invoking an openness or willingness to change. The concept, however, goes beyond an openness to change, implying that purpose, choice, and action are involved (Walter & Gerson, 2007). Moreover, there appears to be an
important aspect of motivation to personal agency. For the purposes of my study, I define personal agency as a motivation to enact purposeful change.

The journals also illustrate how study abroad students learn from their experiences. Kolb (1984) emphasizes that learning is a process. This process includes grasping experience and transforming it into knowledge. Indeed, the tolerant journals describe situations where participants experienced a cultural difference and then transformed that experience into new forms of behavior and communication. These new forms of communication and behavior unlock the door to higher levels of intercultural competence. The intolerant journals, on the other hand, exhibit an incomplete experiential learning cycle or a need for “recycling” (Moon, 2004; p. 127) through the model. In the intolerant journals, participants have experienced cultural differences, but they have not transformed these experiences into new forms of behavior and communication. Transformation of experiences often results from reflection (Kolb, 1984). Learners, however, do not always come by reflection naturally (Moon, 2004) and they engage in reflection in accordance with their preferred learning style (Kolb, 1984). Thus, it is important to provide study abroad students with appropriate opportunities to improve their reflective skills. Again, it is beneficial to intervene in the intercultural learning process (Savicki, 2008; Vande Berg, 2007).

Narratives of Intercultural Competence

I used structural analysis (Labov, 1997) to understand the organization of participants’ narratives about their intercultural competence. In the upcoming section, I describe the organization of these narratives by drawing upon examples from the semi-structured interviews. An example of my structural analysis of an intercultural competence narrative appears in Table 4-8. After discussing structural analysis, I examine the content of the narratives by exploring four themes related to when participants perceived that they communicated and behaved appropriately and effectively, and when they did not.
Organization of Intercultural Competence Narratives

Participants begin their intercultural competence narratives with statements summarizing their perceptions and interpretations of their communication and behavior. These abstracts tend to be broad descriptions of opinion and are predominantly evaluative in nature. Brian starts his narrative on interacting in a class setting with, “I’d say also in the classroom I’ve come to be a little bit more successful.” Chris remarks, “I think my Spanish has improved a lot more than the others [on my program] because I’ve worked at my Spanish. I think I made much more of an effort.” Frederick has a similar opinion about his Spanish skills, “Well, I think it’s improved over time. I remember at the beginning some bad, hard experiences and even still now in some situations.” The evaluative nature of the abstracts is a unique aspect of the intercultural competence narratives. It was not evident in the photo elicitation narratives or in the journals. The existence of evaluations at the beginning of the intercultural competence narratives resonates with the conversational thread of the semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, I asked participants to describe and assess those situations when they did and did not exhibit intercultural competence.

Orientation information occurs only occasionally in participants’ narratives of intercultural competence. The great majority of the narratives have no orientation details at all. This may be explained by the fact that participants often speak in general terms about their communication and behavior, reflecting back over the course of the semester. As such, there is little specific information to provide. When participants do use orientations, they do so to describe characters in their stories or provide personal background information. Haleigh, for example, remarks, “My host father was in the military here. He was a Marine,” and Gavin provides information on his life in the U.S., “I’ve never lived in a big city. I drove my car everywhere in my home town. There isn’t a lot of public transportation.”
The plots of participants’ intercultural competence narratives consist of descriptions of their intercultural encounters. In particular, participants describe situations when they perceive that they did or did not behave and communicate according to Chilean norms. Participants also explain their understanding of Chilean norms for communication and behavior and compare them to U.S. norms. Sometimes they bring up hypothetical situations. Diane discusses her friendship with a Chilean peer,

Diane. My friend Lorena, she generalizes a lot. Instead of laughing at the generalization she’s made or catching her on it, I don’t catch her on it. In the U.S., you catch people on them [generalizations] and you challenge people. But here [in Chile] you don’t really challenge people.

Haleigh talks about when she adjusts her habits and clothing when out in public.

Haleigh. If I’m walking alone at night, I don’t walk with my iPod on or something like that. Or I don’t try to have my phone out a lot in the *micros* because anything that looks nice, it draws attention. I try not to stand out. A lot of times when I can at night, if I have a hood, I put my hood up to cover my [blond] hair.

Both Diane and Haleigh talk about general situations when they exhibited intercultural competence. A lack of specificity in describing intercultural encounters is common in this set of narratives; many of the stories do not have a concrete sequence of events. Rather, participants summarize and discuss several situations that occurred over the semester. This pattern of generalization is also evidenced by the paucity of orientation information in the narratives. One explanation for the generalized nature of the storylines is that participants were unaware of or unable to recall specific instances of communication and behavior. It could also be due to the fact that the development of intercultural competence is a process (Deardorff, 2006) based upon an accumulation of intercultural experiences and encounters. Individuals need to cycle through the Process Model of Intercultural Competence numerous times as they adapt their communication and behavior to the new cultural context.
Participants discuss their emotions, opinions, and perceptions of their intercultural competence. They evaluate how they feel about behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately. Frederick states, “I really feel confident in my Spanish and my skills as far as getting along with people. That goes great.” They also interpret why they think they were successful in their interactions. Gavin, for example, credits his ability to act appropriately in specific social situations by having observed Chilean social cues and then trying them out later. He says, “I think you just see it [a social cue], observe it, copy it up, and keep going.” In addition, participants evaluate their inappropriate or ineffective behavior and communication, critiquing their interactions and stating what they should have done instead. Chris talks about an interaction with his Chilean language partner, “If I had just shut up and smiled, and let him keep talking, I would have learned far more.” Ellen mentions a situation when she misunderstood that she should kiss a friend’s father goodbye rather than shake hands,

Ellen. One time I was over at a friend’s house and it was a group of guys and me. And we went to say bye to one of the guy’s dad’s right before we left. And between the guys, they all shook hands with the dad. So I thought I should shake hands with the dad, too. And he kind of half stood up to kiss me, half didn’t know what to do. So that was a little bit awkward. But it was because I thought that because he was someone’s dad that it was more formal.

The skills required for developing intercultural competence include the abilities to listen, observe, evaluate, analyze, interpret, and relate (Deardorff, 2006). Evidence of participants’ skills is contained in their evaluative or interpretive statements. For example, Ellen’s excerpt above shows that she committed a cultural faux pas by not giving an obligatory kiss on the cheek when leave-taking, but it also shows that she had the necessary observational and interpretive skills to pick up that something went awry in the encounter. Gavin’s reliance on social cues is another case in point. He listened to and observed Chileans’ communication and behavior and then interpreted when he should enact what he learned.
In the intercultural competence journals, as with the photo elicitation narratives, it is sometimes difficult to separate out plot descriptions from participants’ personal evaluations and perceptions. Plot descriptions and evaluations can occur within the same sentence and some participants switch back and forth between the two in quick succession. The following excerpt from Brian’s narrative about the classroom setting illustrates the relationship of these two types of statements,

Brian. As I’ve gotten to know more of them [my classmates] and gotten used to the atmosphere, I’d say I’ve had success in class - being able to participate in the discussions, feeling very competent in terms of the work that we’re doing, and on a test feeling that I can communicate basically what I’m trying to say to the professor - and then, doing very well on the test, which is very encouraging.

For the photo narratives, I suggested that the blurring of plot descriptions and evaluations was due to participants’ need to react in an immediate fashion to the cultural differences they had encountered. In those narratives, participants were dealing with the tension and disequilibrium brought up by the adapting to cultural differences (Bennett, 2008). In the intercultural competence narratives, we see much of the same phenomenon. Participants react to the tension caused by not being interculturally competent. We also see, however, the satisfaction that participants experience when they have intercultural successes. Diane’s story about making friends with her Chilean classmates demonstrates this.

Diane. I mean I haven’t been very, very successful. I'm not very popular, but I do have some good friends and I've been happy that I've been able to make those good friends. But I think it's because of my personality. I’m very outgoing. Most of the friends I've made are in my Mapuche class. And I think it’s because of how open I was, open to hear from them and what they were doing, and I find what they're doing fascinating. Instead of coming in and being like, "Yeah, this is what I do in the States. Oh, yeah, I'm in all these clubs and..." No, I listen to what they do and all of them do interesting things. And then, I think also being more free because, at the beginning, I was thinking, "Okay, I'll have all these extra-curriculars, this and that." But then I had to drop all of them, all of the extra-curriculars, and now I have much more free time, which is good though. After class, that's how I got close to them, we'd go out to eat or we'd hang out, we go to one of my friend’s houses. So with all that free time, that's what's helped me talk to them more and be just centered on, basically, my classes. That's how they are
So it's basically centered on your classes and you don't have extracurriculars. So I guess being more like them has helped me.

