**AVOIDANCE IN INTERCULTURAL WORK CONTEXTS:
THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE SELF-EFFICACY, CULTURAL
INTELLIGENCE, AND INTERPERSONAL NEGATIVE AFFECT**

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Summary

Avoidance of interactions with people from different cultures is a common occurrence that can have detrimental effects on work collaborations. Yet, we know very little about what can be done to reduce avoidance behaviors in contexts where people from different cultures work together. To address this gap, I developed and tested a model to predict and explain avoidance in intercultural work contexts. Drawing on Social Identity Theory and Affective Events Theory, I propose a model where language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence (CQ) have negative main effects on avoidance behaviors. Further, I hypothesize a joint effect such that avoidance should be the lowest when people are both efficacious to communicate in the language of interaction and culturally intelligent. Next, I hypothesize that interpersonal negative affect should mediate the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance. I tested my model using two time-lagged field studies. In Study 1, I tested the hypothesized main and joint effects with 108 household service workers using OLS regressions. The findings did not support the main effects of language self-efficacy and CQ but supported the joint effect on avoidance. In Study 2, I tested the main effects, joint effect and mediation in 391 intercultural dyads from a sample of 82 senior business students working in multicultural teams using a round-robin multisource design and social relations modeling analyses. The main effect of language self-efficacy was not supported but the main effect of CQ was significant and negative. The joint effect found in Study 1 was replicated. Further, the joint effect was fully mediated by interpersonal negative affect. I discuss the implications of these findings for theory and practice.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“As a matter of fact, an impressive number of studies reveal that intergroup encounters are anxiety-arousing and that people are prompt to avoid out-group members.”

Yzerbyt and Demoulin (2012, p. 253)

In today's interdependent workplace, people must interact with others on a daily basis to share information and receive feedback (Barry & Crant, 2000). An increasing number of these interactions occur with people from different cultures who speak different mother tongues (Crystal, 2003; Neeley, 2012). These interactions are all the more necessary to develop shared mental models of how to work together (Fisher, Bell, Dierdorff, & Belohlav, 2012) and enable collaboration (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998) given that people from different cultures often hold fundamentally different assumptions and expectations of what is appropriate behavior (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001; Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett, & Ybarra, 2000; Stone-Romero, Stone, & Salas, 2003). Yet, studies show that people are much more inclined to avoid contact with those from other cultures rather than to proactively pursue such interactions (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Pentland, 2012).

From an evolutionary perspective, these avoidance behaviors are not surprising. This is because those who are different are often deemed dangerous (Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Jun, 2002), and the natural reaction to potential threats is to avoid them (Chen & Bargh, 1999; Tooby & Cosmides,

2008). Moreover, avoidance reactions are particularly powerful and as a result, difficult to resist (Tooby & Cosmides, 1990; Zajonc, 1998). This is because, in the hierarchy of fundamental processes, the need to avoid danger supersedes all other needs, including the need to approach opportunities. As Crawford and Cacioppo noted, “in terms of survival, it is more important to escape from danger than to pursue an opportunity, and it is easier to recover from a missed opportunity than from a failed escape” (2002, p. 449). This functional asymmetry between avoidance and approach reactions is at the source of a negativity bias whereby people react more strongly to negative experiences than to neutral or positive ones (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001). For example, negative experiences are associated with greater brain activation (Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo, 1998) and more intense emotional distress (Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996), and are retained longer and in more detail in memory than positive ones (Thomas & Diener, 1990). Thus, avoiding interactions with people from other cultures is a self-protective behavior.

According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), people avoid interactions with those from different cultures because they are threatening to their fundamental need to maintain a positive and secure view of themselves. For this reason, people prefer interactions that provide some certainty that they will not make fools of themselves, offend others, or be poorly treated (Hogg & Terry, 2000). When people cannot maintain a positive self-concept, they experience negative emotions (Chattopadhyay, Finn, & Ashkanasy, 2010), which in turn precipitate avoidance behaviors (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, & Zhang, 2007).

During interactions with people from other cultures, two important sources of challenges to the self-concept are differences in language and culture.

As renowned cultural anthropologist Edward Hall noted in his seminal book *Beyond Culture*, during intercultural interactions, “two things get in the way of understanding: the linearity of language and the deep biases and built-in blinders that every culture provides” (1989, p. 69).

Language as a “system of signs that expresses ideas” (Saussure, 1959, p. 16) is the means by which abstract experiences are translated and communicated to create a shared reality (Berger & Luckman, 1966, in Wallace & Wolf, 2006). People from different cultures rarely share the same native language. As a result, they must rely on a *lingua franca*, or shared language, to communicate (Crystal, 2003). When people are not confident that they can communicate effectively in the language, they may feel incompetent and fear being devalued, and in turn avoid interactions (Neeley, 2013; Tenzer, Pudenko, & Harzing, 2014).

Culture connotes a set of rules, values, and assumptions shared by groups of people (Triandis, 1994) that shape our meaning systems (Kramsch, 2014) and deeply ingrained expectations about human interactions (Hall, 1989). When people from different cultures interact, there is a lot of uncertainty about how to predict and to explain the behaviors of others; this uncertainty produces anxiety about committing faux pas and offending others (Gudykunst, 2004; Gudykunst, 2005). Moreover, in work contexts where people interact on a regular basis, cultural differences in norms and expectations inevitably produce misunderstandings and conflicts (Matsumoto, Leroux, & Yoo, 2005; Matsumoto & Takeuchi, 1998). In turn, people seek to minimize awkward and embarrassing situations by avoiding intercultural interactions (Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

Needless to say, avoidance of intercultural interactions is counterproductive in work contexts. When people from different cultures do not interact, teams are at risk of splitting (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000), conflict may

erupt (Hinds & Mortensen, 2005; Polzer, Crisp, Jarvenpaa, & Kim, 2006), and collaboration may suffer (Chatman & Flynn, 2001).

Despite these negative consequences, we know surprisingly little about what can be done to reduce avoidance, especially in contexts where people from diverse cultures work together. To date, existing studies on avoidance of people from other cultures have been primarily concerned with interactions between strangers rather than between people who work together. For example, in a series of studies drawing on Allport's (1954) prejudice reduction hypothesis, Barlow and her team showed that avoidance of contact with members of minority groups is positively related to racist beliefs, lack of or negative intergroup contact (Barlow et al., 2012) and fear of rejection (Barlow, Louis, & Terry, 2010), and is negatively related to cross-group friendships (Barlow, Louis, & Hewstone, 2009). Another study drawing on Gudykunst's (2005) uncertainty and anxiety management (UAM) theory found that avoidance of interactions between Japanese and international students was positively associated with uncertainty and anxiety (Dumont, Nishida, & Nakayama, 2005). In these studies, participants reported about their interactions with strangers with whom they had little or no prior contact in purely social contexts. Thus, an important research question is: What can be done to minimize avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts?

In this dissertation, I investigate two specific research questions: 1) What individual capabilities reduce avoidance of interactions in intercultural work contexts? 2) What mechanism mediates this effect?

To address the first research question, I examine two individual differences—language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence. I propose that these individual capabilities can help reduce avoidance by minimizing the challenges

to the self-concept produced by language and cultural differences during intercultural interactions. Based on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1982), those who are efficacious feel secure in their ability to communicate in the *lingua franca*. Language self-efficacy is a new construct in management research that is relevant to the present research question given the motivational nature of avoidance behaviors (Elliot, 1999, 2006; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Cultural intelligence (CQ) denotes an individual's capability to function effectively in intercultural situations (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ang et al., 2007). Those who are culturally intelligent possess the motivational, meta-cognitive, and behavioral skills to facilitate intercultural functioning. The benefits of CQ for intercultural relations are well documented in the literature (see reviews by Ang, Van Dyne, & Rockstuhl, 2015; Leung, Ang, & Tan, 2014). Little is known, however, about the effect of CQ on avoidance behaviors. I expected that language self-efficacy and CQ would reduce avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts.

To address the second research question, I advance interpersonal negative affect as a key theoretical mechanism to explain the joint effects of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance. I propose an affective mechanism because of the deep connection of avoidance and negative affect. Affect is an umbrella term that encompasses affective components including emotions (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Kelly & Barsade, 2001). Based on neuroimaging studies, avoidance and negative affect originate from the same region in the brain (Corbetta & Shulman, 2002; Davis & Whalen, 2001). Interpersonal negative affect denotes negative emotions that people experience during interactions with their coworkers. It is target-specific so that it can vary across multiple interactions. In this dissertation, I expected that interpersonal negative affect serves to mediate the relationship between language self-efficacy, CQ, and avoidance.

In addressing these two research questions, this dissertation makes three important contributions. First, it advances existing knowledge on avoidance to contexts in which people from different cultures work together. Although there is existing research on avoidance of strangers, avoidance of people from different cultures who work together is likely to differ in important ways. This is because, in work contexts, people often have interdependent goals that require frequent interactions with others (Howard, 1995). As a result, they cannot realistically avoid contacts at all times without risking damage to their performance, possibly even to their employment. In this dissertation, I conducted two separate studies in two distinct intercultural work contexts: 1) In the context of household service workers interacting with their employers from other cultures, and 2) In the context of senior university students working in multicultural teams. Replicating findings in different contexts with different populations presents the advantage of strengthening the external validity of the original findings (Rosenthal, 1991; Tsang & Kwan, 1999).

The second contribution of this dissertation is to examine language self-efficacy and CQ jointly in order to determine how they affect avoidance behaviors in intercultural contexts. Few studies have looked at the joint effects of language and cultural capabilities on avoidance. There is preliminary evidence, however, to suggest added benefits of combining language and cultural skills for boundary-spanning activities for managers in multinational organizations (Barner-Rasmussen, Ehrnrooth, Koveshnikov, & Mäkelä, 2014). This is because language and culture are deeply intertwined and fundamentally inseparable.

According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (see Canagarajah, 2007; Elmes, 2013; Kramsch, 2014), language structures the values and worldviews that are shared by people from different cultures and culture shapes how people

communicate abstract concepts through language. For example, languages in collectivistic cultures are more likely to allow pronouns to be dropped than languages from individualistic cultures, which indicates different conceptualizations of the self and others (Kashima & Kashima, 1998). For this reason, linguists have argued that misunderstandings that arise during intercultural interactions are rarely due to language mistakes alone, but rather are caused by misinterpretation of subtle cultural conventions or clues that are not easily decoded and understood by people from different cultures (Henderson, 2005; Scollon & Scollon, 2001). As Gudykunst noted, “If we understand others’ languages or dialects, but not their communication rules, we can make fluent fools of ourselves” (2004, p. 3). Thus, another contribution of this dissertation is to examine the effects of both language self-efficacy and CQ for avoidance behaviors.

The third contribution of this dissertation is to advance existing knowledge on affect as a mechanism of behaviors in intercultural interactions at work. To do so, I propose Affective Events Theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) as a new theoretical lens to complement the paradigms of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) commonly used to examine intercultural interactions (Mannix & Neale, 2005). The value of affective events theory is that it draws attention to the role of emotions as the proximal cause of workplace behaviors (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Affective events theory complements social identity theory in two ways. First, AET is specifically concerned with the structure, cause and consequences of affective events. While social identity theory suggests that intergroup interactions are emotion-generating events because of threats to the self-concept (Chattopadhyay et al., 2010), they do not consider the affective reactions associated with these events.

Second, AET recognizes that people do not react equally to affective events. By comparison, social identity theory is not concerned with the resulting events of intercultural interactions and their effects on people. By conceptualizing intercultural interactions as affective events and examining avoidance behaviors through an affective lens, the present work underscores both the role of emotions as valid mechanisms of interpersonal behaviors in intercultural work contexts and the role of individual differences as sources of variation in how individuals react to these events.

The thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the literature on avoidance, language self-efficacy, and cultural intelligence in order to identify existing gaps in research. Chapter 3 delineates a model whereby language self-efficacy and CQ affect avoidance separately (i.e., main effects) and jointly (i.e., interaction effect), and the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance is transmitted through interpersonal negative affect. Chapters 4 and 5 present two empirical studies: Study 1 tests the main and interaction effects of language self-efficacy and CQ on the dependent variable of avoidance in a sample of 108 household service workers and their employers from different cultures; Study 2 tests the full model in a sample of 82 senior students working in multicultural teams on a three-month project. Chapter 6 concludes with a discussion of the implications for theory, practice, and future research.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews prior empirical research on the three constructs of interest: avoidance, language self-efficacy, and cultural intelligence. For each construct, I review specific definitions and conceptualizations in the respective literatures. I then describe theoretical frameworks that have been used to study the constructs of interest and review the empirical studies based on these frameworks. Lastly, I summarize important gaps in the literature.

The scope of the present work focuses on the interaction of people from different cultures. As much as possible, I searched for studies conducted in intercultural work contexts. This review seeks to clarify what the research has demonstrated to date and to identify significant ways in which we can advance research and theory.

2.1 Avoidance

2.1.1 Definition

Avoidance is the reaction to a negative stimulus. It is characterized by a movement away from something negative and potentially harmful (Chen & Bargh, 1999; Tooby & Cosmides, 2008).

Avoidance is a coping strategy to reduce negative emotions (Davis & Whalen, 2001). When people encounter new situations, they quickly and automatically form both positive and negative judgments of their surroundings (Bargh, 1997; Chen & Bargh, 1999). In the presence of negative stimuli, people experience negative emotions that serve to indicate the imminence of undesirable

and potentially dangerous conditions (Crawford & Cacioppo, 2002; Maxwell & Davidson, 2007; Tooby & Cosmides, 2008) and in turn activate the fight-or-flight response (Davis & Whalen, 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001; Tooby & Cosmides, 2008). The resulting anxiety prepares the body to respond. One of the most immediate responses is that of avoidance (Chen & Bargh, 1999). Avoidance helps deactivate the amygdala by distancing the immediate source of threat and preventing its recurrence (Baumeister et al., 2007). The absence of negative emotion, in turn, indicates that a threat has been removed.

In the literature, avoidance has been conceptualized as a behavior, a personality trait and a motivation. *Avoidance behaviors* denote behaviors aimed at preventing or minimizing negative consequences (Elliot, 2006). In an interpersonal context, *interaction avoidance* or *social avoidance* refers to a set of behavioral strategies intended to prevent or minimize contact with other people (Beer, 2002; Duronto et al., 2005; Nifadkar, Tsui, & Ashforth, 2012). Examples of behaviors include avoiding eye contact or keeping a physical distance, giving brief answers, refraining from asking questions, rejecting informal engagements as a means of preventing interactions, and terminating interactions as quickly as possible.

Other forms of avoidance behaviors include *experiential avoidance*, which refers to deliberately altering the form and frequency of private experiences (bodily sensations, emotions, thoughts, memories, images, behavioral predispositions) that are aversive, or the contexts that occasion them (Hayes et al., 2004; Hayes, Wilson, Gifford, Follette, & Strosahl, 1996); *conflict avoidance*, which involves downplaying the importance of or denying the existence of conflict (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, & Nauta, 2001; Leung,

1988); and *issue avoidance*, which occurs when people intentionally avoid mentioning topics deemed too sensitive (Barlow et al., 2009).

Avoidance personality (also known as avoidance temperament) denotes a general sensitivity to negative stimuli accompanied by heightened vigilance, acute reactivity, and forceful behavioral response (Elliot & Thrash, 2010). Avoidance personality is related to neuroticism, negative emotionality, and the activation of the nervous behavioral inhibition system (Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Avoidance personality is thought to be inherited, may be influenced by experience and remains stable over time.

Avoidance motivation is a form of self-regulation that is activated during the pursuit of a goal, whereby people select performance activities designed to prevent failure (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1994). Avoidance motivation has been positively related to avoidance personality (Elliot & Thrash, 2002), competency expectancy (Elliot & Church, 1997), fear of failure, entity theory, and parental socialization practices which focus on person-based negative feedback and conditional approval regarding the child's performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). In addition, avoidance motivation is negatively associated with perceived control and incremental theory (Elliot & McGregor, 2001), as well as performance-approach goals (Elliot & Church, 1997).

In sum, the above review indicates that: 1) Avoidance represents a movement away from negative stimuli that is central for survival; 2) Avoidance is a coping mechanism designed to reduce negative emotions in the presence of potentially threatening situations; and 3) Avoidance may be conceptualized as a behavior, a personality trait, and a motivation.

