
The Competitive Advantage of Foreign Languages and Cultural Knowledge

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This study presents the results of an electronic survey of 2,500 randomly selected alumni from the graduating classes of 1970 through 2002 of Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management. Of the 2,500 alumni, 581 responded. Thunderbird required a minimum of 4 semesters of foreign language for graduation. The survey concerned whether or not the alumni had received a competitive advantage in their careers from their foreign language skills and cultural knowledge. The vast majority of the respondents acknowledged that both foreign language skills and cultural knowledge had benefited them in their professional lives. Slightly more of them reported receiving an edge from their cultural skills (89%) than from their foreign language abilities (82%). The research results provide empirical data on how members of the U.S. and international business communities perceive the value of foreign language and cultural knowledge to their work.

IS ENGLISH ENOUGH FOR DOING INTERNATIONAL business today? Do proficiency in foreign languages and understanding of different cultures give business people an edge in the global economy? The term *global economy* implies a business environment where competition among companies regularly crosses national borders. In a world where many believe that English is the language of international business, what advantages have executives gained by knowing foreign languages? This research reports the results of an Internet-based survey on the competitive advantage of foreign language and cultural competence for graduates of Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management, a business school.

The survey asked 2,500 alumni whether their foreign language skills and cultural knowledge had given them a competitive advantage at work. Of the 581 respondents, 82% gained a competitive advantage in business from their foreign language skills. Even more, 89%, received an edge from their knowledge of other cultures. Although

competitive advantage is difficult to quantify, many Thunderbird alumni defined in specific terms the edge that foreign languages and cultures have given them in their careers.

The alumni who participated in the study all graduated from Thunderbird between 1970 and 2002 with a master's degree in business administration (MBA)/international management. In 2002, Thunderbird was ranked first among graduate schools in international business in the United States by *U.S. News and World Report* (April 15, 2002) and first worldwide by the *Wall Street Journal* (September 9, 2002). For over 50 years, all graduates have been required to take a minimum of 4 semesters of foreign language or demonstrate equivalent proficiency. Recently, in 2002, Thunderbird instituted a controversial nonlanguage track to accommodate students who choose not to study a second language. However, most of the 1,100 graduate students currently attending Thunderbird are enrolled in the language track.

Thunderbird's foreign language requirement is rare among graduate business schools, whose administrators generally are reluctant to require subjects that are not directly related to business. Thunderbird has also earned recognition for its

unusual tripartite curriculum, which requires coursework in international business, foreign languages, and international studies.

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

The impetus for this research came in response to a comment overheard at Thunderbird that, "English is the language of international business today. Foreign languages aren't necessary anymore." How true is this statement? Would monolingual or marginally bilingual people know what they were missing by not knowing a foreign language or culture? Clearly, the question needed to be addressed by people who had second language and cultural skills as well as business experience.

An opportunity to pursue the research came in February, 2002, when a small seminar on research priorities in business language education was held at The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Russ Campbell, then Professor Emeritus of Applied Linguistics and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at UCLA, organized the conference with the sponsorship of the Center for International Business Education Research (CIBER), which is funded by Title VI of the U.S. Department of Education. He invited 10 business language faculty, primarily from universities with CIBERs, to identify and discuss the most pressing research issues in business languages (Campbell, 2002; Grosse, 2002).

The author offered the following research question to the group: Do foreign language skills and cultural knowledge give business executives a competitive advantage in their careers? The participants expressed interest in the project, made suggestions, and gave encouragement. A month later, the author received a research grant from the Thunderbird Research Center to study the issue.

Other studies have shown the positive attitudes of students toward foreign language study (Roberts, 1992) and the relationship between foreign language study and interest in international business careers (Robbins, Abramson, & Hollingshead, 1998). Prior research has also shown that companies have a demand for employees with foreign language and cultural skills (Grosse, 1998; Hedderich, 1997; Kenny & Sheikh, 2000; Schorr, 2000; Vande Berg, 1997). In the American business press, a number of articles have focused on the need for U.S. business people to learn other languages (Frook, 2000; Griffith & Ferguson, 2000; Josefak, 2000; Peterson, 2002; Stokely, 2000). The same theme has

appeared in the British press concerning the dearth of language skills among U.K. business people (Coleman, 2000, 2002; "Foreign Language Skills," 2002; Hancock, 1999; "Parlez-vous anglais?" 2000; Pickard, 1999; Whettingsteel, 1999).

Rationale for the Study

To date, no empirical study has investigated whether foreign language and cultural knowledge give business executives an advantage in the workplace. The related benefits could be somewhat intangible and difficult to quantify. Previous studies have looked into recruiter demand for foreign language skills (Grosse, 1998; Kumayama & Makita-Discekici, 1999), the economic utility of foreign languages (Grosse, Critz, & Tuman, 1998), American and European perspectives on Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP; Grosse & Kingscott, 1991), and the evolution of LSP (Grosse & Voght, 1991). Several books have focused on issues in business languages, particularly those edited by Fryer and Guntermann (1997), Loughrin-Sacco and Abrate (1998), and Schorr (2002).