Participants bring a close to their narratives with both resolution statements and codas. Resolutions are the last sentence of about three-quarters of the intercultural competence stories. These phrases summarize participants’ rationale for their communication and behavior, whether competent or incompetent. Haleigh, for example, describes how she changes her style of clothing for going out at night. In the last sentence of the following excerpt, she resolves the storyline by summarizing why and how she changes her style.

Haleigh. I went out and bought some high-top sneakers and I got a banano, a fanny pack. At home I always laugh at my grandma for using one, but here they use them in the clubs. It’s considered the best way to go dancing because it stays on you. You don’t have to worry about it. I’m like, “That’s so smart,” but if I wore this in the U.S. I would be kicked out of the club. I’ve definitely changed my style of what I would wear out. Like if I’m going out at home, I’m going out in a dress and stilettos and dressed up to go to the bar or a house party or whatever. If it’s a Friday night here I’m going to roll with what I was wearing to class. I wear sneakers, the more comfortable the better because you’re going to dance all night. You just kind of observe how everyone else does it and then try to understand why they do it that way and then mimic them if it is comfortable.

Many of the resolutions are evaluative in tone. Since the narratives deal primarily with participants’ perceptions, this is not surprising. This evaluative pattern, however, it is not as prevalent as with the photo elicitation narratives. Brian tells a story about attending a family dinner and how he was unfamiliar with the dining protocol. He concludes, “I think what often makes it kind of awkward and not just confusing is when I feel like I’m acting out of place somehow.” Codas consist of the last sentence in about a quarter of the narratives. Participants utilize codas to bring the narrative back to the interview question and they often pick up or refer back to the content of their abstract statement at the beginning of their story. Gavin starts one of his stories with, “I think it [feeling frustrated] just comes from the language barrier.” After
telling his story, he concludes, “I think the most frustrating thing is that the language barrier inhibits your ability to express yourself.”

The organization of participants’ intercultural competence stories reflects the skills needed to develop intercultural competence as well as the processual aspect of developing intercultural competence. In these narratives, plots describe the situations in which participants have and have not exhibited intercultural competence, while evaluations and introductory abstract statements explain participants’ perceptions and interpretations of their intercultural competence. Plot descriptions are often generalized, reflecting the developing of intercultural competence as a process (Deardorff, 2006) based upon an accumulation of intercultural experiences and encounters. Evaluation statements provide evidence of the skills that participants need to develop their intercultural competence. They also serve as a means for participants to react to the highs and lows of intercultural learning. Finally, resolutions provide insight on participants’ rationale for communicating and behaving as they did.

**Content of Intercultural Competence Narratives**

Participants’ narratives about their intercultural competence fall into two categories - those dealing with effective and appropriate communication and behavior, or intercultural competence, and those dealing with inappropriate and ineffective communication and behavior, or intercultural incompetence. There were 63 instances in the narratives when participants discussed their intercultural communication and behavior. Of the 63, 24 instances were examples of unsuccessful interactions and 39 were examples of successful interactions (Table 4-9). Four main themes run through both categories. These themes are: a) Spanish language skills, b) interpersonal communication and behavior, c) individual behavior, and d) communication style. Next, I examine these four themes from the perspective of intercultural incompetence and then from intercultural competence.
Intercultural incompetence: Participants’ Spanish skills were a factor in their intercultural incompetence, particularly at the beginning of the semester. They talked about struggling with Spanish vocabulary (i.e. using an incorrect word or not knowing a word); difficulty comprehending slang, accents, rate of speech, and jokes; and an inability to express themselves in Spanish to the extent or with the emotion they would like. As a result, participants often felt frustration and discomfort. They were well aware that their language skills sometimes caused confusion and miscommunication. Frederick discusses a party he attended soon after his arrival to Chile, “I was talking to some people, but it’s harder for them to communicate with somebody who doesn’t speak the language very well. It’s not very fun at a party, [to be] struggling with the language. I ended up being pretty frustrated.” Brian relates a similar sentiment, “At first it was difficult to communicate both linguistically and culturally. There were a lot of awkward moments.”

Participants’ experienced unsuccessful interactions with Chileans because of their general interpersonal communication and behavior. Examples included eating a lot, laughing loudly at a friend in public, wanting to date someone casually, speaking about money or related issues, showing a lack of patience with bureaucracy and disorder, and shaking hands upon leave-taking. These situations caused participants to feel awkward, out of place, confused, and even angry. They chalked up their unsuccessful experiences to having followed U.S norms for social interaction, instead of Chilean norms. Chris reflects on how he communicated and behaved when encountering the bureaucracy of the Chilean immigration system,

Chris. That story I’ve already told you about going to get my visa? That was a bad instance of communication because I got very, very angry with the woman and of course she wasn’t going to change at all. Usually when I’ve failed, it’s because I want this country to work in a way that it will not work ever.
Participants knew when their individual actions led to inappropriate or ineffective behavior. Participants realized when they were “out of place” or drew attention to themselves. In these situations, they acted in ways that would be accepted in the U.S., but not in Chile. Examples include not dressing according to Chilean styles, wearing a lot of expensive jewelry, showing excitement or emotion in public, and leaving personal belongings around in public.

Diane talked about a time when she clapped after a movie scene, “I think everybody in the movie theater looked at me because I was very *desubicada* (out of place). Lorena [my friend] was like, ‘Why are you clapping?’ I was like, ‘Sorry, I couldn’t help it.’” Ellen meanwhile looks back on why she had some money robbed at a party,

Ellen. Something else that would be bad is leaving my stuff around or being more trusting with my things than the average Chilean because they always assume that it’s going to be robbed, and it usually will be. For example, I went to a party at someone’s house. I left my things in a room. And then the next day my money had been stolen….Usually in the U.S. I’ll just leave my jacket somewhere and nothing ever happens to it. Here I did that and it got stolen.

Miscommunications arose from participants’ communication style; such as, taking no as a final answer, speaking in a direct manner, and taking charge in conversations. Participants felt that it was difficult to get things done in Chile and that they were still trying to figure out how to approach communication from a Chilean perspective. Diane struggles with how to communicate with her classmates about a homework assignment,

Diane. I don't know how to communicate effectively to them [Chilean classmates] that we need to get this [class project] done. I still have not figured out how to tell them seriously, ‘Look, this will affect my grades back where I'm from, and we need to take it seriously and get it done.’ I don't know how to communicate that to them, or even just to meet….I want to call my partner and tell him that we have to meet, but it feels weird to me since they don't have this academic excellence plan before attitude.

Meanwhile, Frederick perceives a lack of common ground with Chilean peers as inhibiting him from communicating well with them,
Frederick. I feel like they're in a different spot, a different life situation. Even though they're the same age, they've got different things going on. Most of them aren't living on their own….Most of them aren't working. They're just going to school and doing classes and partying and stuff.

**Intercultural competence:** As the semester progressed, participants sensed improvement in their Spanish language skills and were able to engage in more interculturally competent communication. They were able to better understand Chilean slang, vocabulary, and accents and misunderstandings were less frequent. Participants were pleased with their linguistic progress and they felt a sense of achievement. They used words like awesome, cool, fun, better, and success to describe their language skills. Ellen explains, “It’s easier to understand Chileans now and the slang that people use and also their accent. It doesn’t bother me as much as before. But it’s still difficult for me, so I still do have a language barrier.”

Participants cited successful instances of interpersonal communication and behavior. For example, they used appropriate behaviors in context (i.e. greeting people, riding *micros*, shopping etc.), did not object to certain issues during conversations, adjusted to a different concept of time, did well in classes, and altered their behaviors. Participants expressed that they had become more successful in their encounters because they had adapted to Chilean norms.