Having clarified the definition of avoidance, I'll next review existing research on avoidance in intercultural context. To the best of my knowledge,

existing research is found in the intergroup contact literature. According to this research, people avoid contact with those from other cultures because of intergroup biases and prejudice, and of uncertainty and anxiety. Next, I briefly describe the specific theoretical frameworks and the specific studies based on these frameworks.

2.1.2 Intergroup prejudice as predictors of avoidance

The first reason people may avoid interacting with people from other cultures is because of intergroup bias and prejudice. Based on Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis, positive contacts between groups are necessary to reduce negative stereotypes and racist beliefs between people from different cultural groups. Recently, a meta-analysis of 515 studies established that positive intergroup contact reduced prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) by decreasing intergroup anxiety and enhancing intergroup knowledge and empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). From this perspective, prejudice and negative intergroup contact predict avoidance mediated by intergroup anxiety.

Consistent with the contact hypothesis, Barlow et al. (2012) found that white people were more likely to avoid contact with black people in general when they had racist beliefs or when prior experiences of intergroup contact were negative. Conversely, white people were less likely to avoid interactions with black people when prior experiences of contact were positive.

In another study, Barlow et al. (2009) found that cross-group friendships negatively predicted avoidance of contact between Aboriginal Australians and White Australian students, and that this relationship was mediated by intergroup anxiety and fear of rejection. This means that the more Aboriginal friends White Australians have, the less likely they are to avoid contact with members of the

Aboriginal community because they feel less anxious and fearful of being rejected.

In a third study, Barlow et al. (2010) found that fear of rejection positively predicted avoidance of contact with Aboriginal Australians by Australian students of Asian descent and that this relationship was mediated by intergroup anxiety. This was only true for Asian Australians with a strong identification with their Asian cultural heritage, presumably because anticipating rejection threatened their positive cultural identity, which generated anxiety. By comparison, fear of rejection was not related to avoidance by those Asian Australians with a weaker identification with their Asian cultural heritage, presumably since rejection by an out-group did not threaten their cultural identity nor produce anxiety or avoidance.

2.1.3 Uncertainty and anxiety as predictors of avoidance

The second reason people avoid interactions with those from other cultures is intercultural uncertainty and anxiety. According to Uncertainty and Anxiety Management (UAM) theory (Gudykunst, 2005), people must manage uncertainty and anxiety in order to communicate effectively with people from other cultures. Uncertainty refers to the inability to predict others' behaviors and intentions, and is a common feature of first encounters with strangers (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Anxiety is the affective outcome of uncertainty that is associated with the fear of being perceived negatively and being rejected by those who are different (Stephan, 2014; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). In the past, uncertainty and anxiety were negatively related to communication effectiveness (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001) and intercultural adjustment (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990). When uncertainty and anxiety are too high, psychological resources

become depleted, communication becomes awkward and people avoid interactions (Gudykunst, 2005).

Consistent with this view, Duronto et al. (2005) asked 114 Japanese students to recall an encounter with an international student whom they did not previously know. Results showed that uncertainty and anxiety were positively related to avoidance of interaction and communication with international strangers. Next, 233 Japanese college students recalled an encounter with an unfamiliar Japanese person. As expected, uncertainty was higher during the interaction with the international stranger than with a Japanese stranger. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in anxiety and avoidance between the two groups. While these findings suggest that avoidance stems from uncertainty and anxiety during interactions with strangers, it is not clear how much avoidance is driven by the fact that the parties are from different cultures.

2.1.4 Summary and need for research

The above literature review reveals that most studies on avoidance in intercultural contexts are concerned with interactions with strangers. These studies indicate that avoidance is lower for those who hold fewer racist beliefs (Barlow et al., 2012), more positive intergroup contacts (Barlow et al., 2012) and more friends from other groups (Barlow et al., 2009) because of lower uncertainty (Duronto et al., 2005) and anxiety (Barlow et al., 2009; Barlow et al., 2010; Duronto et al., 2005).

Importantly, this review shows that little is known about avoidance in contexts where people from different cultures are not strangers, such as when they work together. Interactions with strangers differ from interactions with people at work because avoiding strangers is easy and has limited consequences.

By comparison, avoiding people at work is much more challenging given that most work goals require frequent interactions with others to exchange information and obtain feedback (Howard, 1995). As a result, those who avoid interpersonal interactions are likely to see their performance falter (Nifadkar et al., 2012).

When people interact with others from different cultures at work, they are bound to have affective reactions. This is for two reasons. First, people may experience uncertainty and anxiety when they do not know how to predict and explain the behaviors of others (Gudykunst, 2004; Gudykunst, 2005). These reactions are anticipatory and produce negative expectations, which in turn prime negative emotions during intercultural interactions because people become more sensitive to cues that may confirm their expectations (Stephan, 2014). Second, misunderstandings and conflicts are inevitable when people who have different cultural backgrounds work together, largely because they often have different views on how to get the job done (Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999). When not managed effectively, these misunderstandings and conflicts produce negative emotions in people.

In this dissertation, I draw on two complementary theoretical frameworks, namely, social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and affective event theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) to conceptualize intercultural interactions as emotion-generating events. Next, I examine the role of two individual capabilities, language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence, and how they influence people's intercultural interactions at work. I review existing literature on these two constructs in the next sections.

2.2 Language Self-Efficacy

2.2.1 Definition

Language self-efficacy refers to a personal judgment of one's capability to communicate effectively in the language of interaction (Bandura, 1997). It is a specific form of efficacy belief (Wood & Bandura, 1989) targeted at situations where people communicate in a language that is not their mother tongue. It is distinct from general self-efficacy, which refers to the belief that one is capable of performing a variety of tasks and situations (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001; Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998).

Self-efficacy is a widely accepted and empirically validated predictor of individual behaviors. Based on social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs trigger effort and persistence (Bandura, 1997). This theory is supported by a large amount of empirical work demonstrating that efficacy beliefs specific to a particular task domain, are most relevant for predicting and understanding performance in a given situation (Bandura, 1989; Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

On the basis of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1982, 1997), people with greater language self-efficacy feel secure about their ability to express themselves, to communicate their thoughts and ideas in the language of interaction. Their confidence rests on previous successful interactions and the belief that difficulties are momentary obstacles that can be overcome with more effort. By comparison, those with low language self-efficacy doubt their own ability to communicate, worry about making mistakes, and interpret setbacks as evidence of their ineptitude even when their competence is objectively high (Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995).

Language self-efficacy is distinct from language proficiency (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994) which denotes the capability to use language that is elaborate and adapted to the situation, grammatically correct, and produced fluently and smoothly (Towell, 2012). In his social cognitive theory, Bandura (1982) makes a clear distinction between the “execution of response patterns”—which is associated with individual capabilities—and “self-appraisals of operative capabilities,” which refers to the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982, p. 122). The distinction between language self-efficacy and proficiency is important because people’s actions are not only driven by knowledge and ability, but also by beliefs about their ability to perform (Bandura, 1997).

Yet, to the best of my knowledge, research on language in management has not considered language self-efficacy, and most studies have been concerned with language proficiency. I’ll next review existing studies on language proficiency.

2.2.2 Existing research on language proficiency

Studies on language in the management literature can be divided into two groups based on their operationalization of language proficiency.

The first group of studies used a scale developed by Selmer (2006). One sample item is, “I cannot manage a conversation in Mandarin” (reverse polarity). These studies found that language ability in Mandarin was positively related to cultural, social and work adjustment for expatriates in China (Selmer, 2006). Host country language proficiency was positively related to social and work adjustment but not with cultural adjustment for expatriates in Korea probably because English-language services are available for expatriates in Seoul that do not require the use of Korean (Froese, Peltokorpi, & Ko, 2012).

The second group of studies, and by far the largest, operationalized language proficiency by sorting people into groups with varying levels of proficiency using a mixture of self- and observer-reported measures.

Among the studies that used self-reporting, one used a 4-point scale (with anchors none, basic, conversational, and fluent) and found that language proficiency in Japanese was positively associated with cultural adjustment, marginally related to social adjustment and unrelated to work adjustment for expatriates in Japan (Peltokorpi, 2008). One study used a 5-point scale (with anchors none, beginner, intermediate, advanced, and fluent) and found that language proficiency in Japanese had a positive association with cultural adjustment, social adjustment and job satisfaction, and unrelated to work adjustment and turnover intention for expatriates in Japan (Huff, 2013). One study asked participants to rate their proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and found that language ability in Chinese was negatively related to job performance, but that language ability in English was positively related to job performance (Chen, Lin, & Sawangpattanakul, 2011). One study used text analysis of interview transcripts to code for evidence of self-assessed language proficiency and found that host country language proficiency was positively related to boundary-spanning activities of managers in multinational organizations (Barner-Rasmussen et al., 2014).

In the studies that used observer-reported measures, the researchers sorted participants, based on interviews, into three groups of low, moderate, and high language proficiency. One study found that employees in the low proficiency group reported counterproductive behaviors, such as avoiding situations that required speaking the language, excluding native speakers from meetings, remaining silent, speaking in the mother tongue, or smiling and nodding when

they could not understand; whereas those in the moderate and high proficiency groups did not employ these behaviors (Hinds, Neeley, & Cramton, 2014). The second study found that employees judged those in the low language proficiency group more negatively in terms of competence, cognitive trust, and dependability than those in the moderate or high proficiency group, and that people in the low proficiency group reported more fear of losing face, being judged negatively, and feeling less trust in their more proficient colleagues (Tenzer et al., 2014).

One study used both self- and observer-reported measures to sort participants into groups with low, moderate and high proficiency (Neeley, 2013). Findings indicate that employees who rated their language proficiency as low made minimal effort to speak English, were more likely to withdraw during conversations and to avoid meetings when speaking English was required. Employees who rated their language proficiency as moderate reported feeling compelled to prove their worth and to speak more during interactions in the language. Lastly, employees who rated their language proficiency as high reported feeling motivated to interact with natives as a mean to improve their language skills. Neeley also found that among those she assessed as having high language proficiency, 47% (8) rated their proficiency as moderate. In turn, their reactions to interactions in the language were similar to their peers with moderate or low language proficiency.

2.2.3 Summary and need for research

The review of the literature indicates that most studies examining language in the management literature have been primarily concerned with language proficiency. By addressing only language proficiency, these studies have not considered the motivational processes linking ability to action. Indeed,

even when people have the knowledge and capability to communicate in a language, they may not do so if they feel anxious and have thoughts about being perceived negatively or being devalued (Neeley, 2013). Based on social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs determine “how people behave, their thought patterns, and the emotional reactions they experience in taxing situations” (Bandura, 1982, p. 122). The motivational nature of self-efficacy is particularly relevant to the present research question on how to reduce avoidance behaviors during intercultural interactions at work because of the motivational nature of avoidance behaviors (Elliot, 1999, 2006).

Based on construct correspondence theory, motivational predictors are better predictors of motivational outcomes than non-motivational predictors. Fishbein and Ajzen (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974) advanced construct correspondence theory as a general theory of behavioral prediction. The theory stipulates that predictors best predict criteria when the underlying constructs are conceptualized and measured at the same level of specificity (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). This theory is widely supported for attitude-behavior relationships, where specific behavior intentions are stronger predictors of specific behaviors while general attitudes are stronger predictors of general behavioral outcomes (Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006). Although developed specifically in the context of attitude-behavior relationships, the correspondence principle applies more broadly to other constructs, including motivational ones (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). As Hough and Furnham explain: “The best criterion-related validities are attained when researchers use a construct-oriented approach to match predictors to criteria” (2003, p. 136).

Thus, in this dissertation, I examine language self-efficacy as a predictor of avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts because of the motivational nature of the two constructs. Next, I review existing research on the construct of cultural intelligence.

2.3 Cultural Intelligence

2.3.1 Definition

Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to an individual's capability to function effectively in intercultural situations (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ang et al., 2007). It is an individual difference that characterizes a person's competence in the content domain of intercultural functioning. CQ does not denote a trait or an attitude (Leung et al., 2014). Instead, it is a skill that can be developed through training (Mor, Morris, & Joh, 2013; Rosenblatt, Worthley, & Macnab, 2013) and through experience in multicultural environments (Ng, Van Dyne, & Ang, 2009; Wang, Heppner, Wang, & Zhu, 2015).

The concept of cultural intelligence is anchored in the broader literature on intelligence (Sternberg & Detterman, 1986). It is a specific form of intelligence applied to situations in which an individual is required to solve problems characterized by cultural diversity (Earley & Ang, 2003). Consistent with Sternberg's (1986) theory of multiple-loci of intelligence, CQ has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions, with each dimension representing qualitatively distinct facets of overall CQ (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ang et al., 2007; Van Dyne et al., 2012).

Metacognitive CQ is an individual's level of conscious cultural awareness during intercultural interactions (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Van Dyne et al., 2012). It involves high-level cognitive strategies and deep information processing designed to acquire knowledge and develop guidelines for interaction with people from other cultures. Those with a high metacognitive CQ are consciously aware of how cultural norms and preferences influence behaviors and interpretations of intercultural situations, both before and during interactions. They also understand the importance of checking when behaviors differ from expectations and of planning before intercultural encounters (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Individuals with a high metacognitive CQ embrace confusion and ambiguity as an inherent but temporary part of intercultural interactions (Brislin, Worthley, & Macnab, 2006).

Cognitive CQ refers to a person's knowledge of norms, practices and conventions in different cultures that are both observable (e.g., communication styles, language, social roles and norms of interaction) and psychological (e.g., cultural value systems) (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Those with a high cognitive CQ form sophisticated mental models of culture, cultural environments, and how individuals are embedded in their own cultural context. These knowledge structures are particularly useful to understanding and anticipating patterns of interaction with people from different cultures. Thus, those with a high cognitive CQ know what to expect during intercultural interactions.

Motivational CQ is the capability to direct attention and energy toward learning about other cultures and functioning in intercultural situations (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Motivational CQ is critical in intercultural interactions because it provides a sense that one's actions can influence the course of events (Kanfer & Heggstad, 1997). When people want to achieve results, they exert effort

toward accomplishing a task (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Motivational CQ is critical to nurturing a sense of enjoyment from intercultural encounters. When people feel competent and in control, they are energized to pursue their natural inclinations (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Those with a high motivational CQ direct their attention and energy to facilitating successful intercultural interactions based on a genuine interest in cultures (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the confidence that they will be successful (Bandura, 2002).

Behavioral CQ denotes the capability to use a wide range of verbal and nonverbal actions beyond one's own cultural repertoire (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008). Thanks to this behavioral agility, those with a high behavioral CQ can engage in culturally appropriate behaviors that reduce others' misperceptions and misattributions of their behaviors (Ghahremani, Monterosso, Jentsch, Bilder, & Poldrack, 2010; Gudykunst, 2005), and allow for smooth intercultural interactions.

Next, I review existing studies on the outcomes of cultural intelligence. Then I review studies where CQ had a joint effect with other variables because the present study is concerned with the joint effect of CQ and language self-efficacy. To remain consistent with the scope of the present study, I only include studies that examine individual and relational outcomes, and exclude studies on team and organizational outcomes.

2.3.2 Outcomes of CQ

Since the publication of Earley & Ang's (2003) pioneering book *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures*, the research on CQ has enjoyed steady interest from scholars worldwide. To date, this body of research

has demonstrated the link between CQ and a variety of outcomes in intercultural contexts (Ang et al., 2015).

Table 2-1 summarizes the known outcomes of CQ. I ordered outcomes according to whether they denoted individual or relational outcomes. Next, I sorted outcomes according to whether they had a positive or negative association with CQ. As this review shows, the research has predominantly examined positive and individual outcomes of CQ with less attention paid to negative and relational outcomes.

For individual performance outcomes, CQ was positively related to task performance in 23 studies ($\rho = .35$), adaptive performance in six studies ($\rho = .46$), global leadership in ten studies ($\rho = .40$), cultural judgment and decision making in four studies ($\rho = .23$), and organizational citizenship behaviors in ten studies ($\rho = .36$) in meta-analyses by Rockstuhl and Van Dyne (2016). Studies not included in the meta-analysis found a positive relationship between CQ and leadership emergence (Lisak & Erez, 2015). For relational outcomes, CQ was positively associated with joint gains in intercultural negotiation (Groves, Feyerherm, & Gu, 2015; Imai & Gelfand, 2010).

For individual behavioral outcomes, CQ was positively related to socio-cultural adjustment ($\rho = .50$) in meta-analyses (Rockstuhl & Van Dyne, 2016). In other studies, CQ was positively related to cultural diversity in social network for managers in international organizations (Gjertsen, Torp, Tan, & Koh, 2010) and for international students during study abroad (Fehr & Kuo, 2008). For relational outcomes, CQ was positively related to collaborative behaviors in multicultural teams including pursuing goals that benefit both parties (Mor et al., 2013) and interpersonal helping behaviors (Wu & Ng, 2012), and during intercultural negotiations (Groves et al., 2015; Imai & Gelfand, 2010).