Gavin talks about how he has altered his attitude about mealtimes,

Gavin. At Preston [home university], we're so busy and when you eat dinner with someone or have lunch with someone and you've got a lot of work to do, you bolt. You eat and you peace…they understand. It's rude, but you have to do it….Here I have work, but I need to finish my cup of tea and wait for my host parents to finish their cups of tea.

More importantly, participants wanted to fit in with Chilean culture. Diane relates, “I had a certain objective…absorption into the culture.” To learn how to fit in, participants picked up social and cultural cues, stepped back and watched Chileans in action, remained open, adapted, and figured things out. Chris talks about how he adjusted to the work environment and the concept of time in Chile,
Chris. There are things that are just different and some aspect of cultural differences is just saying that you're going to agree to disagree. And if you can't get beyond those differences, which vary from culture to culture, but some of them are so fundamental that they're not going to go away, you're not going to make any progress. For example, I just sort of had to accept the fact when I was going to work with the non-profit organization that they're more disorganized, that time was sort of a relative concept, that sometime someone would show up, and things would get done when they would get done. And that's just something you have to accept. That's just how it is. You can't yell at someone for instance to be on time or to hurry up. You know, when you're queuing, you can't yell at someone, "You know, I have some place to be!" like you could in the United States. That's just not going to work.

Participants talked about engaging in effective and appropriate individual behavior. They did this by altering their behavior to conform to the Chilean reality. In some instances, they felt they had no choice but to adapt, but in others they wanted to do so. Participants changed their style of clothing, used public transportation, took cold showers, refrained from using cell phones and iPods in public, and even became less vigilant about crossing the street. These may seem like fairly minor changes, but they are all widespread daily behaviors that Americans tend to take for granted. Thus, these changes in behavior had a cumulative impact and stood out in participants’ minds. Diane, for example, relates her parents’ reaction to how she adapted to changes in her living conditions,

Diane. My parents were very impressed with different things that I take for granted now [in Chile], but that I've gotten so used to….My bedroom is tiny. My parents [said], "My God, how did you get used to this? Why?" And I was like, "No, it's very easy. I'm very used to it." "Diane, the cold." "No, no. Now I'm used to it." "The heater." "No, it's good." "The shower, Diane." And I'm like, "No, I've gotten used to it." All this stuff I've gotten used to and they were just amazed…."Oh my God, Diane, how did you get used to taking the micro every day?" And I was like, I got used to it. I had no choice. You have to get used to it.

Participants perceived success in their communication style when they refrain from communicating in certain ways. They were hesitant to bring up touchy or uncomfortable subjects, carefully evaluated what they would and would not say, and spoke in a more indirect manner. They made these adjustments in their communication style mainly because they wanted
to adapt to Chilean norms. This does not mean, however, that it was an easy process. At times they felt awkward or constrained when not communicating in accustomed ways. Diane states, “It’s an internal struggle. I think that’s why it’s so exhausting. I’m usually very tired here. I think adaptation is exhausting.” Participants especially did not want to intrude on or offend their homestay families in any way. Ellen relates, “They [my homestay family] have certain outlooks that I don’t share. And it makes it very awkward because sometimes I don’t want to say anything against them, but something that they say might seem ridiculous to me.”

**Synthesis:** In examining the two categories of narratives discussed here, a few patterns emerge in regards to participants’ intercultural communication and behavior. The instances of intercultural incompetence, with the exception perhaps of those due to Spanish skills, are characterized by participants’ following U.S. norms for social interaction, exhibiting a lack of personal agency or intentional change. In these cases, participants were aware that something went awry with their encounters. This awareness typically came after the fact and caused them to feel awkward, out of place, and uncomfortable. On the other hand, the instances of intercultural competence are characterized by participants acting according to Chilean norms. They intentionally altered their communication and behavior to adapt and fit in, highlighting their agency in the adaptation process. Their new patterns of communication and behavior were sometimes internally jarring, but they carried them out just the same. These findings, much like those from the journals of cultural adaptation, suggest that personal agency plays an important role in intercultural competence. This expands our theoretical understanding of the process by which intercultural competence is developed (Deardorff, 2006).

Participants were able to cite when they did and did not engage in successful interactions, but on the whole, participants were more likely to cite successful encounters (n=39), than
unsuccessful ones (n=24) (Table 4-9). Also, some participants cited more instances of any type of encounter than other participants. The number of encounters that a participant discussed is likely related to the total number of narratives that he/she created. Issues that might have affected the creation of narratives include the participant’s recall the day of the interview, our rapport, and whether the participant was comfortable with telling stories. We should consider, though, that some participants were more aware of their own intercultural communication and behavior than others and that overall, participants were more likely to see their encounters in a positive light as opposed to a negative one. Individual differences among study abroad students are not surprising (Anderson, 2003; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Vande Berg et al., 2009), but perhaps participants were relatively unaware of their unsuccessful encounters. If this is the case, it appears all the more important that study abroad students be sensitive to cultural differences so that they can anticipate those situations where they should adapt their communication and behavior, instead of follow U.S. norms. Indeed, sensitivity to cultural differences is the affective starting point of intercultural competence (Hammer et al., 2003). Likewise, developing intercultural competence requires certain skills. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) states that an individual should be able to listen, observe and evaluate as well as analyze, interpret and relate. The more advanced these skills are, the more likely a student is to be able to recognize and analyze his/her own communication and behavior or that of members of the host culture.

**Intercultural Learning through Social Interaction**

During the semi-structured interviews, participants discussed the activities that they perceived as having promoted their intercultural learning. Participants viewed social interaction with Chileans to be the most effective way to learn interculturally. This section discusses how this social interaction took place and the strategies that participants employed to encourage
interaction. A concept map of the participants’ intercultural learning process is shown in Figure 4-17.

Participants’ social interaction with Chileans took place primarily with their host families and with Chilean peers. Their interactions with host families occurred during dinner and once (afternoon tea or snack in Chile), while doing errands and attending church with family members, “hanging around” with host siblings, attending extended family gatherings, and through daily exchanges in the home. Families served as cultural sounding boards for participants, answering questions about Chilean culture or helping participants interpret intercultural encounters. Interacting with host family members also provided opportunities for participants to practice the Spanish language. Ellen, Chris, Haleigh, Gavin, and Diane all offered examples of when their host families provided the “inside scoop” on Chilean culture. Chris related how his host mother explained the Chilean slang word *flaite*, which is used to refer to lower class people and their mannerisms,

Chris. My host mom explained all about what *flaite* means, what the accent is, how it's sometimes just associated with the people from the country, and how you should think twice before you say "Chile" with a soft "ch," so "Shile," because that puts you in a completely different social strata.

Several participants discussed that interactions with their host families could be problematic. Participants did not fit seamlessly into family culture and it could be hard to figure out their role in household activities. Also, host parents sometimes had different political views than participants. Participants were uncomfortable disagreeing with their host parents on political issues or speaking out in certain social situations, so they often avoided such conversations altogether. As a result, participants felt like they were constrained from expressing their true opinions and feelings. Diane stated, “I usually feel a little restricted; very
conscious of what I’m doing….And that happens a lot, that you don’t know when to say things or when not to say things.”

Participants’ host families and friend groups were often inter-related. Participants became friends with their host siblings and their host siblings’ friends. However, not all participants had host siblings and some did not have host siblings in their age group. Moreover, even those that did were eager for social interaction outside the family milieu.

Engaging Chileans outside the family could prove to be difficult. It was challenging for participants to meet Chilean peers and develop friendships with them. This was especially true at the beginning of the semester when participants felt there was a more pronounced language barrier. Frederick stated, “It's a lot harder to find [common ground] and to joke around with someone across a language barrier than it is with people from your own culture.” Also, several participants hoped to be able to make friends with Chileans in their classes as they might in the U.S. but participants eventually learned that Chileans do not necessarily view classes as a venue for forming friendships. Ellen and Brian remarked that they had taken a lot of initiative to meet and maintain relationships with Chileans, while Chris provided a long list of unsuccessful ways he had tried to make Chilean friends. Gavin discussed that it was difficult to break into long-established friend groups. Finally, Diane, who had a fair amount of success making Chilean friends, remarked that she was able to do so because she tried to be “more like them [Chileans].” She dropped her extra-curricular activities, leaving time to spend with Chilean peers after class. Diane’s actions show that she had the sufficient cultural knowledge and observational skills to understand the dynamics of Chilean university students. In turn, she was able to form close friendships. (It should be noted, however, that Diane was studying at a university with a
different social scene and atmosphere than the universities of the other participants mentioned here.)