For individual affective outcomes, CQ was positively related to psychological well-being in 19 studies ($\rho = .28$) in meta-analysis (Rockstuhl & Van Dyne, 2016) and with positive affect and life satisfaction during study abroad (Wang et al., 2015). CQ was negatively related to intergroup anxiety in international organizations (Bücker, Furrer, Poutsma, & Buyens, 2014), emotional exhaustion and burnout for short-term business travelers (Tay, Westman, & Chia, 2008), and culture shock for migrant workers (Chen et al., 2011) and international students (Ward, Wilson, & Fischer, 2011). Interestingly, CQ was not related to negative affect during study abroad (Wang et al., 2015). For relational outcomes, CQ was positively related to affect-based trust in intercultural dyads (Chua, Morris, & Mor, 2012; Rockstuhl & Ng, 2008).

2.3.3 Joint effects of CQ and other variables

More recently, scholars have started to examine the joint effects of CQ with other variables in intercultural contexts (Ang et al., 2015). One study examined the interaction of CQ and cultural identification for effectiveness during international assignment (Peng, Van Dyne, & Oh, 2015), and looked at 98 students who enrolled in a five-week study abroad program and reported on their motivational CQ and cultural identification while peers reported on their cultural effectiveness. Based on cultural identity theory (Sussman, 2000), those who identify more strongly with their culture of origin should experience a greater identity threat during international experience which in turn reduces cultural effectiveness. This effect should be stronger for those with a low motivational CQ and weaker for those with a high motivational CQ because CQ buffers identity threats. Findings supported this hypothesis.

Table 2-1. Summary of Known Outcomes of Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

	Positive association with CQ	Negative association with CQ
	<i>Performance</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task performance • Adaptive performance • Global leadership • Cultural judgment and decision-making • Organizational citizenship behaviors • Customer satisfaction 	
	<i>Behavioral</i>	
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-cultural adjustment • Social networks 	
	<i>Affective</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological well-being • Positive affect and satisfaction with life during international assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture shock • Intercultural anxiety • Emotional exhaustion
	<i>Performance</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint negotiation profit 	
	<i>Behavioral</i>	
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest-based negotiation behaviors • Cooperative behaviors • Interpersonal helping 	
	<i>Affective</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect-based trust 	

Two studies examined the interaction of CQ and conflict management, and CQ and psychological contract for cultural adjustment. Chen, Wu, and Bian (2014) asked 260 international students in Taiwan to report on their CQ, conflict management style, and cultural adjustment. Based on conflict style theory (Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994), the researchers predicted that agreeable conflict style—wherein people pursue mutually beneficial goals—should be positively related to intercultural and social adjustment, and this effect will be more pronounced for those with a high CQ than a low CQ. By comparison, active conflict style—wherein people use assertive and direct conflict approach—will have a negative association with intercultural and social adjustment because this style stands in opposition to the principle of harmony that prevails in Asia, and this effect should be weaker for those with a high CQ. The findings generally supported these hypotheses.

Lee, Veasna, and Sukoco (2014) asked 256 expatriates based in China and Vietnam to report on their CQ, transactional and relational psychological contracts and cultural adjustment. Based on social exchange theory (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2010), those who hold a relational view of their assignment see international assignments as an opportunity for personal growth and long-term benefits, which leads them to exercise a greater effort to adjust. As a result, relational psychological contract should be positively related to cultural adjustment and CQ should strengthen this relationship. By comparison, when expatriates hold a transactional view of their international assignment, they weigh personal sacrifices (e.g., being away from family and friends) against compensation and modulate their efforts accordingly. As a result, the transactional psychological contract should be negatively related to cultural adjustment and CQ should weaken this relationship because a high CQ can

compensate for negative outcomes of the transactional contract. Findings generally supported these hypotheses.

2.3.4 Summary and need for research

As the literature review shows, the benefits of CQ in intercultural contexts are clear. A few studies also show that CQ influences how people react to intercultural situations such that those who are culturally intelligent have lower levels of anxiety (Bücker et al., 2014), cultural shock (Chen et al., 2011; Ward et al., 2011), or burnout (Tay et al., 2008). Interestingly, CQ was not associated with negative affect during study abroad (Wang et al., 2015). This finding is surprising given the potential of intercultural situations for negative events. It is also unclear how those with cultural intelligence respond behaviorally to these affective experiences and in particular, whether they are less likely to avoid interactions with those from other cultures.

The present literature review also shows that language has been largely overlooked in CQ research. To my knowledge, there is no study on the joint effects of CQ with language constructs. Whenever studies considered language, it was relegated to a control variable (e.g., Chen et al., 2011; Chen, Kirkman, Kim, Farh, & Tangirala, 2010; Huff, 2013; Huff, Song, & Gresch, 2014; Ward, Fischer, Zaid Lam, & Hall, 2009). I believe this is an important omission given the inseparability of language and culture. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, culture structures the values and worldviews that are communicated through language (Canagarajah, 2007; Elmes, 2013; Kramsch, 2014). When people from different cultures work together, they use different communication styles that influence how they convey meaning in the *lingua franca*. In some cultures, meaning is conveyed implicitly, while in others it is conveyed more

directly (Hall, 1989). People also differ on how they communicate messages using non-verbal means (Elfenbein, Beaupré, Lévesque, & Hess, 2007; Fontaine, Scherer, & Soriano, 2013). Accessing these sources of meaning requires not only knowing the language but also having an in-depth understanding of the culture of others (Brannen, 2004; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000).

Thus, I propose to examine language self-efficacy and CQ jointly in intercultural work contexts. I develop a model where language self-efficacy and CQ predict avoidance behaviors. I introduce the proposed model and hypotheses in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Theory and Hypotheses

In this chapter, I propose a model of avoidance in intercultural work contexts wherein people from different cultures must interact repeatedly to accomplish interdependent goals. The model proposes language self-efficacy and CQ as predictors, and interpersonal negative affect as a mediator.

First, I briefly describe social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to underscore the importance of the fundamental human need to maintain a positive and secure self-esteem. Second, drawing on affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), I conceptualize intercultural interactions as affective events because differences in language and cultural norms and assumptions challenge the fundamental need to maintain a positive self-concept. Next, I propose that language self-efficacy and CQ are two individual differences that influence how people react to these affective events. I hypothesize that language self-efficacy and CQ have both main and joint effects on avoidance behaviors. Lastly, I advance interpersonal negative affect as a mediator of the overall effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance. The proposed theoretical model is presented in Figure 3-1.

Taken together, I proposed a mediated interaction model whereby the interaction effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance is transmitted through interpersonal negative affect. The proposed model advances research on avoidance behaviors in intercultural contexts by extending existing knowledge on avoidance of people from different cultures to intercultural work contexts.

Figure 3-1. A Mediated Interaction Model of Avoidance in Intercultural Work Contexts

3.1 Social Identity Theory and the Fundamental Need for Positive Self-Concept

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is a theory of intergroup relations that was originally formulated to explain the processes leading to intergroup discrimination. The basic tenet of the theory is that people derive their self-concept from their membership in social groups (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to the theory, people spontaneously categorize themselves and others into groups, which they use as a basis for social comparison (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). As soon as distinct categories emerge, they instinctively modify their attitudes and behaviors in an effort to enhance their similarities with group members ("We're all much the same") and to emphasize their differences from other groups ("We're different from them") (Brewer, 1991; Hornsey & Jetten, 2004; Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963).

These processes are based on the premise that people have a fundamental need for a positive and secure self-concept (Tajfel, 1978). This need for a positive self-concept motivates people to use their group memberships for self-

enhancement (Hogg, 2000). People enhance their group's desirability and distinctiveness from other groups by attributing positive characteristics to in-group members and negative characteristics to out-group members (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, 1981).

The fundamental need to maintain a positive self-concept also gives rise to the need to reduce uncertainty (Hogg, 2000). In social interactions people want to know with some certainty that they will not make fools of themselves, offend others, or be poorly treated (Hogg, 2000; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Social categories help regulate social interactions by providing some certainty about what to expect and how to behave around others (Brewer, 2007). This makes interactions with similar others predictable and reinforces the sense of a confident and secure self. By comparison, interactions with dissimilar others are difficult to predict and more perilous to the self-concept (Chattopadhyay, George, & Ng, 2011). For example, studies show that minority members of diverse work groups tend to spend more time in performance monitoring activities than majority members because they do not know what is appropriate behavior in the majority culture (Guillaume, Van Knippenberg, & Brodbeck, 2014).

Thus, based on social identity theory, the inability to predict the behaviors and expectations of others during intercultural interactions challenges the fundamental need for a positive self-concept. Next, I draw on affective events theory to conceptualize intercultural interactions at work as affective events and further elaborate on how the need to maintain a positive self-concept produces affective reactions during these interactions.

3.2 Intercultural Interactions as Affective Events

3.2.1 Affective events theory

Affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) is a theory of emotions at work, which posits that events that occur at work produce affective reactions, which in turn influence people's attitudes and behaviors. According to Weiss and Cropanzano, affective events denote something "important happening [...] responsible for a change in what one is currently experiencing" (1996, p. 31). Negative events, in particular, have deep implications in work contexts given the natural tendency to react more strongly to negative events than to positive events (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Studies show that employees recall negative events with supervisors in greater detail than positive events (Dasborough, 2006), emotional contagion in teams is more likely to happen from negative than from positive events (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000); and negative emotions are more likely than positive ones to spill over outside the work context (Williams & Alliger, 1994). Negative events also have deep implications for intercultural relations. For example, it takes fewer negative interactions with people from different groups to engender racist beliefs than it takes positive interactions to alleviate them (Barlow et al., 2012).

The focus of affective events theory is on the emotions produced by events, and how they relate to behaviors. One important source of emotions in work contexts is interactions with people (Dimotakis, Scott, & Koopman, 2011) due to their complex, changing and unpredictable nature (Elfenbein, 2007). These affective reactions, in turn, influence how people behave with others. Negative events, in particular, produce negative emotions. According to Lazarus (1991), negative emotions signal that an event is incongruent with individual goals. When this happens, people seek to reduce or remove the source of

negative affect (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001). For example, people are more likely to engage in negative behaviors such as retaliation (Lyons & Scott, 2012; Yang & Diefendorff, 2009) and avoidance (Nifadkar et al., 2012) after experiencing negative emotions.

Based on Hall (1989), I propose that intercultural interactions are affective events because they challenge the self-concept due to differences in language and culture. Next, I describe why language and cultural differences are sources of affective events during intercultural interactions at work.

3.2.2 Language differences as a source of affective events

Language differences are the first source of affective events in intercultural work contexts. This is because people from different cultures rarely share the same native language and most interactions in a *lingua franca* involve at least one partner who is not a native speaker (Crystal, 2003; Feely & Harzing, 2003).

When people rely on a *lingua franca*, their self-concept as competent communicators is often challenged because one can rarely be as witty, articulate and smart in a second language as in their mother tongue (Horwitz, 2000). As scholars of foreign language education noted, “adults typically perceive themselves as reasonably intelligent, socially-adept individuals, sensitive to different socio-cultural mores. As an individual’s communication attempts will be evaluated according to uncertain or even unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards, second language communication entails risk-taking and is necessarily problematic. [...] Thus, adult language learners’ self-perceptions of genuineness in presenting themselves to others may be threatened by the limited

range of meaning and affect that can be deliberately communicated” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 128).

At work, communication in the *lingua franca* is a challenge because people are often limited in their ability to impress others with their use of humor, nuance, symbolism, and influence tactics (Harzing & Feely, 2008). This often generates feelings of incompetence and depreciation (Beyene, 2007; Neeley, 2013; Tenzer et al., 2014). These negative reactions make language differences and the need to communicate in a *lingua franca* the first source of affective events in intercultural work contexts.

3.2.3 Differences in cultural norms and assumptions as a source of affective events

Differences in cultural norms and assumptions are the second source of affective events in intercultural work contexts. When people from different cultures work together, they often have different expectations and beliefs about appropriate work behaviors. For example, they might have different understandings of teamwork (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001) and different role expectations (Stone-Romero et al., 2003) that influence how they evaluate others' performance when they do not conform to these expectations. People also have different expectations of their leaders, such that certain characteristics that are seen positively in some cultures (e.g., charisma, risk-taking) may be seen negatively in other cultures (Javidan, Dorfman, de Luque, & House, 2006).

They may also have different beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior. For example, Americans consider emotional displays in the workplace unprofessional because they view professional and personal matters as separate, whereas Mexicans do not make such distinctions and as a result are comfortable

with, and even expect, shows of emotions at work, and these different relational schemas influence how they interact with their colleagues at work (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2000). People in “clock-time” cultures (e.g., North America, Northern Europe) expect punctuality at all times because it signals respect, whereas people in “event-time” cultures (e.g., the Middle East) see appointments and deadlines as loose guidelines based on an emphasis on relationships (Brislin & Kim, 2003). In some cultures it is acceptable to discuss conflicts openly, whereas it is inappropriate in other cultures to do so (Von Glinow, Shapiro, & Brett, 2004).

These cultural norms and assumptions are often held implicitly, and people are rarely aware that they exist (Triandis, 2006). As Edward Hall noted in his seminal book, *The Silent Language*, “Most people are not conscious of the elaborate patterning of behavior which prescribes our handling of time, our spatial relationships, our attitudes toward work, play, and learning. In addition to what we say with our verbal language we are constantly communicating our real feelings in our silent language—the language of behavior. Sometimes this is correctly interpreted by other nationalities, but more often it is not” (1959, p. 15).

As a result, cultural differences are a major source of uncertainty when people from different cultures work together because they do not know what to expect from others and how to explain their behaviors (Gudykunst, 2005). When people do not know what to expect from others, they anticipate negative consequences, such as feeling awkward, embarrassing themselves, offending others, or being harmed by others, which directly targets their self-concept (Stephan, 2014). These negative expectations prime negative emotions during interactions by focusing attention to negative cues (Stephan, 2014). Cultural differences also increase the risk of misunderstandings and conflicts during work

interactions (Matsumoto et al., 2005; Matsumoto & Takeushi, 1998), which in turn in turn threaten the self-concept and induce negative emotions (Chattopadhyay et al., 2010). These negative reactions make differences in cultural rules and assumptions between people from different cultures the second source of affective events in intercultural work contexts.

3.3 The Effect of Language Self-Efficacy, Cultural Intelligence and Interpersonal Negative Affect on Avoidance in Intercultural Work Contexts

In the previous section, I conceptualized interactions between people from different cultures as affective events because differences in language and cultural norms of interaction challenge the fundamental need for a positive and secure self-concept. In this section, I propose that language self-efficacy and CQ are two individual differences that influence how people react to these affective events.

Based on affective events theory, people do not react equally to affective events. According to Weiss and Cropanzano, “individuals are not passive recipients of environmental pressure. Instead, individuals move through their lives both influencing and being influenced by their environments” (1996, p. 39). In intercultural work contexts, management scholars have argued that people react differently to intercultural work environments because of differences in their preference and ability to work with those from other cultures (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007).

Thus, I theorize that those who have language self-efficacy and CQ should exhibit lower levels of avoidance behaviors during intercultural interactions at work because of their capability to enhance their self-concept and to reduce uncertainty. Next, I propose that interpersonal negative affect mediates the effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance behaviors.

3.3.1 The negative relationship between language self-efficacy and avoidance

I propose that language self-efficacy is negatively related to avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts because those with higher language self-efficacy can enhance their self-concept and reduce uncertainty during intercultural interactions at work. According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), people who are confident in their ability focus their effort on learning and getting better. As a result, they see interactions in the *lingua franca* as opportunities to learn and improve their skills, which serves to enhance their self-concept (Neeley, 2013). Those who are highly conversant in the *lingua franca* also enjoy a positive status in organizations, which reduces uncertainty about being perceived negatively by others (Neeley & Dumas, 2016; Paunova, 2016). In turn, they do not avoid intercultural interactions.

By comparison, those with lower language self-efficacy are unable to enhance their self-concept and reduce uncertainty during intercultural interactions at work. According to self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), those with low self-efficacy attribute mistakes and failures to fundamental flaws in their character and intelligence. This makes them vulnerable to social comparison and fearful of exposing what they perceive as their own limitations. As a result, they see interactions in the *lingua franca* as threatening to their self-worth and

unpredictable. In turn, they respond by avoiding intercultural interactions (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Henderson, 2005; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Neeley, 2013; Phillips, 1992; Yashima, 2002).