Participants viewed having Chileans friendships as advantageous because peers provided cultural insight and offered opportunities for social activities. Moreover, there were no “strings attached” with friends outside the host family. Brian related,

Brian. I definitely think making an effort to make Chilean friends among peers my age has been really challenging. But when it’s a successful thing, I think that it has been really helpful. It’s one thing to get the perspective of my host family…but it feels much more genuine when it’s a friend that I’ve made. I guess because the host family was given to me.

Ellen discussed the importance of having trusted relationships with peers who would give her the “real deal” on Chilean culture. “More than anything I would say talking to people that I’m close to, like to friends I can trust, has given me more insight than anything official, like a class or anything.” Both Ellen’s and Brian’s statements reflect the need for deep cultural knowledge to develop interculturally (Deardorff, 2006).

Participants employed several strategies to engage in social relationships with Chilean peers and learn about Chilean culture. These strategies consisted of completing an internship or volunteering at local community organizations, having a language partner, attending local cultural events, taking dance classes, joining a university student group, and participating in program-sponsored activities and excursions. Most of these strategies came about due to participants’ own initiative, though a few were offered by the study abroad programs.

Another strategy that participants employed to promote their learning about Chilean culture was to actively disengage from other American study abroad students and to limit their interactions in English. Haleigh purposely did not initiate social activities with the other American students on her study abroad program. When they invited her to do things, she would only go if not busy. If Diane was invited to spend time with Americans from her program, she
would always invite a Chilean friend along. Gavin tried not to speak in English with other Americans when he did spend time with them. He expressed dismay about observing American students speaking English at the university or in the street, “We'll pass a group of American students speaking English and we're just like, ‘What are you doing? Why?’ It just doesn't make any sense to me personally that you can come down here and speak English and hang out with Americans all the time.” Some participants noted that traveling on weekends took away from their opportunities to engage with Chileans. Traveling interfered with participants’ ability to attend host family events and dinners, or to go out with Chilean friends. Also, travel typically took place with American peers since Chilean peers usually did not have the funds to do so. Participants still traveled, but they tried to mitigate the negative effects. Frederick often traveled alone, while Chris tried to speak Spanish when traveling with Americans. Diane simply decided not to undertake weekend travel since her Chilean friends did not have the funds to go. In fact, she declined the opportunity to travel to Argentina since the other travelers were American and she did not want to speak a lot of English. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) does not incorporate the use of personal strategies for developing intercultural skills, nor does it address the initiative and effort required to achieve the interactions in which intercultural competence is carried out (or not). This could be a reflection of the fact that the model does not deal with intercultural development at the individual level. The strategies that participants employed, however, illustrate a respect for learning about Chilean culture and Spanish, which is one of the attitudes addressed by the model.

Finally, a few participants discussed personal processes for learning interculturally. Haleigh would observe cultural differences and then try to interpret them on her own. If she could not get at the root of the difference herself, she would ask a Chilean friend about it;
someone who would know she was curious about, but not critical of Chilean culture. She discussed her internal thought process as “trying to step-by-step walk through, ‘Well why is this accepted in this culture and not in that culture?’ And in the end say, ‘Okay, well these are two different points of view that come from these two different perspectives.’” Brian talked about maintaining an open and receptive stance in intercultural situations. Both Brian and Gavin stated that they would often observe Chileans interact and later copy their behaviors or modes of speech. All of these personal learning techniques fit well with the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006). Haleigh and Brian exhibit respect for Chilean culture by maintaining an open stance and withholding judgment. Brian and Gavin try to improve their intercultural competence by mimicking Chileans’ communication and behavior.

**Synthesis:** The concept map provides a graphic representation of participants’ intercultural learning process (Figure 4-17). Social interaction is at the heart of participants’ learning. This social interaction takes place with Chilean host families and friends, which are often related to one another. Participants employ certain strategies to encourage social interaction with Chilean culture. They purposely engage with Chileans and disengage with Americans and the English language. (On the map, the arrows represent those aspects of intercultural learning that relate to or feed into one another.)

The intercultural learning data results presented here, as well as the existing research literature, suggest that the structure of study abroad programs influences students’ intercultural learning. Engle and Engle (2003) discuss the importance of study abroad program design in creating an environment for students to interact with the host culture. In my study, the role of the study abroad programs’ structure is evident, particularly in terms of housing. Participants indicated that their homestay placements were important for promoting their intercultural
learning as were experiential learning activities, such as internships and volunteering. The programs had several other features that are believed to encourage intercultural development (such as semester-length, advanced language proficiency, instruction in Spanish, and classes with Chileans), though participants did not specifically mention them.

Even though the structure of their programs was stacked in their favor, participants had to work quite hard to achieve the level of social interaction with Chileans that they desired. As a consequence, they employed several strategies to engage with Chileans and eschew contact with Americans and the English language. Some developed their own techniques for intercultural learning, many of which illustrate the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for developing intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Mendelson’s (2004) and Jackson’s (2005) studies also point out the role of personal learning strategies for intercultural development. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006), however, does not take into account the role of personal learning strategies or techniques in the development of intercultural competence because it does not address the individual nature of intercultural learning.

Participants showed initiative and effort in interacting with Chileans, demonstrating the role of agency in their intercultural learning process. They deliberately involved themselves in Chilean culture to achieve social interaction, above and beyond what was provided by the programs. Results from the participants’ journals and the semi-structured interviews also emphasize the role of personal agency in intercultural development. Overall, the ability to make intentional and “purposeful choices” (Walter & Gerson, 2007; p. 208) appears to play an important role in developing intercultural competence. Thus, my study expands the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) by highlighting the role of agency in achieving competency.
Summary

I utilized three methods of analysis within the narrative tradition - structural analysis, visual analysis, and thematic analysis - to analyze data that I collected through photo elicitation, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews. Structural analysis of the three types of narratives revealed the relationship between narrative organization and meaning. In plot descriptions, participants described the cultural differences they encountered, discussed their cultural adaptation, and narrated when they did and did not exhibit intercultural competence. They used evaluations to make sense of their intercultural encounters, discussing how they experienced Chilean cultural differences, how and why they could or could not adapt, and how they perceived their intercultural competence. Structural analysis was especially useful for gaining insight on participants’ intercultural sensitivity and their interpretations of their intercultural encounters. Visual analysis of the participants’ photos revealed individual differences in their discrimination of cultural differences, which had implications for their levels of intercultural competence. It also underscored how cognitive development might affect the development of intercultural competence. Interpretation of the photo-narrative cases drew out the role of the experiential learning cycle in intercultural learning. In addition, it provided a deep understanding of the contributions of the photos and the narratives to meaning-making. Thematic analysis of the journals and semi-structured interviews highlighted the importance of personal agency in developing interculturally, particularly in terms of interacting with Chilean culture, enacting new patterns of behavior and communication, and coming to terms with cultural differences. This, in turn, expands our theoretical understanding of the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) by explaining how students achieve intercultural competence. In the next chapter, I summarize my study and interpret the findings. I also outline areas of future research related to study abroad and the development of intercultural competence.
### Table 4-1. Overview of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Pertinent Research Questions</th>
<th>Relationship to Process Model</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
<th>Major Findings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photo elicitation: narratives, photos, and photo-narrative cases</td>
<td>How do students experience cultural differences while studying abroad?</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Structural, direct visual, and interpretive guiding questions</td>
<td>Understanding intercultural competence through narrative inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective journals: narratives</td>
<td>How do students experience cultural differences while studying abroad?</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Structural and thematic</td>
<td>Understanding intercultural competence through narrative inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?</td>
<td>Internal outcome: informed frame of reference shift</td>
<td></td>
<td>How students discern cultural differences</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>External outcome: intercultural competence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Role of personal agency in intercultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews: narratives and intercultural learning data</td>
<td>What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?</td>
<td>External outcome: intercultural competence</td>
<td>Structural and thematic</td>
<td>Understanding intercultural competence through narrative inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What activities do students perceive as promoting their intercultural learning while studying abroad?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Role of personal agency in intercultural competence</td>
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*Refers to Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006).*
Table 4-2. Subjects of photos at face value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
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<td>Sculpture or statue</td>
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<td>Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interior scene</td>
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<tr>
<td>People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor market</td>
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<td>Public transportation</td>
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<td>Advertisement</td>
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<td>Documents</td>
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Table 4-3. Inductively developed themes in photos

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<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
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<th>Subjective</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Blended</th>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Religious Issues</td>
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<td>Celebrations</td>
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<td>Values</td>
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<td>Social Issues</td>
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<td>Social Relationships</td>
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<td>Cultural Symbols</td>
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<td>Behavior</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Comparisons</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. Some photos have more than one theme, thus the total number of photos listed in the table is more than total number in the data set (n=58).