Based on the above argument, I propose that:

Hypothesis 1: Language self-efficacy is negatively related to avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts.

3.3.2 The negative relationship between CQ and avoidance

Next, I propose that CQ is negatively related to avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts because those with higher CQ can enhance their self-concept and reduce uncertainty during intercultural interactions at work. Those with greater cognitive CQ have acquired sophisticated knowledge structures that enable them to anticipate interaction patterns and explain the meaning behind the behaviors of people from different cultures. Those with greater metacognitive CQ can visualize intercultural interactions ahead of time and formulate plans leading to positive outcomes (Van Dyne et al., 2012). These mental representations of what to expect increase the perception of control and predictability and decrease uncertainty. They may also revise their knowledge and assumptions about other cultures when behaviors do not match their expectations (Rosenblatt et al., 2013). This, in turn, expands their mental models of intercultural interactions, and increases their confidence to effectively engage in intercultural interactions, which enhance their self-concept. Those with greater behavioral CQ have a broad repertoire of verbal and nonverbal behaviors, which makes them less likely to commit faux pas and offend others, and reduces uncertainty. Those with greater motivational CQ tend to feel confident that they can be effective during interactions with colleagues from other cultures, which

enhances their self-concept and reduces uncertainty. In turn, they are less likely to avoid intercultural interactions.

By comparison, those with lower CQ are unable to enhance their self-concept nor reduce uncertainty during intercultural interactions at work. Those with low cognitive CQ do not know the value and belief systems of other cultures and how they differ from their own (Van Dyne et al., 2012), and those with low meta-cognitive CQ lack the capability to accurately infer the intentions, desires, and beliefs of those from other cultures (Triandis, 1975). When people cannot accurately explain the reasons behind ambiguous behaviors, they tend to rely on their own cultural understanding (Triandis, 2006) and attribute behaviors to negative traits (e.g., incompetence) or adverse intentions (e.g., hostile motives) (Ross, 1977). This increases perceived uncertainty because of the inability to predict and explain people's behaviors, and threatens the self-concept. Those with low behavioral CQ lack the skills to engage in culturally appropriate behaviors, which threatens the self-concept and enhances uncertainty by increasing the risk of committing faux-pas and offending others. Those with low motivational CQ are not motivated to adapt to other cultures, which increases the risk of being perceived negatively by others and threatens the self-concept. In turn, those with lower CQ are more likely to avoid intercultural interactions.

Based on the above argument, I propose that:

Hypothesis 2: Cultural intelligence is negatively related to avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts.

3.3.3 The joint effect of combining language self-efficacy and CQ

Although I expected that language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence would be negatively related to avoidance behaviors, I propose that the two

capabilities have a joint effect that may produce an even greater reduction in avoidance behaviors than what either capability might achieve alone. This is because based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (see Canagarajah, 2007; Elmes, 2013; Kramsch, 2014), language and culture are profoundly interconnected. Thus, I propose that a person with either high CQ or high language self-efficacy will only be able to enhance her self-concept and reduce uncertainty to a small extent as compared to someone high in both language self-efficacy and CQ.

For instance, a person with high CQ but poor language self-efficacy will have misunderstandings with others if she cannot understand their words or if others cannot understand hers. Likewise, a person with high language self-efficacy but low CQ will be unable to accurately infer the meaning of others if she does not know how culture affects the meanings that people have for words, their communication styles, and their non-verbal behaviors. These events, in turn, threaten the self-concept and enhance uncertainty. Thus, intercultural interactions can induce avoidance behaviors when people have either low language self-efficacy or low CQ.

By comparison, a person who is high in both language self-efficacy and CQ will know to interpret the meaning of words in the *lingua franca* through the cultural lens of the communicator and this will reduce misunderstandings and conflicts. For example, she will know that when Americans apologize, they mean to take responsibility for a wrongdoing whereas Japanese intend to show that they are eager to repair the relationship (Maddux, Kim, Okumura, & Brett, 2011). She will know that meaning can be hidden in the context depending on whether the person comes from a high or a low context culture even when communicating in the *lingua franca* (Hall, 1989), and she will know to adapt her own message accordingly so as to avoid offending others or being misunderstood. She will also

know to interpret the non-verbal behaviors that accompany words and give them meaning based on the culture of the communicator (Elfenbein et al., 2007; Fontaine et al., 2013). Thus, avoidance behaviors should be lowest during intercultural interactions for those with both high language self-efficacy and CQ.

While research on the joint effects of language self-efficacy and CQ is scarce, one study provides preliminary evidence to support the benefits of the joint effect in the area of boundary-spanning activities for managers in multinational organizations (Barner-Rasmussen et al., 2014). In this study, the authors argued that those with in-depth knowledge of both the language and the culture should be better at grasping the meaning associated with a given cultural concept (Brannen, 2004; Hong et al., 2000), and this should lead to more boundary-spanning activities than for those with knowledge of only one. Based on 145 interviews with employees from four multinational organizations, they coded for evidence of boundary-spanning activities, language and cultural skills. As expected, both language and cultural skills were positively associated with boundary-spanning activities, and the rate of boundary spanning activities was significantly greater for those with both language and cultural skills than for those with one capability alone. Likewise, the rate of boundary-spanning activities for those with one capability was significantly higher than for those with neither language nor cultural skills. Similarly, I expected that combining language self-efficacy and CQ would produce a greater reduction in avoidance behaviors than having language self-efficacy or CQ alone.

Based on the arguments and preliminary evidence cited above, I propose:

Hypothesis 3: Language self-efficacy and CQ have joint effects on avoidance behaviors such that avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and

CQ are high, compared to other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ.

(See Figure 3-2.)

Figure 3-2. Hypothesized Joint Effects of Language Self-Efficacy and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on Avoidance

3.3.4 The mediating role of interpersonal negative affect

So far, I have argued that language self-efficacy and CQ are negatively related to avoidance and that combining language self-efficacy and CQ produces a joint effect on avoidance such that avoidance is the lowest when the two capabilities are combined compared to other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. This is because those who are high in both capabilities are better equipped to enhance their self-concept and reduce uncertainty during intercultural interactions at work. I now propose that the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance is transmitted through interpersonal negative affect.

Interpersonal negative affect represents negative emotions experienced during interpersonal interactions at work. In past research, interpersonal negative affect was a key mechanism of avoidance behaviors at work (Nifadkar et al., 2012). It must be noted that affect is a broad term that encompasses various affective components including emotions (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Kelly & Barsade, 2001). As Barsade and Gibson noted, affect is an “umbrella term encompassing a broad range of feelings that individuals experience, including feeling states, such as moods and discrete emotions, and traits, such as trait positive and negative affectivity” (2007, p. 38). Emotions refer to the psychological and physiological sense of being affected emotionally by an event and are target-specific states (Frijda, 1986), whereas moods denote generalized, low-intensity affective states with no specific target (Frijda, 1994), trait affect refers to an individual’s inclination to view the world through a positive or negative lens (Lazarus, 1991).

Following the conceptualization of Nifadkar et al. (2012), I operationalize interpersonal negative affect as the negative emotions that people experience during interactions with a specific person from a different culture at work.

Based on Hypothesis 3’s joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ as well as the argument proposing emotions as a proximal cause of avoidance behaviors at work, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4: *Interpersonal negative affect mediates the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts.*

CHAPTER 4: Study 1

4.1 Overview

Study 1 tested the main effects (Hypotheses 1 & 2) and joint effects (Hypothesis 3) of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance behaviors. Study 1 was conducted using a sample of 108 foreign household service workers in Singapore based on a time-lagged multisource design and received approval from the relevant institutional review board.

Household service workers are migrants from developing countries who find employment as domestic help overseas. They are often referred to as “foreign domestic workers,” “helpers,” or “maids.” The International Labor Organization (2015) estimates that there are 53 million household service workers around the world, predominantly women (83%) who are employed in Asia and Latin America. Singapore, where the study was conducted, hosts 227,100 household service workers (Singapore Ministry of Manpower, 2015). These workers have been the subject of numerous studies in the social sciences predominantly concerned with employment conditions within a legal framework (Huang & Yeoh, 1996; Yeoh, Huang, & Devasahayam, 2004). Some studies have also examined questions related to cultural identity and integration (Yeoh & Huang, 1998, 2000). To my knowledge, none has looked at how workers interact with their employers.

Household service workers offer a relevant context for the present study for two reasons. First, with rare exception, service workers and their employer come from dissimilar cultural backgrounds. In Singapore, household service workers are generally from the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Sri

Lanka, India, and Vietnam. Most find employment with Singaporean families or within the expatriate community. Second, given the nature of domestic work, which includes housekeeping, child care, and elderly care, interdependence between service workers and their employer is high.

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Sample and procedure

Participants in Study 1 were 108 household service workers attending a financial literacy course in Singapore. All were female. The mean age was 34.3 years ($SD = 6.0$ years). Participants came from the Philippines (68.5%), Indonesia (25.9%), Myanmar (3.7%), and Sri Lanka (1.9%). Of these, 58.3% had secondary education, 39.8% had some college and higher education, and 1.9% had only primary school education. 67.6% had at least four years of formal English education; all participants could speak English and had friends with whom they spoke English. 74% had female employer. Participants attended the bi-monthly course for nine months.

Demographic variables were obtained from the organization database. Measures for the variables of interest were collected using paper-and-pencil surveys in class at three-month intervals over a six-month period.

Time 0. The first day of the course, participants were invited to join the study and asked for their consent. After that, they completed a survey containing the control variables, a measure of CQ, and an English test.

Time 1. Three months later, participants answered a second survey on language self-efficacy and avoidance behaviors directed toward their employers.

Time 2. Three months following the second survey, a third survey was administered asking participants about their avoidance behaviors and employer support. Participants also received an invitation letter, questionnaire, and return envelope for employers to report participants' avoidance behaviors.

Of the original sample, 195 participants agreed to join the study, and two declined. Of the remaining sample, 81 (42%) observations were removed due to missing values, another because the participant and employer shared the same nationality, and five because English was not the *lingua franca*. Of the 81 participants who gave incomplete data, 40 dropped out of the course before the study ended. The remaining 41 were either absent on the day of data collection or returned incomplete questionnaires. Based on independent sample t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs), those providing incomplete data were two years younger ($p < .05$) on average and scored 0.5 points lower in language self-efficacy ($p < .01$). The difference in language self-efficacy indicates that conducting the surveys in English may have contributed to missing values. There was no significant difference in avoidance, CQ, personality, or perceived employer support. Interestingly, no significant difference was noted on the English test, suggesting that perceptions of language self-efficacy were driving the missing values more than any real language difficulties.

4.2.2 Employer responses

At Time 2, participants invited their employers to take part in a short survey asking about avoidance behaviors. 56 employers returned the survey, which represents 52% of the final sample. The employers who returned the survey were predominantly female (85.7%) and university educated (82.1%). They came from 18 countries: Singapore (28.6.1%), the United Kingdom

(14.3%), France (10.7%), Malaysia (7.1%), Australia (7.1%), the Philippines (5.4%), India (3.6%), the U.S. (3.6%), Hong Kong (3.6%), China (1.8%), Germany (1.8%), Finland (1.8%), Belarus (1.8%), the Netherlands (1.8%), Switzerland (1.8%), South Korea (1.8%), New Zealand (1.8%), and Ireland (1.8%). Most had lived overseas for at least one year (80.4%) and could speak more than one language (80.4%); 78.6% reported speaking English at home most of the time.

I excluded seven responses due to missing values on the predictor variables, two because of shared nationality with the service worker, and two because English was not the *lingua franca* spoken. The final dataset comprises 45 observations with complete employer responses.

4.2.3 Questionnaire development

When designing the questionnaire, I was concerned that acquiescence bias and language proficiency might pose a threat to the internal validity of the data. Acquiescence bias occurs when participants show a propensity for agreeing with every statement presented (Baumgartner & Steenkamp, 2001). In past studies, acquiescent responses were more prevalent among survey participants who had lower education and income (Heaven, 1983; Javeline, 1999; Mirowsky & Ross, 1991; Watson, 1992), poorer English proficiency (Harzing, 2006), and who came from countries with higher levels of corruption leading to lower self-confidence and ingrained subordination and conformity patterns (Meisenberg & Williams, 2008). Given that these characteristics applied to participants in the present sample, I took additional steps to minimize the bias.

Acquiescence is often greatest on questions of a conformist or moralist nature, those that are worded more positively, and those that have a scale

anchored between “good” and “bad” choices (e.g., “agree” vs. “disagree,” “not important” vs. “very important”) (Meisenberg & Williams, 2008). Thus, I sought to word items in a descriptive and neutral manner, inviting participants to “select the answer that best described them as they really are” on an anchored scale ranging from “not at all” to “extremely.” Because language proficiency could affect how participants interpreted the questions (Harzing, 2006), I simplified the wording of items as much as possible without compromising the internal validity of the scales. I also discussed the questionnaire with the executive director and the head of research at the organization, and revised the survey based on their recommendations.

I conducted two focus groups with 12 students and alumni who did not participate in the survey, using a convenience sample with characteristics of nationality and language proficiency representative of the final sample. I asked participants to complete the questionnaire individually. We then discussed every item one by one as a group. If there was confusion over a word, I asked participants to propose alternative wording that would be better understood.

Lastly, I ran a pilot test with a shorter version of the questionnaire and a sample of 15 participants enrolled in the course. A bilingual Bahasa Indonesia speaker conducted the course in English. All participants were Indonesian with English proficiency expected to be lower than average, given that they had elected to attend a bilingual version of the course. I encouraged participants to ask for clarification when they could not understand a word or concept. When this happened, I first explained the word or concept in English and then asked participants to rephrase what I said. When there was an inconsistency, two bilingual Bahasa Indonesia speakers translated. No major changes to the questionnaire occurred following the pilot test.

4.2.4 Measures

Participants rated all of the variables in the model on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Dependent Variables

Avoidance (self-rated) was measured with self-ratings on three items adapted from Nifadkar et al. (2012) at two points in time (Time 1 and Time 2). Items included “I don’t speak with my employer unless it is necessary,” “I avoid starting conversations with my employer,” and “As much as possible, I don’t ask my employer for help or information.” Cronbach alphas were .71 and .82 for Times 1 and 2, respectively.

I combined Times 1 and 2 measures to form an aggregate score for self-rated avoidance. Based on affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), discrete events at work produce emotions that influence behaviors. When people work together for extended periods of time, they encounter events that may affect the way they feel about each other, and these emotional states vary over time (Ashkanasy, 2003). Thus, aggregating the measures of Times 1 and 2 should provide a more stable measurement of the overall construct of avoidance across time.

Prior to aggregation, I examined measurement invariance of the construct of avoidance across the two time points using CFA and a multi-sample approach, based on procedures suggested by Vandenberg and Lance (2000). Results are presented in Table 4-1. First, I tested a one-factor model (Model 1) with no constraint to test for structural invariance across the two time points (parameters at Time 1 and Time 2 freely estimated). Results demonstrated a perfect fit ($\chi^2 (0) = 0$, GFI = 1, SRMR = 0, RMSEA = 0), indicating that the one-factor model held

across time periods. This was expected, given that the model had only one latent construct. Next, I developed two alternative models: Model 2 (factor loading held as invariant) and Model 3 (factor loadings and error terms held as invariant). The chi-square difference between Models 1 and 2 (nested factorial invariance model) were not significant ($\Delta\chi^2 [3df] = 5.79, ns$), providing strong support for invariance in the factor loadings across time points. The chi-square difference between Models 2 and 3 (error terms held as invariant) were also not significant ($\Delta\chi^2 [3df] = 7.18, ns$), supporting invariance uniqueness across time points. Thus, an overall measure of avoidance was created, using the mean of Time 1 and Time 2 measures. Cronbach's alpha for this aggregate measure is .74.

Avoidance (employer-rated) was measured using employer ratings of avoidance on the same items adapted from Nifadkar et al. (2012) after changing the target. A sample item was "My household service worker doesn't speak with me unless it is necessary." Cronbach's alpha is .78.

Independent Variables

Language self-efficacy was measured using self-ratings. I adapted four items from Williams and Deci's (1996) perceived competence scale. Items included "I believe I can speak English," "I am capable of expressing myself in English," "I can participate in conversations in English," and "I can meet the challenge of communicating in English." Cronbach's alpha is .89.

Table 4-1. Multiple Group CFA across Time: Comparing the Fit of Alternative Models (Study 1)

Model	Description	χ^2	df	χ^2 / df	GFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Model 1	One-factor model with factor loadings freely estimated across time	0	0	N/A	1	0	0		
<i>Alternative nested models:</i>									
Model 2	One-factor model with invariant factor loadings across time	5.79	3	1.93	.98	.09	.10	5.79	3
Model 3	One-factor model with invariant error terms	12.97	6	2.16	.97	.08	.11	7.18	3

Note. N = 108. GFI = Goodness of Fit Index. SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square. RMSEA = Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation.

Cultural intelligence was measured using self-ratings on nine items adapted from the CQ Scale (Ang et al., 2007). Examples of items include “I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar,” “I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures,” “I change the way I speak when I meet people from different cultures,” and “I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.” Cronbach’s alpha is .78.

Control Variables

Big Five personality traits. I controlled for personality traits because research has shown that broad dispositional tendencies influence how people experience events in their lives (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Diener & Lucas, 1999). Moreover, neuroticism has been positively associated with avoidance motivation (Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Thus, I expected a positive relationship between neuroticism and avoidance. I assessed the Big 5 personality traits using 14 items from Goldberg’s (1999) IPIP-FFM. The final scale consisted of agreeableness (4 items, $\alpha = .71$), conscientiousness (3 items, $\alpha = .73$), extraversion (3 items, $\alpha = .68$), openness to experience (3 items, $\alpha = .74$), and neuroticism (3 items, $\alpha = .75$).

Objective language proficiency. I controlled for objective language proficiency to demonstrate the incremental validity of language self-efficacy above and beyond objective proficiency. I used a test adapted from the British Council Overseas Placement Test¹ already in use in the organization, consisting of 16 questions designed to assess comprehension of written English and

¹ I contacted the British Council to find out about existing research on the predictive validity of the Overseas Placement Test. I was told that no such research has been done. The British Council is a leading provider of English education and examinations with offices in 110 countries. <https://www.britishcouncil.sg/>

command of basic grammar and vocabulary. This test is typically used to assign prospective students to the classes suited to their language proficiency. The maximum score is 27; higher scores signal greater proficiency. In this study, the mean score was 15.2 (SD = 5.5).

Age. I controlled for age because in past research, younger people reported greater negative affect than older people (Thomsen, Mehlsen, Viidik, Sommerlund, & Zachariae, 2005). Given the positive relationship between negative affect and avoidance, I wanted to rule out a potential negative effect of age on avoidance.

Perceived employer support. I controlled for perceived employer support because research shows that employer support is negatively related to avoidance (Nifadkar et al., 2012). I used six items adapted from the Perceived Organizational Support scale. Items included “My employer shows concern for me,” “My employer cares about my well-being,” “My employer strongly considers my goals and values,” “My employer is proud of my accomplishments,” “My employer is willing to help me when I need a special favor,” and “My employer values my contribution to the family.” Cronbach’s alpha is .91.

Employer gender. Finally, I controlled for employer gender because relational demography research has shown that employees who share similar demographic characteristics with their supervisors received higher performance ratings (Tsui & O’Reilly, 1989) and enjoyed a more positive relationship (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007). Given that all participants in the sample were female, I expected greater avoidance when an employer was male. I coded male employers as 0 and female employers as 1.

4.2.5 Confirmatory factor analysis

Prior to determining the scales of regression analysis, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis, using LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) to assess the discriminant validity of the latent variables in Study 1. Due to the small sample size, I only included the main variables of avoidance, language self-efficacy, CQ, and the control variable of perceived employer support in the confirmatory factor analysis. I conducted a separate confirmatory analysis for the Big 5 personality traits. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis for the Big 5 personality traits using all items supported the discriminant validity of the 5-factor model ($\chi^2(94) = 154.97, p < .01$, IFI = .90, SRMR = .08, RMSEA = .08). All factor loadings were significant.

I created parcels by aggregating subsets of items in each scales. Parcels present several advantages in structural equation modeling, including increasing the reliability of model fit by reducing the number of indicators needed to estimate (Coffman & MacCallum, 2005). For the latent variable of CQ, I created indicators corresponding to the four factors of cognitive CQ, metacognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ, by aggregating items from the respective subscales. For the latent variables of language self-efficacy and perceived support, I created indicators by aggregating pairs of items from the respective scales.

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis are summarized in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2. Model Comparison for Confirmatory Factor Analysis for All Self-Reported Variables (Study 1)

Model	Description	χ^2	df	χ^2 / df	IFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Model 1	Hypothesized 4-factor model	62.06	48	1.29	.98	.06	.05		
<i>Alternative nested models:</i>									
Model 2	3-factor model combining language self-efficacy and CQ	154.18	51	3.02	.82	.11	.12	92.12**	3
Model 3	2-factor model combining avoidance and perceived employer support	261.85	53	4.94	.64	.15	.19	199.79**	5
Model 4	Single-factor model	318.34	54	5.90	.54	.18	.21	256.28**	6

Note. N = 108. IFI = incremental fit index. SRMR = standardized root mean square. RMSEA = root mean-square error of approximation. ** $p < .01$.

As the results show, the hypothesized 4-factor model (avoidance, language self-efficacy, CQ, and perceived employer support) has a better fit to the data ($\chi^2(48) = 62.06$, ns, IFI = .98, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .05) than three plausible competing models, including a 3-factor model that combines language self-efficacy and CQ into a single latent variable ($\Delta\chi^2[3df] = 92.12$, $p < .01$); a 2-factor model that combines language self-efficacy and CQ, and combines avoidance and perceived employer support into two latent variables ($\Delta\chi^2[5df] = 199.79$, $p < .01$); and a single-factor model that combines all items into one latent construct ($\Delta\chi^2[6df] = 256.28$, $p < .01$). All factor loadings were found to be significant. These results support the discriminant validity of the main variables.

To further examine the discriminant validity of the main variables from the Big 5 personality traits, I also considered the disattenuated correlations between the main variables and the Big 5 personality traits. These correlations ranged from .00 to .58. Taken together, the results presented in this section provide evidence of the discriminant validity of the variables in the model.

4.2.6 Statistical Approach

The primary goal of Study 1 was to test the main effects (Hypotheses 1 & 2) and interaction effect (Hypothesis 3) of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance behaviors in an intercultural work context. I tested the hypotheses using ordinary least square (OLS) regression in SPSS Statistics 23. This method was deemed appropriate considering that all the variables in the dataset were at the individual level of analysis. All predictors in the model were grand-mean centered prior to analysis in order to avoid any multicollinearity problems associated with the interaction variables (Aiken & West, 1991).

I ran two separate regression analyses on self-rated avoidance and employer-rated avoidance. In each set of regression analysis, I first entered all control variables in Model 1. Next, I added the main effects of language self-efficacy and CQ in Model 2 to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. Lastly, I entered the interaction term of language self-efficacy and CQ in Model 3 to test Hypothesis 3.

Consistent with recommendations on handling control variables (Bernierth & Aguinis, 2016; Spector & Brannick, 2011), I also tested my hypotheses in a baseline model without control variables and compared the effect sizes after entering the control variables. This approach provides a more stringent test by ruling out whether control variables are responsible for the hypothesized relationships. This approach is also useful to ascertain relationships with a small sample size and low statistical power, such as with the dataset containing employer data.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and internal consistency reliability are presented in Table 4-3 for all variables.

Table 4-3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Individual Level Variables (Study 1)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Dependent Variables</i>														
1. Self-rated avoidance	2.3	0.8	(.74)											
2. Employer-rated avoidance	1.8	0.8	.10	(.78)										
<i>Individual Variables</i>														
3. Language self-efficacy	3.6	0.8	-.15	-.22	(.89)									
4. CQ	2.8	0.6	-.17	-.15	.10	(.78)								
<i>Control Variables</i>														
5. Objective language proficiency	15.2	5.5	-.04	-.16	.22*	.16	--							
6. Agreeableness	3.7	0.8	-.08	-.33*	.44**	.39**	.28**	(.71)						
7. Conscientiousness	3.7	0.8	-.25**	-.07	.45**	.29**	.23*	.42**	(.73)					
8. Extraversion	2.8	0.8	-.24*	-.11	.11	.31**	.05	.32**	.40**	(.68)				
9. Openness	4.2	0.7	-.18	-.10	.23*	.34**	.34**	.45**	.40**	.33**	(.74)			
10. Neuroticism	2.4	0.8	.13	.00	-.03	.08	.06	.01	.00	.25**	.14	(.75)		
11. Perceived support	3.8	0.9	-.28**	-.09	.19*	.22*	.18	.24*	.36**	.29**	.18	-.04	(.91)	
12. Age	34.3	6.0	-.09	-.21	.23*	.02	-.01	.20*	.08	.11	.00	-.07	.19	--
13. Employer gender (0 = Male; 1 = Female)	0.7	0.4	-.19*	-.02	.05	-.03	.02	-.03	.02	.02	.15	-.02	.03	.01

Notes. N (Individual) = 108. N (Employer) = 45. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha coefficients) are on the diagonal. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Correlations reveal some interesting bivariate relationships. For instance, the personality traits of conscientiousness ($r = -.25, p < .01$) and extraversion ($r = -.24, p < .05$) are negatively related to self-reported avoidance, while agreeableness ($r = -.33, p < .05$) is negatively related to employer-rated avoidance. Perceived employer support ($r = -.28, p < .01$) and employer gender ($r = -.19, p < .05$) are negatively related to self-rated avoidance but not to employer-rated avoidance, suggesting that household service workers report less avoidance when employers are female and supportive. Neither language self-efficacy nor CQ is significantly related to self-rated avoidance or employer-rated avoidance.

4.3.2 Hypothesis tests

Hypotheses 1 and 2 assert that language self-efficacy and CQ are negatively related to avoidance behaviors, respectively. Hypothesis 3 states that language self-efficacy and CQ have a joint effect such that avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high, compared to other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. I tested these hypotheses with self-rated avoidance followed by employer-rated avoidance. Results of the OLS regression analyses for self-rated avoidance are reported in Table 4-4. I also reported results without control variables in Table 4-5.

Avoidance (self-rated). The results of Model 1 of Table 4-4 show that none of the control variables are significantly related to avoidance. Results of the test of Hypotheses 1 and 2 in Model 2 show that language self-efficacy ($\beta = -.15, ns$) and CQ ($\beta = -.12, ns$) are not significantly related to avoidance. The results of

Model 1 in Table 4-5 show that effect sizes are comparable for language self-efficacy ($\beta = -.14$, *ns*) and CQ ($\beta = -.16$, *ns*) when no control variable is added. Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are not supported for self-rated avoidance.

The test of Hypothesis 3 lies with the interaction term between language self-efficacy and CQ. Results in Model 3 of Table 4-4 show that the interaction term between language self-efficacy and CQ is significant and negative ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .05$). The interaction of language self-efficacy and CQ increased the variance explained in avoidance by 4%. Based on Model 2 of Table 4-5, these effect sizes are comparable to the model with no control variables ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .05$; $\Delta R^2 = 4\%$).

Next, I plotted the interaction effect to interpret the interaction (Aiken & West, 1991). As shown in Figure 4-1, avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high, compared to other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. Results of simple slope analysis show that language self-efficacy is negatively and significantly related to avoidance when CQ is high (dashed line: $b = -.35$, $p < .05$) but unrelated when CQ is low (solid line: $b = .00$, *ns*). These results further indicate that avoidance tends to be the lowest when language self-efficacy and CQ are high, and remains high when language self-efficacy is high and the other is low, or when both are low. These findings provide support for the hypothesized joint effect. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported for self-rated avoidance.

I then tested Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 using employer-rated avoidance. Results of the OLS regression analyses for employer-rated avoidance are reported in Table 4-6 and in Table 4-7 without control variables.

Avoidance (employer-rated). Results in Model 1 of Table 4-6 show that none of the control variables is significantly related to avoidance. Results from Hypotheses 1 and 2 in Model 2 show that neither language self-efficacy ($\beta = -.14$, *ns*) nor CQ ($\beta = .05$, *ns*) is significantly related to avoidance. These effect sizes are similar to those in Model 1 of Table 4-7 without control variables for language self-efficacy ($\beta = -.18$, *ns*) and CQ ($\beta = -.11$, *ns*). Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are not supported for employer-rated avoidance.

Results of the test of Hypothesis 3 in Model 3 of Table 4-6 show that the interaction term between language self-efficacy and CQ is significant and negative ($\beta = -.43$, $p < .05$). The interaction of language self-efficacy and CQ increased the variance explained in avoidance by 14%. These effect sizes are comparable to the ones obtained in Model 2 of Table 4-7 without control variables ($\beta = -.38$, $p < .05$; $\Delta R^2 = 14\%$). It is important to note that the overall model was not significant ($F = 1.22$, *ns*.) and became so only after removing the control variables ($F = 3.15$, $p < .05$). Given the small sample size, this is likely due to low statistical power. Thus, I conducted subsequent analysis on the model without including control variables.

Next, I plotted the interaction effect to interpret the interaction. As shown in Figure 4-2, there is an interaction effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance such that avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high, compared to other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. Results of simple slopes analyses also show that language self-efficacy is negatively and significantly related to avoidance when CQ is high (dashed line: $b = -.84$, $p < .01$) but not when CQ is low (solid line: $b = .37$, *ns*). These results further indicate that avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy

and CQ are high, and higher when either factor is high and the other low, or when both are low. Testing the simple slopes for the relationship between CQ and avoidance at different levels of language self-efficacy showed a similar pattern of interaction. Specifically, CQ is negatively and significantly related to avoidance when language self-efficacy is high ($b = -.71, p < .05$) but not when language self-efficacy is low ($b = .44, ns$). Taken together, these results indicate that avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high, compared to other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. These findings support the hypothesized joint effects. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is also supported for employer-rated avoidance.

Table 4-4. Results of Ordinary Least Square Regression Analyses for Self-Rated Avoidance (Study 1)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control variables</i>			
Age	-.07	-.06	-.07
Agreeableness	.09	.15	.13
Conscientiousness	-.13	-.07	-.10
Extraversion	-.16	-.16	-.16
Openness	-.11	-.10	-.11
Neuroticism	.20	.20*	.15
Objective language proficiency	.01	.02	.02
Perceived employer support	-.08	-.06	-.04
Employer gender	-.16	-.16	-.18
<i>Main effects</i>			
Language self-efficacy		-.15	-.18
CQ		-.12	-.11
<i>Interaction</i>			
Language self-efficacy × CQ			-.21*
<i>F</i>	2.07*	1.94*	2.25*
ΔR^2		.02	.04

Notes. N = 108. Table entries represent standardized parameter estimates. * $p < .05$.

Table 4-5. Results of Ordinary Least Square Regression Analyses for Self-Rated Avoidance with No Control Variables (Study 1)

	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Main effects</i>		
Language self-efficacy	-.14	-.18
CQ	-.16	-.17
<i>Interaction</i>		
Language self-efficacy × CQ		-.21*
<i>F</i>	2.71	3.44*
ΔR^2		.04

Notes. N = 108. Table entries represent standardized parameter estimates. * $p < .05$.

Table 4-6. Results of Ordinary Least Square Regression Analyses for Employer-Rated Avoidance (Study 1)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control variables</i>			
Age	-.15	-.15	-.09
Agreeableness	-.29	-.30	-.32
Conscientiousness	-.08	-.03	.03
Extraversion	-.02	-.04	.01
Openness	.11	.10	-.01
Neuroticism	-.02	-.02	-.11
Objective language proficiency	-.14	-.12	.03
Perceived employer support	-.06	-.05	-.05
Employer gender	.01	.04	.08
<i>Main effects</i>			
Language self-efficacy		-.14	-.20
CQ		.05	.09
<i>Interaction</i>			
Language self-efficacy × CQ			-.43*
<i>F</i>	.73	.64	1.22
ΔR^2		.02	.14

Notes. N = 45. Table entries represent standardized parameter estimates. * $p < .05$.

Table 4-7. Results of Ordinary Least Square Regression Analyses for Employer-Rated Avoidance with No Control Variables (Study 1)

	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Main effects</i>		
Language self-efficacy	-.18	-.18
CQ	-.11	-.10
<i>Interaction</i>		
Language self-efficacy × CQ		-.38*
<i>F</i>	1.02	3.15*
ΔR^2		.14

Notes. N = 45. Table entries represent standardized parameter estimates. * $p < .05$.