\(^a\)# refers to the number of photos in that sub-theme.
Figure 4-1. Typical city vista. Photo courtesy of Frederick.

Figure 4-2. Formality and hierarchy of educational event. Photo courtesy of Diane.
Figure 4-3. Chilean eating habits and diet. Photo courtesy of Ellen.

Figure 4-4. Prevalence of stray dogs in streets. Photo courtesy of Diane.
Table 4-4. Number of photos by participants and themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Photos (n=58)</th>
<th>Objective #&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Subjective #</th>
<th>Blended #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavin</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some photos have more than one theme.

<sup>a</sup># refers to the number of a participant’s photos with that theme.

Figure 4-5. Conservative values. Photo courtesy of Ellen.
Table 4-5. Photo-narrative cases by themes and participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme and Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Figure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Life</td>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrations</td>
<td>Gavin</td>
<td>4-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Life</td>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>4-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Life</td>
<td>Gavin</td>
<td>4-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values &amp; Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Symbols</td>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Issues</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>4-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>4-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>4-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Gavin</td>
<td>4-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>4-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>4-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Relationships</td>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Relationships</td>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>4-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: One photo is not included because it shows personal information about participant.

Table 4-6. Photo-narrative cases by themes, learning mode, and reflection type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Reflection&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Figure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>D-I-E</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>D-I-E</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>D-I-E</td>
<td>4-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>D-I-E</td>
<td>4-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>D-I-E</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>D-E</td>
<td>4-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>D stands for description, I for interpretation, and E for evaluation.
Figure 4-6. Power of cultural symbols. Photo courtesy of Brian.

Figure 4-7. Prevalence of security walls. Photo courtesy of Frederick.
Figure 4-8. Conflict between modernization and traditional religious values. Photo courtesy of Chris.

Figure 4-9. Culture of *pololeando*. Photo courtesy of Diane.
Figure 4-10. Many churches and historical development of city. Photo courtesy of Gavin.

Figure 4-11. Attitudes toward the Mapuche. Photo courtesy of Chris.
Figure 4-12. Shopping in outdoor markets. Photo courtesy of Gavin.

Figure 4-13. Graffiti as a means of political expression. Photo courtesy of Brian.
Figure 4-14. Children performing traditional dances. Photo courtesy of Gavin.

Figure 4-15. Culture of *micros*. Photo courtesy of Frederick.
Figure 4-16. Chilean women’s roles. Photo courtesy of Ellen.
The situation that I’m going to describe in which I’ve exhibited flexibility is related to the situation in which I haven’t exhibited flexibility.

When arriving to Chile I was thinking of all the extra-curricular activities I could do. I thought that my university life would be similar to my university life at Westview, and that I would have free time to do other activities besides my school work. I had been assigned to an [educational] organization, and they wanted me to teach many classes of English. At first I thought that this was possible, but everything changed as soon as classes started. I realized that most of the classes that I was going to have required a lot of group work. At Westview most work is individual, and if there is group work it’s easy to meet up with group members. I started realizing that students here don’t really take meeting times seriously. One of my group members would tell me that we should meet at 3 at the library so there I was at 3, but nobody else from my group was there. This happened MANY times.

At first, I would get angry.

Professors are this way too. Two of my professors always arrive late to class.

And as in the case with my classmates I would get angry.

In the case of my classmates sometimes they would never show up, and other times they would show up much later. Of course sometimes they actually did come on time.

I realized that instead of getting angry I should just get used to it.

So one day we had planned to meet at around 10 a.m. in the morning. I arrived at around 10:15 and still no one. So I had brought my laptop so that I could work. I stayed at the library for about 2 hours working on my own, and finally I saw someone from my group. Two members of my group, who are also my friends, had arrived around 11:30 and had started working so I went to join them.

I was not angry at them at all that they had arrived so late. Surprisingly, now it doesn’t bother me that my classmates don’t always keep their word or that professors arrive late to class. I think I’ve adapted a little too much

because now sometimes I arrive late to class because I think the professor will arrive late to class or I arrive late to a meeting with my classmates because I think they’re going to arrive late.

I hope this lax attitude of mine goes away once I’m at Brown because if you’re more than 5 minutes late it’s basically considered rude.
Table 4-8. Example of structural analysis of an intercultural competence narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>I notice sometimes that I don’t communicate properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>A lot of times I forget to say “Que te vayas bien” or forget to salute people as I’m leaving or coming. I’ll realize it afterwards and be like, “Oh, I hope they weren’t offended.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>But for me it’s like you just don’t do that in the U.S. And even after six months in France where you [unintelligible] everyone all the time and here where every time you come or go you have to say hello to everyone, it’s still not fully, fully natural. It’s like, “Yeah. I’m leaving. Bye.” And like, “I got to go. I’m going to leave.” No, I’m not going to take the time always to do it. And when I forget to do it I’m like, “Oh, I hope I didn’t offend anyone.” But where I’ve communicated well, I mean, generally I think I communicate fairly well. I don’t know. What’s more eminent in my mind is where there’s miscommunication. Dating here is different from the way I know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>If you’re seeing someone you immediately try dating them. And go all the way out immediately. And I started kind of seeing someone very casually. And for me I was just like, “Yeah, this is casual.” And for him it was like, I think he was trying to escalate things a lot faster and actually start dating. I was like, “I don’t plan on dating anyone seriously while I’m here.” I think it took awhile for that to clear up between the two of us. I kind of just stopped calling or stopped being like, “Yeah, let’s do something.” Because I was like, “I don’t want to see you every other day or talk to you on the phone at night.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>That’s just awkward. Like, you’re not my boyfriend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>And their impression of how the progression of that is very distinct from the U.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-9. Instances of communication and behavior in narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Narratives (n=41)</th>
<th>Inappropriate &amp; Ineffective</th>
<th>Appropriate &amp; Effective</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#^a</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavin</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haleigh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some narratives have more than one instance.
a# refers to the number of instances of communication and/or behavior.
Figure 4-17. Intercultural learning concept map.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

My study responded to the need for further research on the development of intercultural competence by U.S. undergraduate students on study abroad programs. The purpose of my research was to investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions about developing intercultural competence while studying abroad for a semester. I had three research questions:

1. How do students experience cultural differences while studying abroad?
2. What are students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior?
3. What activities do students perceive as promoting their intercultural learning while studying abroad?

In this final chapter, I summarize my study, interpret the findings, and make recommendations for future research.

Summary of my Study

The theoretical framework for my study was constructivism, which maintains that all meaning and knowledge is not discovered by individuals, but constructed by them (Crotty, 1998). My research activities were guided by narrative inquiry. In this mode of inquiry, researchers investigate the stories or narratives that research participants tell about their lives, experiences, and understandings of phenomena (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). For my study, participants’ narratives about their intercultural experiences while studying abroad in Chile provided rich material for investigating the development of intercultural competence.

I collected data from August to November 2010 through three methods: photo elicitation, reflective journaling, and semi-structured interviews. Participants consisted of seven U.S. undergraduate students from Preston College, IAP, and UF that were studying for a semester at three universities in Chile. I analyzed the data by using three forms of narrative analysis – structural analysis, visual analysis, and thematic analysis. In the upcoming sections of this
chapter, I summarize data collection and analysis and review my study’s major findings. An overview of my study is available in Table 4-1.

**Data Collection**

The first two phases of data collection consisted of a photo elicitation project. Six participants took a series of photos of the aspects of Chilean culture that made them curious or that interested them. Then, they each selected approximately five to ten of their photos that they felt best represented their interests. A few weeks later, I carried out individual semi-structured interviews with each participant in Chile. In these interviews, participants told the stories of their selected photos. These stories provided insight on the first research question dealing with how students experience cultural differences while abroad.

Reflective journaling comprised the third phase of data collection. Four participants wrote a total of eight journal entries on situations when they did and did not exhibit tolerance, flexibility or adaptability when encountering Chilean culture. To facilitate a reflective approach, I asked the participants to describe, interpret, and evaluate the intercultural situations in their journals. The journals collected data for the first research question on how students experience cultural differences as well as for the second question on students’ perceptions of their intercultural communication and behavior.

For the fourth and final phase of data collection, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with seven participants in Chile. In these interviews, I asked participants to describe situations when they felt they had or had not communicated and behaved effectively and appropriately. In response to my questions, the participants told stories that offered insight on their perceptions of their intercultural competence, which related to the second research question. I also queried students about what activities they perceived as having promoted their intercultural learning while abroad for the third research question.
Data Analysis

For data analysis, I drew upon the socio-linguistic, visual, and socio-cultural approaches of narrative inquiry. I utilized structural analysis (Labov, 1997) and thematic analysis (Cresswell, 2008; Grbich, 2007) to analyze the narratives and interview data. I analyzed the photos using visual analysis (Collier, 2001). Table 3-3 lists the different data analysis steps.

The photo elicitation project collected narrative and photo data. First, I structurally analyzed (Labov, 1997) the 56 narratives present in the interviews. By delineating narrative structure, I gained an understanding of the cultural differences that the participants noticed and how they experienced these differences. I also acquired insight on participants’ intercultural sensitivity. Next, I used Collier’s (2001) direct analysis technique for visual data to analyze the participants’ 58 photos. My results described how participants discerned cultural differences and uncovered variations in how participants understood and interpreted these differences.

The narratives and their corresponding photos formed integrated sets of data that I called photo-narratives. I interpreted the content and relationship of 15 critical photo-narratives with guiding questions that I formulated. These findings had implications for participants’ experiential learning and revealed the function of the narratives and the photos in the participants’ meaning-making process.

The reflective journaling phase of data collection produced eight journals or narratives. I used structural analysis (Labov, 1997) and thematic analysis (Cresswell, 2008) to analyze these narratives. Analyzing the journals’ narrative structure provided details about the types of cultural differences that participants did and did not tolerate and revealed how they perceived their intercultural communication and behavior. Thematic analysis produced findings with implications for the Process Model for Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006).
To analyze the 41 narratives present in the second set of interviews, I undertook structural (Labov, 1997) and thematic analysis (Cresswell, 2008). The narratives’ structural characteristics offered insight on how participants perceived their intercultural communication and behavior. Thematic analysis extended this structural insight by revealing patterns in participants’ communication and behavior. My last stage of analysis consisted of thematically analyzing (Grbich, 2007) the data on the activities that promoted participants’ intercultural learning. This step resulted in a concept map of participants’ intercultural learning process.

**Major Findings**

My study resulted in four main findings related to the development of intercultural competence. The first finding relates to narrative inquiry and how it informed my understanding of intercultural competence. The remaining findings deal with how participants discerned cultural differences, the role of personal agency in the development of intercultural competence, and social interaction as a means for intercultural learning.

**Understanding intercultural competence through narrative inquiry:** Narrative inquiry proved to be an excellent lens for viewing the development of intercultural competence. Participants’ stories of their intercultural experiences provided the thick, descriptive data needed to explore my research questions. Moreover, the relationship between narrative structure and meaning proved to be important. This was the case for the photo-narratives dealing with cultural differences as well as the journals about cultural adaptation and the intercultural competence narratives.

In the three set of narratives, participants detailed their interactions with Chilean culture in the storylines or plots. Participants described the cultural differences they encountered, discussed their cultural adaptation, and narrated when they did and did not exhibit intercultural competence. Storylines, particularly those in the journals and the intercultural competence
narratives, reflected the development of intercultural competence as a process (Deardorff, 2006) based upon an accumulation of intercultural experiences. In evaluation statements, participants made sense of their encounters, discussing how they experienced Chilean cultural differences, how and why they could or could not adapt, and how they perceived their intercultural competence. Evaluation clauses were charged with emotions, reactions, and opinions that conveyed participants’ negotiated lived experiences of Chilean culture and of the process of developing intercultural competence. In the photo-narratives and the journals, evaluation statements conferred insight on participants’ intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993), while in the intercultural competence narratives, they provided evidence of the skills that participants needed to develop their intercultural communication and behavior. In all of the narratives, participants used evaluations to react to and attempt to resolve the internal tension and disequilibrium brought about by developing intercultural competence (Bennett, 2008). In the intercultural competence narratives, however, evaluations also served as a means for participants to express the satisfaction brought about by successful intercultural encounters.

The relationship between structure and meaning in the photo-narratives was especially compelling. The contribution of photos to meaning-making depended upon the type of cultural differences under discussion. As the continuum progressed from objective, observable differences to subjective, unobservable differences, the photos became less representative of the cultural differences under discussion. Thus, the narratives took on the more important role in understanding participants’ stories. Moreover, photos and narratives conferred different types of meaning to a story. Photos visually represented the content of the narratives, provided supplementary information not mentioned in the narratives, and symbolically represented the content of the narratives. Narratives contributed participants’ evaluations, provided
supplementary information not pictured in the photos, and imbued the photos with new meaning. For each photo-narrative case, the photo and the narrative functioned as an integrated whole to create a story. This story could then be transformed into a new story that extended beyond the physical limits of the photo-narrative.

Discerning cultural differences: Participants’ discerned subjective, objective, and blended cultural differences in their interactions with Chilean culture. Subjective cultural differences consisted of “the psychological aspects of culture” (Bennett & Stewart, 1991; p.2) like communication, values, stereotypes, and social roles and relationships. Objective cultural differences encompassed the institutions and artifacts of culture (Bennett & Stewart, 1991), such as celebrations and city life. Blended differences, a combination of objective and subjective issues, included cultural symbols, social issues, religious issues, cultural comparisons, and behavior. Not all participants noticed the same kinds of differences. Two of the participants were mainly interested in objective cultural differences, while four were focused on subjective and blended aspects of culture. Those participants who were drawn to subjective and blended differences likely had higher levels of intercultural sensitivity, and thus intercultural competence, than the objective-oriented participants (Bennett, 1998). Participants’ capacity to view cultural differences from an ethnorelative perspective, however, may have been influenced by their cognitive development, specifically their ability to recognize that knowledge is relative and dependent upon context (Love & Guthrie, 1999).

Participants’ discrimination of cultural differences had implications for their experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). The photo-narratives representing blended issues exhibited complete experiential learning cycles. In these cases, participants fully grasped cultural differences and transformed them. Because these participants had completed the learning cycle, they interpreted
cultural differences as complicated mixtures of subjective and objective issues through an ethnorelative lens. On the other hand, the photo-narratives dealing with subjective and objective cultural differences were examples of incomplete experiential learning cycles. Participants that described subjective cultural differences recognized that subtle cultural issues existed, but they had not had sufficiently complex interactions with Chileans to allow them to fully grasp these differences. With an incomplete understanding of the issues at hand, they struggled to interpret what the intercultural differences meant and could not move beyond an ethnocentric stance. Meanwhile, participants that described objective cultural differences noticed or conceptualized differences, but they did not transform these differences effectively. As a result, they were left with superficial knowledge of Chilean culture that kept them from understanding the cultural values and beliefs underlying these differences. In fact, many of the issues that participants portrayed as objective could have been transformed into subjective or blended issues with deeper reflection.

The role of personal agency in developing intercultural competence: Participants’ perceptions of their intercultural competence revolved around four issues: Spanish language skills, interpersonal communication and behavior, individual behavior, and communication style. When participants communicated and behaved appropriately and effectively (i.e. when they exhibited intercultural competence), they interacted according to Chilean norms. In these cases, participants demonstrated personal agency by intentionally choosing to alter their patterns of communication and behavior. These new patterns of communication and behavior could be internally jarring to participants, but by enacting them, they were able to achieve their goals. Participants expressed a sense of perspective and context after changing their communication or
behavior, indicating that they had “turned the corner” on cultural differences that at one time bothered them.