Figure 4-1. Interaction of Language Self-Efficacy and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on Self-Rated Avoidance (Study 1)

Figure 4-2. Interaction of Language Self-Efficacy and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on Employer-Rated Avoidance with No Control Variables (Study 1)

4.4 Discussion

In Study 1, I first tested the main effects and joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance behaviors in an intercultural work context using a time-lagged research design involving 108 foreign household service workers. To minimize common method bias, I used self-rated avoidance data collected three months after assessing language self-efficacy and six months after assessing CQ. To triangulate my results, an additional set of regressions using employer ratings of avoidance behaviors was conducted. Results from self-rated and employer-rated avoidance were largely similar.

There were two key findings. First, contrary to Hypotheses 1 and 2, no main effect was found for either language self-efficacy or CQ. This suggests that language self-efficacy and CQ are not related to avoidance behaviors in household service workers. This was true whether avoidance was self-reported or reported by employers. This was unlikely a power issue, since the results remained stable even after removing control variables. The results may be interpreted in light of the significant interaction effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance.

Second, I found support for my argument regarding the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on self- and employer-reported avoidance. Consistent with my hypothesis, having both high language self-efficacy and high CQ produced a greater reduction in avoidance behaviors during intercultural interactions at work compared with other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. This finding seems to indicate that language self-efficacy and CQ alone are insufficient to reduce avoidance behaviors. This joint effect seems robust,

considering the low statistical power of the analysis using employer-rated avoidance.

Although my hypothesis about the joint effect of language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence is verified, the absence of any main effects is unexpected and calls for a replication in order to strengthen confidence in the validity and generalizability of the present findings (Schwab, Abrahamson, Starbuck, & Fidler, 2011; Tsang & Kwan, 1999).

Replication may also address three important limitations of Study 1. First and foremost, the study did not test the mediating mechanism proposed in Hypothesis 4. Without testing a key mediating mechanism, it is not possible to draw conclusions about why language self-efficacy and CQ have a joint effect on avoidance behaviors.

Second, the all-female sample in Study 1 raises questions about the external generalizability of the findings. Indeed, research shows that women are more likely to report negative emotions than men (Simon & Nath, 2004). Given that negative emotions are a proximal cause of avoidance behaviors (Baumeister et al., 2007), women may be more likely to avoid intercultural interactions due to a lower threshold for negative affect. Thus, further research is needed to establish that the joint effect is valid for men as well as women.

Third, the level of interdependence between service workers and their employers is extremely high. Under Singapore's immigration laws, household service workers depend on their employers for food, shelter, health care, and other basic needs (Singapore Ministry of Manpower, 2016). Thus, the cost of engaging in behaviors that may be perceived negatively is very high. Residing in their employers' homes greatly restricts workers' freedom of movement and the

ability to avoid interactions. Another study should be conducted in which participants are allowed greater discretion in avoiding interactions with others.

A further study was conducted to address the limitations of Study 1. Study 2 tested the full hypothesized model with a mixed sample of senior students working in multicultural teams. According to Rosenthal (1991 in Tsang & Kwan, 1999, p. 768), the external validity of original findings may be especially improved when research findings are replicated using a sample from a different population and different research procedures. I describe Study 2 in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: Study 2

5.1 Overview

Study 2 sought to replicate the test of the main effects of language self-efficacy (Hypothesis 1) and CQ (Hypothesis 2), and the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ (Hypothesis 3) on avoidance with a mixed sample of senior students working in multicultural teams. Study 2 also tested for the mediating effect of interpersonal negative affect to explain the interaction between language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance (Hypothesis 4).

Study 2 relied on a round robin time-lagged multisource design and received approval from the relevant institutional review board. The sample consisted of 82 senior business students from 23 countries at a large university in Singapore. While Study 1 employed a between-subject design to examine how individual characteristics influence avoidance of employers by service workers from different cultures, Study 2 employed a within-subject design to assess effects across multiple interaction partners. The two studies were designed to maximize internal validity and test the generalizability of findings across different populations and contexts.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Sample and procedure

Study 2 examined 82 business seniors attending an international organizational behavior course at a university in Singapore. The students worked in 14 multicultural teams. All 14 teams used English to communicate.

The sample was mostly female (70.2%). The mean age was 21.6 years old ($SD = 1.5$). Participants spoke 2.5 languages ($SD = 1.0$), on average. They had visited 7.3 different countries ($SD = 5.4$) and lived in 1.7 countries ($SD = 1.2$) for more than six months. Of the sample, 19% reported that they were very experienced at interacting with people from other countries, 75% said they were moderately experienced, and 6% thought they were not experienced. The students came from 21 different countries: Singapore (35.4%), China (9.8%), Canada (7.3%), Indonesia (7.3%), India (4.9%), Germany (3.7%), Hong Kong (3.7%), the Netherlands (3.7%), Vietnam (3.7%), Cambodia (2.4%), Laos (2.4%), South Korea (2.4%), the United States (2.4%), Australia (1.2%), France (1.2%), Luxembourg (1.2%), Nepal (1.2%), the Philippines (1.2%), Russia (1.2%), Sweden (1.2%), and Thailand (1.2%). Nineteen percent reported that English was their mother tongue.

Participants worked on a high-stakes project together for three months that consisted of two parts. First, the participants wrote a story depicting a cross-cultural conflict in an organizational setting. They then produced a film based on the story. The project featured high process and outcome interdependence, and required frequent interactions between team members. Data were collected using online surveys at two time points, the beginning and the end of the project.

Time 1. In the first week of the semester, participants were randomly assigned to multicultural teams and asked for their informed consent. A few days later they completed the first survey on language self-efficacy and demographic characteristics.

Time 2. Three months later, participants rated three of their peers using the CQ multi-rater design (Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2008), and reported on their avoidance behaviors, interpersonal negative affect, and familiarity with each one of their teammates using a round robin design (Kenny & La Voie, 1985).

94 students were invited to participate. Of these, seven declined, four agreed but did not complete the surveys and one had an insufficient number of observations needed to compute a CQ score. The final sample comprised 82 participants, representing 440 dyads with complete data.

Next, I coded for intercultural dyads based on dissimilar country of birth. Of the 440 dyads, 391 (89%) met the criteria, of which 46.5% were mixed-gender. Mean age was 21.6 years ($SD = 1.1$). Dyad members had known each other for 3.8 months ($SD = 3.9$), and 62.9% interacted fairly frequently or frequently throughout the semester. Relative to intercultural dyads, the culturally homogeneous dyads ($N = 49$) were older (22 years; $SD = 1.1$), had known each other longer (7.7 months; $SD = 7.9$), and interacted more frequently (87.8% interacted fairly frequently or frequently). The final dataset consisted of 391 intercultural dyads with complete data.

5.2.2 Measures

All variables in the model were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Dependent Variables

Avoidance was measured using self-ratings. Participants rated avoidance of their teammates using four items drawn from Nifadkar et al. (2012) including “I don’t speak with this person unless absolutely necessary,” “I avoid joining this person for informal activities that are not related to the project,” “As much as possible, I don’t ask for help or information from this person,” and “I try to stay away from this person as much as possible.” Item 4 was subsequently dropped because of cross-loading with interpersonal negative affect. Cronbach’s alpha is .87.

Interpersonal negative affect was measured using self-ratings. Participants rated negative affect toward their teammates using four items from Nifadkar et al. (2012). Items included “Whenever I meet this person, I feel anxious,” “I feel angry after talking with this person,” “I feel uneasy when I am around this person,” and “I have unpleasant memories of this person.” Cronbach’s alpha is .91.

Independent Variables

Language self-efficacy was measured using self-ratings. Participants rated their language self-efficacy using four items adapted from Williams and Deci’s (1996) perceived competence scale. Items included “When working with my project team, I feel confident in my ability to speak English,” “I am capable of expressing myself in English,” “I am able to participate in conversations in English,” and “I feel able to meet the challenge of communicating in English.” Cronbach’s alpha is .95.

Cultural intelligence was measured using peer-ratings. Three peers rated each participant on their CQ using 20 items from the CQ-Scale (Ang et al., 2007), including such items as “This person likes intercultural interactions that are new to him/her,” “This person can describe the different cultural value frameworks that explain behaviors around the world,” “This person modifies the way s/he disagrees with others to fit the cultural setting,” and “This person thinks about what s/he needs to know about a culture before s/he interacts with people from that culture.” Aggregating peer ratings is empirically justified when the level of inter-rater agreement exceeds .70 (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). The inter-rater agreement was high ($r_{wg(j)} = .91$) and supported aggregating peer-ratings to the individual level. Cronbach’s alpha is .93.

Control Variables

Trait negative affect. According to trait activation theory, people are more responsive to affective states when they are high in the corresponding trait (Tett & Burnett, 2003). For instance, those who see the world through a negative lens tend to be more vigilant and react more strongly to negative events (Elliot & Thrash, 2010; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Past research shows that those who are high in trait negative affect experience state negative affect more often than those who are low in trait negative affect (Foo, Uy, & Baron, 2009; Ilies, Scott, & Judge, 2006), which is positively related to avoidance motivations (Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Thus, I expected that trait negative affect has a positive relationship with interpersonal negative affect and avoidance behaviors. Participants reported how they generally felt using ten emotions from the Negative Affect Scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The emotions include

scared, afraid, upset, distressed, uneasy, nervous, ashamed, guilty, irritable, and hostile. Cronbach's alpha is .93.

Objective language proficiency. I applied the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level tool embedded in Microsoft Word to written assignments submitted by students as part of their course requirements. The Flesch-Kincaid readability test was initially designed to determine the reading ease of written materials in English (Flesch, 1948; Flesch & Gould, 1949) and was later revised to improve the readability of technical manuals used by the U.S. Navy to match reading difficulty with academic grade level (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975). The test computes a score equivalent to the number of years of education required to understand a text by measuring the average number of words in sentences and syllables in words. For instance, a score of 8 indicates that an average student with eight years of formal education should be able to understand the text. The maximum score that can be obtained is 12. A higher score signals a higher level of language proficiency. The mean score was 10.4 (SD = 1.7).

Age and gender. Studies show that older people report more negative affect than younger people (Thomsen et al., 2005), and that women report more negative affect than men (Fujita, Diener, & Sandvik, 1991; Simon & Nath, 2004). Thus, age and gender may be positively related to interpersonal negative affect and avoidance.

Dyadic tenure. According to mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 1968), people who interact frequently perceive others to be more similar to them (Moreland & Zajonc, 1982) and are more attracted to others (Peskin & Newell, 2004; Reis, Maniaci, Caprariello, Eastwick, & Finkel, 2011). I expected that interpersonal

negative affect and avoidance would be lower when people had known each other for a longer period. Participants reported how long they had known their teammates. I computed dyadic tenure by averaging the tenure provided by both dyad members (Lam, Van der Vegt, Walter, & Huang, 2011). The mean was 3.7 months ($SD = 3.7$).

Age and gender dissimilarity. Based on relational demography research, employees who share similar demographic characteristics have more interpersonal attraction as well as more positive interpersonal attitudes and behaviors at work (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007). Thus, interpersonal negative affect and avoidance may be higher in dyads of dissimilar age and gender. I computed age dissimilarity using the product term of dyad members' age (Edwards, 1994; Van Der Vegt, Bunderson, & Oosterhof, 2006). A dummy variable of 1 was assigned to mixed-gender dyads and 0 to same-gender ones. I also controlled for age and gender of the interaction partner.

5.2.3 Confirmatory factor analyses

Prior to forming the various scales for regression analysis, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) to assess the discriminant validity of the variables in Study 2. For this analysis, I formed individual level variables by averaging all ratings of interpersonal negative affect and avoidance for each participant. The individual level of analysis is theoretically appropriate for this study because my hypotheses are concerned with individual negative affect and avoidance. The inter-rater agreement for both interpersonal negative affect ($r_{wg(j)} = .93$) and avoidance ($r_{wg(j)} = .86$) were high, thus aggregation was justified.

As with Study 1, I used parcels as indicators of the latent variables in order to reduce the number of indicators that needed to be estimated and to increase model fit (Coffman & MacCallum, 2005). For the latent variable of CQ, I created indicators corresponding to the four factors of cognitive CQ, metacognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ, aggregating items from the respective subscales. For avoidance, interpersonal negative affect, language self-efficacy, and negative affect trait, I created indicators by aggregating pairs of items from the respective scales.

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis are summarized in Table 5-1. As shown in Table 5-1, the hypothesized five-factor model (avoidance, interpersonal negative affect, CQ, language self-efficacy, and trait negative affect) better fits the data ($\chi^2(80) = 95.65$, ns , $IFI = .98$, $SRMR = .06$, $RMSEA = .03$) than three plausible competing models: a four-factor model that combines interpersonal negative affect and avoidance into a single latent variable ($\Delta\chi^2[4df] = 45.59$, $p < .01$); a three-factor model that combines interpersonal negative affect and avoidance into one latent construct, as well as, CQ and language self-efficacy into a second latent construct ($\Delta\chi^2[7df] = 185.52$, $p < .01$); and a single-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2[10df] = 498.27$, $p < .01$). These results support the discriminant validity of all variables.

Table 5-1. Model Comparison for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Study 2)

Model	Description	χ^2	df	χ^2 / df	IFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Model 1	Hypothesized 5-factor model	95.65	80	1.20	.98	.06	.03		
<i>Alternative nested models</i>									
Model 2	4-factor model combining interpersonal negative affect and avoidance	141.24	84	1.68	.94	.09	.08	45.59**	4
Model 3	3-factor model combining CQ and language self-efficacy	281.17	87	3.23	.79	.15	.13	185.52**	7
Model 4	Single-factor model	593.92	90	6.60	.44	.21	.26	498.27**	10

Note. N = 82. IFI = incremental fit index. SRMR = standardized root mean square. RMSEA = root mean-square error of approximation. ** $p < .01$.

5.2.4 Statistical approach

I collected data using a round robin design. Round robin data have a complex nested structure wherein individuals are nested within teams and dyads so that each relationship represents two individuals rather than one. The statistical dependence resulting from this unique cross-nested structure may be modeled using Kenny's (1994) social relations model (SRM). The SRM is a specific hierarchical linear model that enables the variance partitioning of complex nested models. The SRM has been used in the past to examine dyadic behaviors, including deference behaviors (Joshi & Knight, 2015), interpersonal harming (Lam et al., 2011) and interpersonal helping (Van Der Vegt et al., 2006) in work teams with a similar nested structure. I tested my hypotheses using the PROC MIXED package in SAS with dummy variables (Kenny & Livi, 2009).

For each model, I obtained two types of estimate for random and fixed effects. Random effects indicate the percentage of the total variance in interpersonal negative affect and avoidance attributable to characteristics of the focal actor, the partner, the dyad, and the team. The fixed effect estimates indicate the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. These estimates are comparable to unstandardized regression coefficients in ordinary regression analysis. I computed effect sizes using overall pseudo- R^2 ($\sim R^2$) (Snijders & Bosker, 1999) for the models that estimate the variance explained by the predictors. I tested for a decrease in log-likelihood between models by means of a chi-square difference test to evaluate the statistical significance of improvements in model fit.

I hypothesized a mediated interaction model such that interpersonal negative affect mediates the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on

avoidance. In my analyses, the dependent variable (avoidance), the mediator (interpersonal negative affect), and the predictors (language self-efficacy and CQ) are at the individual level of analysis. The control variables are at the dyad level (gender dissimilarity, age dissimilarity and dyadic tenure) and at the individual level (gender, age, trait negative affect, objective language proficiency, partner-gender and age). All predictors in the model were grand-mean centered prior to analysis (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Hofmann & Gavin, 1998).

First, I calculated two null models with no predictors to determine the partitioning of variance in interpersonal negative affect and avoidance as a reference for model comparison. I entered all individual- and dyad-level control variables. Next, I added the main effects of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. In order to test Hypothesis 3, I entered the interaction term of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance.

To test Hypothesis 4, I followed procedures described by Muller, Judd, and Yzerbyt (2005) that operationally define Baron and Kenny's (1986) conceptualization of mediated moderation models. First, I ran a separate set of regression analysis with interpersonal negative affect as the dependent variable, and entered all individual and dyad-level control variables. Second, I added the main effects of language self-efficacy and CQ. Third, I entered the interaction term for language self-efficacy and CQ in order to test for a significant effect on interpersonal negative affect as dependent variable. Last, I entered interpersonal negative affect as a mediating variable on avoidance and tested for a reduction in the magnitude of the residual effect of the interaction term of language self-efficacy and CQ, comparing this to the magnitude of the overall effect of the interaction term before entering the interaction term. To further, ascertain the

mediation effect, I computed the Sobel test for the interaction term on the dependent variable through the mediator (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

As in Study 1, I tested my hypotheses in a baseline model with no control variables and compared effect sizes after entering the control variables in order to rule out whether effects were produced by the control variables (Bernierth & Aguinis, 2016; Spector & Brannick, 2011).