When participants communicated and behaved in inappropriate and ineffective ways (i.e. when they exhibited intercultural incompetence), they followed U.S. norms for social interaction. In these situations, participants typically made no changes to their patterns of communication and behavior. Instead, they maintained a sort of behavioral and communicative status quo, demonstrating a lack of agency. When participants were aware that something had gone awry with their interactions, they felt awkward, out of place, and uncomfortable. Unsuccessful encounters could also provoke deep, negative reactions that left participants feeling frustrated and even angry. (A possible exception consists of miscommunications that were caused by participants’ Spanish language proficiency or lack thereof. In these cases, the miscommunications were likely related to inadequate foreign language skills rather than a lack of agency.)

In the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006), intercultural competence is achieved through a process that combines an individual’s attitudes, knowledge, and skills. An informed frame of reference shift results in adaptability, empathy, flexibility, and an ethnorelative view. These characteristics enhance one’s ability to be interculturally competent. I suggest that a personal agency also enhances intercultural competence. Personal agency shares some characteristics with adaptability and flexibility, which invoke an openness or willingness to change. Personal agency, however, goes beyond a sense of change to imply that purpose, choice, and action are involved (Walter & Gerson, 2007). Participants in my study purposely chose to enact new forms of communication and behavior that were appropriate and effective for the Chilean context. In other words, they intentionally opted to be interculturally
competent; or at the very least to try to be interculturally competent. Personal agency does not guarantee intercultural competence, but I do propose that personal agency - a motivation to enact purposeful change – is important for a study abroad student to make the transition from the internal informed frame of reference shift to the external outcome of intercultural competence.

**Intercultural learning through social interaction:** The intercultural learning concept map (Figure 4-17) illustrates that participants viewed social interaction with Chileans as the most effective way to learn interculturally. Participants’ social interaction with Chileans took place primarily with their host families and with Chilean peers. Host families served as cultural sounding boards for participants, answering questions about Chilean culture or helping participants interpret intercultural encounters. Friendships with peers provided cultural insight and offered opportunities for social activities. Host families and peer groups were often related in some way.

Personal agency played an important role in participants’ achievement of social interaction. Participants deliberately involved themselves in Chilean culture. They employed strategies to engage with Chileans and disengage with Americans and the English language. Participants developed these strategies despite the fact the structure of their study abroad programs already facilitated intercultural learning. I propose that the study abroad programs in my study provided a foundation for student learning, but this was not sufficient for participants to achieve social interaction. So, participants needed to be agents for their own social interaction by intentionally pursuing activities that allowed for meaningful experiences of Chilean culture.

**Implications**

My study’s findings have implications for study abroad research and practice. In particular, my findings contribute to the current conversation in the field of study abroad about intervening in student learning. They also enrich our theoretical understanding of the
development of intercultural competence. In terms of study abroad practice, my results offer suggestions for instructional design, program structure, and advising.

**Support for Student Learning**

Several studies have suggested that study abroad programs should actively support or intervene in study abroad students’ intercultural learning (Anderson, 2003; Rexeisen et al., 2008; Savicki, 2008; Vande Berg, 2007; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Such support includes curriculum interventions, cultural training, and informal learning activities. My results further bolster the argument that study abroad students need assistance to develop intercultural competence. I found that students require support for discerning cultural differences and reflecting on these differences. For example, those students who are mainly focused on objective differences need more support for their intercultural learning than those students who can readily discern subjective or blended cultural issues. Likewise, students at lower levels of cognitive development, who may not recognize that knowledge is relative, will require support and structure for their intercultural learning. All students would benefit from the opportunity to improve their reflective skills so that they can successfully transform their experiences into learning. There are a variety of techniques for enhancing reflective skills that could be incorporated into study abroad programs, such as journals, dialogues, creative writing, and problem-based learning (Moon, 2004; Wagner & Magistrale, 1995).

**Theoretical Understanding of Intercultural Competence**

My findings enrich our understanding of how intercultural competence is developed. Specifically, they show that personal agency plays a role in students’ achievement of intercultural competence. Students must be motivated to enact purposeful changes in their communication and behavior in order to be interculturally competent. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) describes the development of intercultural
competence by unspecified individuals in abstract intercultural contexts. This study, however, investigated how intercultural competence was developed by a group of students in a study abroad context. Consequently, we now have a more informed understanding of how undergraduate students develop interculturally and how they perceive their development. This enhanced theoretical understanding has implications for study abroad practice.

**Suggestions for Study Abroad Practice**

Study abroad personnel devote significant time to the instructional design of study abroad programs. Instructional design is especially important if the program intends for students to develop intercultural competence while abroad. Intercultural competence starts with the ability to discern cultural differences. Learning opportunities must be provided for students to both grasp and transform cultural differences.

The ability to grasp cultural differences is partially grounded in knowledge of the host culture. Study abroad program personnel are well-aware that cultural knowledge is important and as such it is included in most study abroad pre-departure programs and orientation programs. In delivering this content, however, I recommend that subjective culture be emphasized over objective culture, and that the relationship of subjective and objective culture be discussed. Knowledge of subjective culture is more important for developing intercultural competence than knowledge of objective culture (Bennett, 2008). Cross-cultural dialogues (Storti, 1994) and simulations (Hofstede, Pederson, & Hofstede, 2002) are good methods for assisting students to grasp cultural differences.

Reflective writing or journaling is often used on study abroad programs to encourage students to reflect on their experiences while studying abroad (Wagner & Magistrale, 1995). The D-I-E approach is especially common (Paige et al., 2004). A photo elicitation project, similar to the one I employed to collect data, is an alternative means for assisting students to examine and
transform cultural differences. My photo elicitation project was designed for collecting research data, but it could fairly easily be adapted into a learning tool. For example, the instructions given to students could be crafted to provide more specific guidelines about what type of photos to take, allowing a more focused approach to learning about cultural differences than the one I used for collecting data. Asking students to take photos of blended cultural differences would provide opportunities to discuss both subjective and objective cultural differences and the links between them. Or, photo elicitation could be implemented as a group project with students taking photos in groups or with individual students explaining their photos to a small group of peers. This would encourage the social construction of learning. Finally, students could debrief photos one-on-one with program personnel who are trained to assist students to both evaluate and interpret cultural differences. While time-intensive, this approach would provide targeted instruction and feedback to students.

Study abroad programs should also encourage students to examine their own communication and behavior. For example, programs should implement learning activities that encourage students to notice and reflect upon uncomfortable intercultural moments or times when they are angry or upset. These moments are likely examples of inappropriate and ineffective communication and behavior. With support from program personnel or peers, students can reflect upon these situations and then consider alternative modes of communication and behavior to enact in future situations. This would allow them to complete the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). During these learning activities, students need to learn that they will not gain intercultural competence through osmosis. Instead, they will have to purposely change their patterns of communication and behavior to fit in with the host culture.
Finally, the structure of study abroad programs must encourage sustained social interaction with the host culture if students are to maximize their intercultural learning. This is not a new suggestion for study abroad practice, but in an era of short-term programs, it is becoming increasingly difficult to facilitate the social interaction needed for intercultural development. Students also need to be aware that they may need to make a significant effort to engage the host culture. Likewise, they may need to develop personal processes to learn from this engagement. A program can encourage social interaction, but ultimately students must be agents for their own social interaction. Educating students about their role in gaining intercultural competence and in engaging the host culture should start in the advising process before students go abroad. It can then be reinforced during orientations and throughout the program.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

My research experience and the findings of my study lead me to suggest several areas of future research as related to study abroad and intercultural competence. These suggestions include further research on personal agency and student development theory as related to the development of intercultural competence. I also encourage researchers to investigate the development of intercultural competence under conditions that differ from those of my study and to undertake qualitative studies on the topic.

One of my main research findings concerns the role of personal agency in the development of intercultural competence. Personal agency is often associated with traits of confidence, high self-esteem, and independence (Freeman & Schumacher, 2010) as well the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). Self-efficacy has been examined as an outcome of studying abroad (Milstein, 2005), but the role of self-efficacy in the development of intercultural competence has not been deeply explored. Thus, further studies on the relationship between intercultural competence and personal agency are warranted. It would be particularly
interesting to investigate how personal agency fits in with the Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006). I propose that personal agency comes into play on the model during the informed frame of reference shift or the intercultural interaction (Figure 2-1). I state this because personal agency appears to enhance the transition from the internal informed frame of reference shift to the external outcome of intercultural competence. More research is necessary to confirm or disconfirm my proposition.