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 5-2 presents the descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and internal consistency reliability coefficients for all individual level variables. Correlations reveal some interesting bivariate relationships. Trait negative affect is negatively related to language self-efficacy ($r = -.37, p < .01$). CQ is negatively related to avoidance ($r = -.31, p < .01$), while language self-efficacy is not. Neither language self-efficacy nor CQ is related to interpersonal negative affect. CQ is positively related to language self-efficacy ($r = .36, p < .01$). The correlation between objective language proficiency and language self-efficacy ($r = .35, p < .01$) is relatively stronger than the one observed in Study 1 ($r = .22, p < .05$).

Table 5-2. Descriptive Statistics and Individual Level Correlations (Study 2)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Dependent Variables</i>									
1. Avoidance	2.2	1.0	(.87)						
2. Interpersonal negative affect	1.5	0.8	.63**	(.91)					
<i>Independent Variables</i>									
3. Language self-efficacy	5.7	1.2	-.12	-.06	(.95)				
4. CQ	5.1	0.4	-.31**	-.04	.36**	(.93)			
<i>Control Variables</i>									
5. Objective language proficiency	10.4	1.7	.19	.10	.35**	.28**	--		
6. Trait negative affect	2.8	1.1	.12	.19	-.37**	-.18	-.16	(.93)	
7. Gender (0 = Male; 1 = Female)	0.7	0.5	-.19	.03	.05	.10	-.10	.21	--
8. Age	21.6	1.5	.14	.13	.03	-.06	.21	-.05	-.26*

Notes. N = 82 team members. Reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha coefficients) are on the diagonal. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5-3 presents descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for all dyad level variables. As expected, gender ($r = .14$, $p < .01$) and age ($r = .10$, $p < .05$) dissimilarities are positively related to avoidance, and age dissimilarity was positively related to interpersonal negative affect ($r = .15$, $p < .01$). Surprisingly, dyadic tenure is unrelated to either avoidance or interpersonal negative affect. Partner's gender is negatively related to avoidance ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$) but not to interpersonal affect suggesting that people are more likely to avoid interacting with male partners than with female partners. Partner's age was not related to avoidance nor interpersonal negative affect.

Table 5-3. Descriptive Statistics and Dyad Level Correlations (Study 2)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Dependent Variables</i>								
1. Avoidance	2.1	1.2						
2. Interpersonal negative affect	1.5	0.9	.67**					
<i>Control Variables</i>								
3. Gender dissimilarity ^a	0.5	0.5	.14**	.06				
4. Age dissimilarity ^b	467.4	44.9	.10*	.15**	.18**			
5. Dyadic tenure (months)	3.7	3.7	-.08	-.05	-.11*	.11*		
6. Partner gender (0 = Male; 1 = Female)	0.7	0.5	-.11*	-.89	-.40**	-.20**	.04	
7. Partner age	21.7	1.6	.01	.07	.14**	.68**	.06	-.29**

Notes. N = 391 dyads.

^a Gender dissimilarity was computed with a dummy variable: dissimilar gender = 1; same gender = 0.

^b Age dissimilarity was computed using the product term of dyad members' age.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

5.3.2 Variance partitioning

Table 5-4 summarizes the partitioning of variance in interpersonal negative affect and avoidance at the actor, partner, dyad and group levels.

Interpersonal negative affect. Individual characteristics accounted for 62%, dyad characteristics 31%, and partner effect for 7% of total variance. These effects were all significant ($p < .01$). Group characteristics did not contribute to variance in interpersonal negative affect.

Avoidance. Individual characteristics accounted for 51%, dyad characteristics for 31%, and partner characteristics 8% of total variance. These effects were all significant ($p < .01$). Group characteristics accounted for 10% of variance; however, this effect was not significant.

Such findings suggest that for this sample, individual characteristics were the largest sources of variance in interpersonal negative affect and avoidance, dyadic characteristics were the second largest, and partner characteristics were the smallest sources of variance. Group characteristics did not account for variance in interpersonal negative affect and avoidance.

Table 5-4. Variance Partitioning for Interpersonal Negative Affect and Avoidance (Study 2)

Source of Variance	Interpersonal Negative Affect			Avoidance		
	Estimate		SE	Estimate		SE
Actor Variance	.50	(62%) **	.10	.70	(51%) **	.14
Partner Variance	.05	(7%) *	.02	.11	(8%) **	.04
Dyadic Variance	.16	(31%) **	.02	.26	(31%) **	.03
Group Variance	.00	(0%)	.06	.14	(10%)	.14
Deviance	781.0			989.7		

Note. N = 82 team members in 391 dyads within 14 teams. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

5.3.3 Hypothesis test

The results of the hierarchical linear modeling application of social relation modeling are reported in Table 5-5 for interpersonal negative affect and in Table 5-6 for avoidance. Results of the hierarchical linear modeling for both interpersonal negative affect and avoidance without control variables are reported in Table 5-7.

The results of Model 4 of Table 5-6 show that dyadic tenure ($b = -.04$, $p < .01$) is negatively related to avoidance and, surprisingly, objective language proficiency ($b = .15$, $p < .05$) is positively related to avoidance. The finding for objective language proficiency may be due to confounding factors; I discuss this possibility in the next section. There is no effect of other control variables on avoidance.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 state that language self-efficacy and CQ, respectively, are negatively related to avoidance. The results in Model 5 of Table 5-6 show that language self-efficacy is not related to avoidance ($b = -.02$, *ns*), and that the relationship is negative and significant for CQ ($b = -.74$, $p < .05$). Results in Model 3 of Table 5-7 indicate that effect sizes are comparable when no control variable is entered for language self-efficacy ($b = .03$, *ns*) and CQ ($b = -.59$, $p < .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is not supported while Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3 states that language self-efficacy and CQ have joint effects on avoidance such that avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high, compared to other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. The results in Model 6 of Table 5-6 show the effect of the interaction term between language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance as significant and negative ($b = -.55$, $p < .01$). The interaction term increases the explained variance in avoidance by 6%. Effect sizes in Model 4 of Table 5-7 with no control variables are comparable ($b = -.60$, $p < .01$; $\Delta R^2 = 7\%$).

Next, I plotted the interaction effects (Aiken & West, 1991). As shown in Figure 5-2, avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high. When either language self-efficacy or CQ is low, avoidance is comparatively higher. Simple slopes analysis further indicates a negative and

significant relationship between language self-efficacy and avoidance when CQ is high (dashed line: $b = -.23, p < .05$), and no relationship when CQ is low (solid line: $b = .13, ns$). These results provide additional support that avoidance is the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high, compared to when language self-efficacy, CQ, or both are low. These findings replicate the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance found in Study 1. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Hypothesis 4 proposes that interpersonal negative affect mediates the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance. First, I tested for the effect of the interaction term between language self-efficacy and CQ on interpersonal negative affect (the mediating variable). Results in Model 3 of Table 5-5 indicate that the effect of the interaction term on interpersonal negative affect is significant and negative ($b = -.37, p < .05$). Second, based on Hypothesis 3, the effect of the interaction between language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance (the dependent variable) is found to be significant. Third, the results in Model 7 of Table 5-6 indicate that interpersonal negative affect (the mediating variable) is positively and significantly related to avoidance ($b = .91, p < .01$). Interpersonal negative affect increases the explained variance in avoidance by 34%. Lastly, the residual effect of the interaction term between language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance is not significant ($b = -.19, ns$) after interpersonal negative affect is entered in Model 7. Furthermore, the Sobel test for indirect effects of the interaction term on avoidance via the mediator is significantly different from zero (Sobel statistic, $t = -2.30, p < .05$), further supporting the full mediation effect. Taken together, these findings provide empirical support for Hypothesis 4.

Next, I plotted the interaction effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on interpersonal negative affect to further investigate the presence of the joint effect on the mediating mechanism. As shown in Figure 5-1, there is an interaction effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on interpersonal negative affect. Simple slopes analysis (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006) indicates that language self-efficacy is negatively and significantly related to interpersonal negative affect when CQ is high (dashed line: $b = -.23, p < .05$) but not related to interpersonal negative affect when CQ is low (solid line: $b = .05, ns$). This pattern is similar to the effect of the interaction term on avoidance. Moreover, testing the simple slopes for the relationship between CQ and interpersonal negative affect at different levels of language self-efficacy shows that CQ is not significantly related to interpersonal negative affect when language self-efficacy is high ($b = -.30, ns$) and is marginally related when language self-efficacy is low ($b = .57, p < .10$). Taken together, these results indicate that interpersonal negative affect is the lowest when either language self-efficacy or CQ—or both—are high, compared to when both language self-efficacy and CQ are low.

Table 5-5. Results of Social Relations Modeling Analyses for Interpersonal Negative Affect (Study 2)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control variables</i>			
Gender dissimilarity	.09 (.08)	.09 (.08)	.09 (.08)
Age dissimilarity	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Dyadic tenure	-.02 (.01)*	-.02 (.01)*	-.02 (.01)*
Gender	.12 (.19)	.13 (.20)	.07 (.20)
Age	.54 (.35)	.54 (.35)	.54 (.35)
Trait negative affect	.11 (.07)	.09 (.08)	.09 (.07)
Objective language proficiency	.06 (.05)	.07 (.05)	.05 (.05)
Partner-gender	-.08 (.09)	-.08 (.09)	-.07 (.09)
Partner-age	.50 (.34)	.50 (.34)	.50 (.34)
<i>Independent variables</i>			
Language self-efficacy		-.05 (.08)	-.09 (.08)
CQ		.14 (.23)	.13 (.22)
<i>Interaction effect</i>			
Language self-efficacy × CQ			-.37 (.16)*
$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	.0 (9)	.0 (2)	3.3 (1)†
Pseudo $\sim\Delta R^2$	.03	.00	.04

Notes. N (Dyad) = 391; N (Individual) = 82. Parameter estimates are unstandardized. Values in parentheses are standard errors. † $p < .10$. * $p < .05$.

Table 5-6. Results of Social Relations Modeling Analyses for Avoidance (Study 2)

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<i>Control variables</i>				
Gender dissimilarity	.08 (.10)	.08 (.10)	.08 (.10)	.00 (.07)
Age dissimilarity	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Dyadic tenure	-.04 (.01)**	-.04 (.01)**	-.04 (.01)**	-.02 (.01)**
Gender	-.23 (.24)	-.19 (.23)	-.28 (.22)	-.35 (.18)
Age	.31 (.45)	.33 (.45)	.32 (.45)	-.17 (.29)
Trait negative affect	.08 (.09)	.07 (.09)	.06 (.09)	-.03 (.07)
Objective language proficiency	.15 (.06)*	.20 (.06)**	.17 (.06)**	.13 (.05)*
Partner-gender	-.15 (.13)	-.15 (.13)	-.14 (.13)	-.06 (.08)
Partner-age	.29 (.44)	.31 (.44)	.31 (.44)	-.15 (.29)
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Language self-efficacy		-.02 (.09)	-.08 (.09)	-.01 (.07)
CQ		-.74 (.28)*	-.76 (.27)**	-.77 (.22)**
<i>Interaction effect</i>				
Language self-efficacy × CQ			-.55 (.19)**	-.19 (.16)
<i>Mediator</i>				
Interpersonal negative affect				.91 (.05)**
$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	.0 (9)	3.0 (2)	6.2 (1)*	250.5 (1)**
Pseudo $\sim\Delta R^2$	.05	.08	.06	.34

Notes. N (Dyad) = 391; N (Individual) = 82. Parameter estimates are unstandardized. Values in parentheses are standard errors. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5-7. Results of Social Relations Modeling Analyses for Interpersonal Negative Affect and Avoidance with No Control Variables (Study 2)

	Interpersonal Negative Affect		Avoidance		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Independent variables</i>					
Language self-efficacy	-.05 (.07)	-.11 (.07)	.03 (.09)	-.04 (.09)	.05 (.07)
CQ	.19 (.23)	.16 (.22)	-.59 (.29)*	-.64 (.27)*	-.69 (.22)**
<i>Interaction effect</i>					
Language self-efficacy $\times$ CQ		-.43 (.16)**		-.60 (.20)**	-.18 (.16)
<i>Mediator</i>					
Interpersonal negative affect					.93 (.05)***
$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	.0 (2)	5.2 (1)*	.0 (2)	7.2 (1)**	262.6 (1)**
Pseudo $\sim\Delta R^2$	.00	.03	.05	.07	.37

Notes. N (Dyad) = 391; N (Individual) = 82. Parameter estimates are unstandardized. Values in parentheses are standard errors. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure 5-1. Interaction of Language Self-Efficacy and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on Interpersonal Negative Affect (Study 2)

Figure 5-2. Interaction of Language Self-Efficacy and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) on Avoidance (Study 2)

5.4 Discussion

In Study 2, I was interested to replicate the findings from Study 1 for Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, and to test the proposed mediated interaction model in Hypothesis 4. I used a multilevel time-lagged design involving a sample of 82 senior students working in 391 intercultural dyads nested in 14 teams. Three findings of the hypotheses emerged.

First, consistent with Study 1 and contrary to Hypothesis 1, no main effect of language self-efficacy was found for avoidance. As discussed below, this finding must be interpreted in light of the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ. However, contrary to Study 1 but consistent with Hypothesis 2, CQ was negatively related to avoidance. This difference may be attributed to different sample characteristics across the two studies. Participants in Study 1 were low-skilled employees with high levels of interdependence with their employers. For them, events that occur during interactions with their employers can have serious consequences on their performance and overall well-being. It follows that they should avoid interactions unless they are absolutely sure that they can present themselves in a positive light and this may require that they have both high language self-efficacy and high CQ. By comparison, participants in Study 2 were senior students working in multicultural teams in which members held equal status. Given lower interdependence, these participants can afford interactions even when there is a risk of presenting themselves in a less than positive light. This may explain why CQ had a stronger effect on avoidance in the student sample than in the service worker sample.

Second, as predicted by Hypothesis 3, language self-efficacy and CQ had a joint effect on avoidance behaviors, such that avoidance was the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ were high, as compared with any other combination of language self-efficacy and CQ. As in Study 1, the joint effect meant that combining language self-efficacy and CQ produced a greater reduction in avoidance than having either capability alone.

Third, as predicted in Hypothesis 4, I found that interpersonal negative affect fully mediated the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance. These results suggest that interpersonal negative affect is a key mechanism of avoidance behaviors, which is to say that avoidance is lower for those with both high language self-efficacy and high CQ because of low interpersonal negative affect during intercultural interactions at work. Taken together, these results provide empirical support for the mediated interaction model advanced in this dissertation.

In addition to the above tested hypotheses, three other findings were of interest. First, the results in Study 2 indicate that avoidance is an interpersonal phenomenon driven not only by individual characteristics but also by characteristics of the dyad. In particular, results of the variance partitioning analysis show that dyadic characteristics are the second greatest source of variance, accounting for 31% of variance explained after individual characteristics, which account for 51% of variance explained. Dyadic characteristics are also the second largest source of variance in interpersonal negative affect accounting for 31% of variance explained, following individual characteristics that account for 62%. Thus, dyadic factors also influence how

people react to intercultural interactions at work and should be considered for future research.

Second, the findings regarding the interaction of language self-efficacy and CQ for interpersonal negative affect also suggest a joint effect, but one that differs from the joint effect found for avoidance. The fact that avoidance was low only when language self-efficacy and CQ are combined suggests there is little to no benefit to having language self-efficacy or CQ alone. By comparison, the fact that interpersonal negative affect was low given at least one capability suggests that either language self-efficacy or CQ may produce some benefit in reducing interpersonal negative affect as opposed to having neither capability. One possible explanation for this finding may be that interpersonal affect and avoidance have different underlying mechanisms such that events that produce negative affect do not necessarily lead to avoidance. Future studies could use experience sampling methodology (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003; Uy, Foo, & Aguinis, 2010) to examine these underlying mechanisms. The value of experience sampling methodology is that it allows researchers to capture affective states and the events that produce them (Ashkanasy, 2003). Therefore, future research could investigate how people with different levels of language self-efficacy and CQ react to specific events affectively and behaviorally.