College student development is an important area of research in student affairs and in higher education administration in general. My study mentioned that undergraduate students have different levels of cognitive development and that this might affect their intercultural development. I did not, however, delve into cognitive development theory and its applications to intercultural competence. Also, few studies on intercultural competence draw upon student development theory and, therefore, this presents another opportunity for future research. For example, self-authorship, which emphasizes decision-making, problem solving, and autonomy (Evans et al., 2010), might be of explanatory interest to the development of intercultural competence.

The results of my study are a reflection of the context in which they were conducted. There is ample room to investigate the development of intercultural competence under conditions that differ from those of my study. It would be useful to investigate the development of intercultural competence in study abroad students in country where English is the official language, to recruit participants studying on programs of varying structures, or to recruit students with specific profiles or demographic characteristics. In regards to student characteristics, racial and ethnic minorities have relatively low study abroad participation rates. About 20% of the students that studied abroad in 2008-09 were minorities (IIE, 2010). More studies are needed on
the experiences of minority students that study abroad. Moreover, the relationship between race and ethnicity and the development of intercultural competence as a study abroad learning outcome has not been well researched. For example, Latino students who are heritage speakers of Spanish and who study abroad in Latin American countries might have an advantage in developing intercultural competence due to their linguistic abilities and previous knowledge and interactions with Latino and/or Latin American culture. This is an assumption, however, and the relationship of race and ethnicity to intercultural competence development merits investigation.

As my literature review in Chapter 2 indicates, quantitatively focused impact studies dominate study abroad research. Educational institutions are very interested in documenting study abroad learning outcomes and this has driven the research agenda. It is important, however, that researchers also conduct qualitative studies related to the study abroad experience. Qualitative research is particularly useful for examining specific phenomena related to studying abroad, understanding students’ experiences and perceptions, generating new theory or expanding on existing theory, and exploring new issues in the field. Qualitative approaches also have a role to play in evaluating study abroad programs. Unfortunately, the few existing qualitative studies on study abroad give short shrift to methods and theory. In fact, I had few models to draw upon when designing my study. I encourage researchers to conduct theoretically and methodologically sound qualitative studies that contribute contextual, nuanced knowledge to the study abroad literature.

Conclusion

The federal government, national educational organizations, universities, and employers view studying abroad as an opportunity for undergraduate students to gain skills required in an era of global interdependence. The research literature concerning study abroad learning outcomes, however, is nascent. My study adds to our knowledge about study abroad learning
outcomes by providing a deep understanding of the process by which undergraduate students develop intercultural competence while studying abroad. Most importantly, my findings describe how students discern cultural differences while abroad and reveal the role of personal agency in achieving intercultural competence. These results have implications for study abroad practice that can enhance students’ intercultural learning and ultimately their intercultural competence.
APPENDIX A
PHOTO ELICITATION GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

While studying abroad, you will encounter opportunities to interact with Chilean culture on a daily basis. You may find that some of your intercultural interactions stimulate your curiosity or give you pause for thought. Such interactions could occur in any number of places, such as on the bus, in your home stay, in a store, walking on a street, in a classroom, or when talking with Chilean friends or professors.

Over the next 4 weeks, take a series of photos (perhaps as many as 25-30) to document or capture those situations, experiences, or interactions with Chilean culture that stimulate your curiosity. Think about those aspects of the culture that have caught your attention or about which you have questions, experiences that have caused you to reflect, or characteristics of Chilean culture you want to learn more about. Do not inhibit yourself with what might be considered an “acceptably curious” situation or experience.

The only limitation on your photo taking is that you should not take photos of individual people. Your photos should be of public scenes or public behavior. Also, be sure to ask permission to take photos of official places (a museum or government building, for example). If you are not granted permission, do not take the photo.

Select 5-10 of your photos that best represent your interests or curiosity about Chilean culture. Then, answer the following questions about each photo:

a. Where was the photo taken?
b. What is the object of the photo?
c. Why did the object of the photo make you curious or draw your attention?
d. What were your emotions or thoughts when you took the photo?

You may use the table on the reverse to record your answers. Submit your photos and notes by Monday, September 6 to Hannah Covert via e-mail. About two weeks after you submit everything, we will discuss your photos in an hour-long interview. The interview will be scheduled with you in advance and take place in the city where you are studying. After completing the interview, you will receive a tarjeta bip! metrocard worth about US$5 for use on Santiago’s buses and subways.

If you have any questions about this activity, contact Hannah Covert, University of Florida PhD student.
APPENDIX B
PHOTO ELICITATION INFORMATION SHEET

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<th>Where was photo taken?</th>
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<th>Why does object of photo make you curious or draw your attention?</th>
<th>What were your emotions or thoughts when taking photo?</th>
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APPENDIX C
GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED PHOTO INTERVIEWS

1) Tell me the story of each photo. What does each say about the aspects of Chilean culture that interest you or stimulate your curiosity?

2) What are the connections or relationships among the photos? Feel free to arrange or move the photos around.

3) Tell me about your process of planning and taking the photos.

4) Are there certain photos that are missing or that you did not take? If so, which?

5) Did you take more photos than those you submitted? If so, why/how did you choose these particular photos from your larger group?

6) What do you think about using photos to represent your cultural interests or curiosities?
APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1. Age: _______

2. Gender: □ Female  □ Male

3. Major: _____________________________

4. Have you studied or lived outside the US previously? □ Yes    □ No
   If so, where and for how long? ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

5. Did you take any courses on Latin America prior to coming to Chile? □ Yes □ No
   If so, what? _____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

6. What is your Spanish proficiency?
   □ Beginner        □ Intermediate     □ Advanced     □ Native
APPENDIX E
REFLECTIVE JOURNAL GUIDELINES

In this activity, you will reflect in writing on your experiences adapting to Chilean culture.

1) Reflect on a situation(s) when you exhibited tolerance, flexibility or adaptability when encountering aspects of Chilean culture. First, describe the situation. Second, discuss why you think you acted this way. Then, discuss your reaction to or feelings about the situation.

2) Reflect on a situation(s) when you did not exhibit tolerance, flexibility or adaptability when encountering aspects of Chilean culture. First, describe the situation. Second, discuss why you think you acted this way. Then, discuss your reaction to or feelings about the situation.

Feel free to use informal language as you might in a journal. The content of your reflections is more important than the length, but a good target for each response is two to three double-spaced typed pages (450-700 words). Send your reflections to me via e-mail as an attachment or in an e-mail message. Please submit to me by November 1, 2010. After submission, you will receive a $10 gift certificate from snapfish.com.
APPENDIX F
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

1) While studying abroad you have interacted with Chileans daily. Tell me about interactions you have had with Chileans when you think you communicated and behaved effectively and appropriately.
   a. How do you know that your interaction was successful?
   b. How did you feel after this interaction?

2) Tell me about interactions with Chileans when you think that you did not communicate and behave effectively and appropriately.
   a. How do you know that your interaction was not successful?
   b. How did you feel after this interaction?
   c. What might have been a more culturally appropriate and effective way to communicate and behave?

3) Think about your intercultural communication and behavior when you first arrived in Chile and your communication and behavior now. Tell me about any changes that have occurred.

4) What activities have you engaged in over the past few months that have promoted your intercultural learning?

5) Tell me about any times when you purposely sought to interact with Chileans or Chilean culture.

6) Describe any breakthroughs or so-called “a-ha” moments in your learning about Chilean culture. For example, describe specific moments or situations when you started to “get” or understand Chilean culture. What do you think led up to or stimulated these learning moments?
LIST OF REFERENCES


194


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hannah Covert grew up in New Jersey. She received her bachelor’s degree in Spanish from Middlebury College and her master’s degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Florida. She received her Ph.D. in higher education administration from the University of Florida in the fall of 2011. Hannah has 12 years of professional experience in higher education administration. Most recently, she worked as Executive Director of the University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies. She has studied, worked, and traveled throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.