Third, I found a positive and significant association of language proficiency with avoidance. This counterintuitive result suggests that avoidance is more pronounced for those with higher language proficiency. Given that English is the primary language of education in Singapore, objective language proficiency may be confounded by local-versus-international student status. Local students have little incentive to interact with newcomers because they have

existing social networks. Foreign students, who do not have many friends, would logically be more eager to meet people. I conducted a post-hoc analysis to test this hypothesis, with a dummy variable of 1 for local students and zero for international students. First, I entered all the control variables on the avoidance measure. Next, I entered the dummy variable and tested for a reduction in the magnitude of the residual effect of objective language proficiency. As expected, after entering the dummy variable, objective language proficiency became non-significant ($\beta = .08$, *ns*) while there was a positive and significant association of local student status with avoidance ($\beta = .59$, $p < .05$). Adding the new dummy variable did not change the results of the hypothesis tests.

In sum, the findings from the two studies support the hypothesized joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts. Study 2 further demonstrates that this joint effect is transmitted through interpersonal negative affect. I discuss the implications of these findings on theory and practice in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion

Two important questions in intercultural work contexts are what drives people to avoid those from other cultures and how to minimize these avoidance behaviors. Based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), I theorized that intercultural interactions are affective events because differences in language, and cultural norms and assumptions produce situations that challenge people's fundamental need for a positive and secure self-concept. When people cannot maintain a positive self-concept, they experience negative emotions (Chattopadhyay et al., 2010) and the natural response is to avoid interactions (Baumeister et al., 2007).

I advanced language self-efficacy—defined as the personal judgment that one can communicate effectively in the language of interaction (Bandura, 1997)—and cultural intelligence—the capacity to function effectively in intercultural situations (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Ang et al., 2007)—as two individual characteristics that reduce avoidance behaviors because of their role in enhancing the self-concept and reducing uncertainty. I expected that language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence would be negatively related to avoidance in contexts where people from different cultures work together. I also expected a joint effect such that combining language self-efficacy and CQ would produce a greater reduction in avoidance than either capability alone. Lastly, I proposed that interpersonal negative affect—defined as negative emotions experienced

during interpersonal interactions (Nifadkar et al., 2012)—would mediate this joint effect on avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts.

Overall, I hypothesized a mediated interaction model of avoidance whereby the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance is transmitted through interpersonal negative affect. I tested the proposed model on two samples: foreign household service workers and senior university students working in multicultural teams. The findings, based on field data collected from multiple sources (self-reported, employer-reported, and peer-reported) at separate time points (over three months and over six months), generally support the proposed relationships.

In the next section, I discuss three key findings from this dissertation.

6.1 Main Findings

First, I had hypothesized that language self-efficacy and CQ would be negatively related to avoidance in intercultural work contexts. Findings from two studies indicate that the hypothesized main effects are only partially supported. Language self-efficacy was not related to avoidance in both studies, while CQ was related to avoidance in Study 2 but not in Study 1. The absence of a main effect of language self-efficacy on avoidance is unexpected given the motivational nature of avoidance construct. Indeed, based on construct correspondence theory (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974), it is expected that motivational predictors such as self-efficacy are associated with motivational outcomes. One possible explanation for the absence of main effect may be low statistical power due to small sample size. Another reason may be

that the effect of language self-efficacy on avoidance behaviors in intercultural work contexts is conditional on CQ. This explanation seems more plausible given that I found a significant interaction effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance such that language self-efficacy was related to avoidance behaviors when CQ was high but not when CQ was low, and this effect was consistent across the two studies.

Another unexpected finding was that CQ was negatively related to avoidance in Study 2 but not in Study 1. This discrepancy may be attributed to sample characteristics. Although it is impossible to pinpoint which specific characteristic is causing the inconsistent finding, I speculate that CQ may play a different role between partners with different distributions of power (Emerson, 1962). In the service worker sample, the power imbalance between the workers and their employer increases the cost of committing faux-pas and other presentational mistakes. This is because interactions represent opportunities for employers to evaluate service workers, which in turn, may affect broader performance judgments (e.g., Molinsky, 2005) and can seriously impact the worker's well-being, possible even their employment. As a result, CQ alone is insufficient to reduce avoidance and service workers also need language self-efficacy in order to initiate interactions with their employer. Only then can they be certain that no negative consequences will ensue. By comparison, in the student sample, power was equally distributed. As a result, students can choose to interact with minimal consequences and CQ alone is sufficient to reduce avoidance behaviors. Future research is needed to test this explanation.

Second, I had hypothesized that language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence would have a joint effect on avoidance in intercultural work contexts

such that avoidance would be the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ are high, compared with other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. Consistent with this hypothesis, I found that combining language self-efficacy and CQ reduced avoidance to a greater extent than either capability alone across the two studies. This effect was robust, regardless of whether avoidance was self-rated or employer-rated (Study 1), or across interactions with multiple partners (Study 2). These results underline the importance of considering language self-efficacy and CQ simultaneously for behavioral outcomes in intercultural work contexts.

Third, I hypothesized that interpersonal negative affect would mediate the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance behaviors. The present findings support this hypothesis, in that having both language self-efficacy and CQ reduced avoidance given low interpersonal negative affect. Taken together, these results demonstrate that interpersonal negative affect is a proximal mechanism needed to explain avoidance in intercultural work contexts. Consistent with existing studies that found a positive relationship between CQ and other affective outcomes (Chua et al., 2012; Rockstuhl & Ng, 2008), the present finding underscores the importance of considering the role of affect in explaining interaction behaviors between people from different cultures at work.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions and Implications

In this section, I review three important contributions of the present to existing theory. The first contribution is to advance existing research on avoidance to contexts in which people from different cultures work together.

Despite evidence of avoidance behaviors between people from different cultures in work contexts (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Pentland, 2012), little is known about why avoidance occurs and how to minimize these behaviors. This is because existing studies have been predominantly interested in avoidance of contact between strangers from different cultural groups (Barlow et al., 2009; Barlow et al., 2010; Barlow et al., 2012; Duronto et al., 2005). Considering avoidance behaviors in work contexts is important because context shapes the underlying meaning of behaviors (Johns, 2006).

In this dissertation, I proposed that stranger and work contexts differ in that avoiding strangers is much easier and less costly than avoiding contact with coworkers. This is because, people at work have interdependent goals that require them to interact on a regular basis (Howard, 1995). These frequent interactions may in turn reinforce negative emotions and avoidance behaviors into a downward spiral (e.g., Nifadkar et al., 2012). I conducted two separate studies in two distinct intercultural work contexts: in the context of household service workers interacting with their employer from another culture, and in the context of senior university students working in multicultural teams. Replicating findings in different contexts with different populations presents the advantage of strengthening the external validity of original findings (Rosenthal, 1991; Tsang & Kwan, 1999). Future research on avoidance could consider other contexts wherein people from different cultures interact in order to further attest to the generalizability of the present predictors and mediating mechanisms. For example, studies could examine the predictors of avoidance behaviors in various organizational settings, such as in collocated and virtual multicultural teams, as

well as between different types of relationships, such as between employees, employees and managers, and managers and employees.

The second contribution of this dissertation is to advance knowledge about the joint benefits of language self-efficacy and CQ during intercultural interactions at work. In past research, the construct of language self-efficacy has not been examined and constructs related to language have been relegated to control variables in CQ research. The present study suggests this may be an important omission given the inherent inseparability of language and culture. Based on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, culture influences how people symbolically represent their world, and these differences are communicated through language (Kramsch, 2014; Matsumoto et al., 2005). For this reason, linguists have argued that misunderstandings during intercultural interactions are rarely due to language mistakes alone, but rather are caused by misinterpretation of subtle cultural conventions of which people lack awareness (Henderson, 2005; Scollon & Scollon, 2001). Based on this argument, I proposed that avoidance should be the lowest for those who have both high language self-efficacy and high cultural intelligence, compared to those who have other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. The present findings support this hypothesis.

The finding on the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ advances efforts to understand factors that drive seemingly competent individuals—they can either speak the language or they know the culture—to avoid interactions with people from other cultures. Thus, considering language self-efficacy and CQ simultaneously may shed new light on previously inconsistent findings, especially studies that found no or inconsistent main effects of CQ, despite theoretical reasons to expect them. For example, this result may explain why CQ

was not related to negative affect of Chinese students adjusting to life in the United States (Wang et al., 2015). The construct of language self-efficacy is especially relevant to that particular study given that participants did not speak English as their first language. Future studies could also explore the benefits of having both language self-efficacy and CQ to minimize counterproductive behaviors in intercultural work contexts such as silence (Van Dyne, Soon, & Botero, 2003), harming (e.g., Lam et al., 2011), aggression (e.g., Nifadkar et al., 2012), and defensiveness (e.g., Ashforth & Lee, 1990).

The third contribution of this study is to advance existing knowledge on affect as a mechanism of behaviors in intercultural interactions by using affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) to complement social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). By examining avoidance behaviors through an affective lens, the present work underscores the role of emotions as a valid mechanism of behaviors in contexts where people from different cultures work together. Future research should therefore pay greater attention to the role of affect during intercultural interactions. In particular, considering the role of affect may explain counterintuitive findings in past research. For example, Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, and Jonsen (2010) found a positive association of cultural diversity with satisfaction in their meta-analysis of 10,632 multicultural teams. From the perspective of social identity theory, this finding is counterintuitive because people's attitude towards their workgroup should be more positive when diversity is low and more negative when diversity is high. This is not necessarily true from an affective events perspective. Based on AET, people's reactions to group diversity is a function of the specific events that occur when people work together as well as their individual preference and ability to respond to these

events. Thus, zooming in on events and their associated affective reactions may illuminate why diversity was positively related to satisfaction in the meta-analysis by Stahl et al. (2010).

6.3 Practical Implications

In practical terms, the present research indicates that people avoid interacting with their colleagues from different cultures in order to minimize negative emotions that arise from the challenges of communicating in a *lingua franca* with people guided by different rules and assumptions for interaction. More importantly, it underscores the importance of simultaneously cultivating language self-efficacy and cultural intelligence in order to minimize avoidance behaviors. By testing a predictive model of avoidance, the present findings provide important insights for managers and organizations seeking to mitigate such behaviors.

The first practical insight is that organizations and employees may benefit from enhancing language skills as well as language confidence. Although language classes may be available to expatriates relocating to a foreign country, attention is rarely paid to enhancing the language skills of existing employees who also need to communicate in a *lingua franca*. Research has shown that working to enhance language confidence is essential and can positively affect the bottom line (Neeley, 2012). Problems associated with using a *lingua franca* at work may not be obvious in countries where English is widely spoken. However, they are prevalent in subsidiaries located in countries where English is not the official language, especially for employees who interact with expatriates or

colleagues from overseas. As the present study shows, improving language confidence is almost as important, if not more important, than improving language skills for employees who may be intimidated in the presence of more proficient *lingua franca* speakers (e.g., Beyene, 2007; Neeley, 2013; Paunova, 2016). In order to enhance language confidence, employees may enlist the help of a professional voice coach (Halpern & Lubar, 2004; Pearce, 2003) or join a public speaking club, such as employee-led Toastmaster clubs (e.g., Sun, 2008).

Second, the present study underscores the benefits of developing CQ skills for employees engaged in intercultural collaboration. While research shows that developing CQ presents unique advantages during overseas assignments, it is not uncommon for organizations to focus on developing language skills at the expense of CQ. Additionally, developing CQ is important for any employee who works with international colleagues on a regular basis. As the study on service workers shows, even low-skilled employees can benefit from developing CQ. To develop CQ, organizations should promote a global mindset by recruiting people who demonstrate the ability to work across cultures (in addition to having language skills), making CQ training available to anyone working across cultural boundaries, and rewarding those who demonstrate improvements (Ng, Tan, & Ang, 2011).

Third, the present research highlights that interactions with people from other cultures are a major source of negative emotions at work. The frequent occurrence of negative emotions during intercultural interactions at work may exacerbate job stress (Schaubroeck, Ganster, & Fox, 1992). Given the damaging effects of stress for individuals (Lupien, McEwen, Gunnar, & Heim, 2009) and organizations (Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984), the present findings further

accentuate the necessity to support employees who are engaged in intercultural interactions either in their home country or overseas using measures such as the ones described above. In fact, the present study shows that these recommendations apply not only to organizations, but also to academic institutions that welcome international students and countries that welcome migrant workers.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

The studies discussed in this dissertation have several limitations that provide rich avenues for future research.

First, several confounding factors exist that may have caused the inconsistent findings for the effect of CQ on avoidance across the two studies. Although I speculated that the different results are due to differences in power distribution, participants in Study 1 and Study 2 differed in many other aspects, including gender, age, social economic status, education level, and the nature of their task, to name a few. Moreover, I did not measure power perceptions. One way future research can rule out the confounding factors is to test the model in a sample of employees in an organizational setting and to compare their avoidance behaviors with peers and superiors. This research design would only vary the working relationship while keeping all other factors constant, thus making it possible to isolate power asymmetry as a potential source of variation in the relationship between CQ and avoidance.

Second, the correlational design used in Study 2 is insufficient to establish the direction of causality between interpersonal negative affect and

avoidance. Although I hypothesized that negative affect precedes avoidance behaviors, the reverse may be also true. One way to ascertain the direction of the effect is using experience sampling methodologies (Bolger et al., 2003; Uy et al., 2010). In experience sampling, participants report on their affective experiences and behavioral reactions in close intervals. Time-lagged data can then be used to determine the causal effect between affective reactions and behaviors.

Third, this study did not consider approach in relation to avoidance. This is a common feature of studies on avoidance in the intergroup contact literature. While social identity theory suggests that approach behaviors are unlikely in intercultural contexts because outgroup members are often seen as threats (Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske et al., 2002), the evolutionary perspective theorizes approach and avoidance as two fundamental motivational forces (Chen & Bargh, 1999; Elliot, 2006). Studying the approach of people from different cultures is also meaningful in intergroup research given the importance of spontaneous contact for developing shared mental models and facilitating implicit coordination in intercultural collaboration (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Hinds & Mortensen, 2005). Thus, future studies should also consider approach behaviors and the mechanisms that promote these behaviors.

Finally, the present work only examined negative affect as a mechanism of the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance, but did not consider positive affect as an alternative mechanism. On the basis of intergroup contact research (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), positive interactions with people from other cultures are associated with lower levels of avoidance behaviors (Barlow et al., 2012). Thus, I would expect that individual differences that increase positive affect during intercultural interactions are also associated with

lower levels of avoidance. It is not clear how language self-efficacy would relate to positive affect given that language may not be salient when people have high language self-efficacy. It may be that language self-efficacy is necessary to reduce negative emotions, whereas it has little effect in increasing positive emotions. By comparison, studies show that CQ is positively associated with positive affect (Wang et al., 2015). Therefore, I would expect the joint effect of language self-efficacy and CQ on avoidance to be transmitted through negative affect but not through positive affect. Future research should investigate these two mechanisms simultaneously.

6.5 Conclusion

Avoidance of interactions with people from different cultures is a common occurrence in intercultural work contexts with obviously detrimental effects on collaboration. Yet, we know surprisingly little about what drives people to avoid those from other cultures and how to reduce avoidance behaviors. The present study is one of the first to address these questions related to avoidance in intercultural work contexts. In doing so, this study makes three important contributions. First, it extends existing knowledge on avoidance of strangers from other cultures to contexts where people work on interdependent goals. Second, it underscores the combined influence of language and culture on behaviors during intercultural interactions. Third, it highlights the role of emotions as an intervening mechanism of behaviors in intercultural contexts.

Across two vastly different samples of household service workers working for employers of different cultures and university seniors working on

multicultural project teams, I found that language self-efficacy was not related to avoidance behaviors, and that cultural intelligence (CQ) was only related to avoidance in the student sample but not in the service worker sample. Moreover, language self-efficacy and CQ had a robust joint effect whereby avoidance was the lowest when both language self-efficacy and CQ were high, compared with other combinations of language self-efficacy and CQ. Further, results from Study 2 showed that this joint effect on avoidance was due to reduced interpersonal negative affect.

These findings are important because the majority of existing research and training programs in organizations tend to focus on either employees' language skills or cultural intelligence alone. My dissertation shows that focusing on one without the other is not effective, at least where intercultural avoidance behaviors are concerned. Future research and practice on intercultural interactions and avoidance should account for both language- and culture-related competencies.

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