Most MBA programs do not require foreign language study for entry or exit. Of the 109 MBA programs that Koch (1997) surveyed, only 29% had foreign languages available to their students. None of the programs required foreign language proficiency for entry or exit. Out of the 20 MBA programs that offered foreign languages, 19 had a master's degree in international business or an international business concentration.

Robert Grosse, Thunderbird CIBER director, conducted an email survey of the directors of the 29 CIBER institutions in July, 2003. He asked, "Does your MBA program, or any sub-component of it, have a foreign language requirement for program entry or exit? If yes, would you please describe the requirement?" Of the 29 business schools, 17 responded to the survey. Only 4 had a foreign language exit requirement for subcomponents of the MBA that are related to international business: the University of Memphis, the University of Hawai'i (whose Japan- and China-focused MBA programs include language training but do not have a specific competency requirement), the University of Colorado at Denver (the Master of Science in International Business [MSIB] and joint MBA/MSIB programs require intermediate level proficiency), and Thunderbird (Track 1 program). Florida International University was planning an exit foreign language requirement. In general, CIBER insti-

tutions provide instruction in critical foreign languages needed to promote understanding of the cultures and customs of U.S. trading partners. CIBER programs include interdisciplinary programs that incorporate foreign language training into the business curriculum and intensive language programs designed to enhance the international skills of the business community.

Thunderbird has had a foreign language requirement for many years. Since it opened in 1946, its graduates have left the school with the requisite 4-semester minimum of foreign language courses or their equivalents. As a result, the alumni in the sample possess a certain level of foreign language proficiency and cultural knowledge. In addition, most of the respondents work in business-related areas. A few of them are employed in the public sector, as well as in education. Thunderbird alumni make good subjects for the research, given their foreign language and cultural competence, master's degrees in international business, and typical employment in business-related fields. Presumably, many of these alumni have direct personal knowledge of whether foreign language and cultural knowledge have added value to their careers.

Research Questions

In the business world, *competitive advantage* refers to the edge that a company or individual has over competitors. It can mean lower costs of goods and services, higher quality, better service, improved production methods, faster distribution systems, more efficient information exchange, and so forth. In terms of language and cultural knowledge, competitive advantage refers to the perceived and real benefits that set apart people who possess them. What experiences, opportunities, rewards, recognition, and personal satisfaction come to people as a result of their foreign language proficiency and cultural understanding? To find out, the research addressed the following questions.

1. What languages do Thunderbird graduates speak, and how did the alumni acquire their foreign language skills and cultural competence?
2. What competitive advantage do foreign language skills and cultural competence give executives at work?
3. How have companies recognized and rewarded foreign language and cultural competence of alumni?
4. How do alumni use their foreign language skills and knowledge of other cultures at work?

5. What are the future plans of alumni for foreign language and cultural study?

METHODOLOGY

The Survey

The survey instrument was developed in the winter of 2002 and piloted in January, 2003, by the school's North American and European Alumni Councils. From the two councils, 15 members offered comments and suggestions, many of which the author incorporated into the final version of the survey. Dr. Anne Stringfellow, assistant professor of global business, recommended Surveypro.com as the Internet-based software program to handle survey development, delivery, and data reports.

The total alumni population from the first graduating class of 1947 through the class of 2002 was 33,053. The 2,500 member target group was randomly selected from Thunderbird graduates of the classes of 1970 through 2002, with an even percentage taken from each class. With the support of Anne-Marie Nelson, Vice President of Alumni Relations, the Office of Alumni Relations provided the email addresses of these 2,500 alumni. On February 7, 2003, the author sent an email message to the alumni inviting them to participate in the survey. To take the survey, the respondent clicked on a link within the email that led to a Web site on the Internet. The responses were anonymous and could not be traced back to an email address. (For survey and responses, see the Appendix.)

Within 5 days of sending out the email link to the survey, almost 500 alumni had completed it. Surveypro.com automatically tabulated the results and produced detailed reports and charts as the responses came in. By the end of the 10-day response period, 581 alumni had completed the survey. Of those respondents, 246 wrote additional comments. After subtracting the 157 incorrect email addresses from the 2,500 sent, the 581 completed surveys represented a response rate of 24.8%.

Demographics of the Sample

The demographics of the 2,500 person sample matched those of the general alumni population well. The gender distribution of the 581 respondents mirrored that of the entire sample, with 71% male and 29% female. The distribution of the respondents' ages fell into a bell curve, with about half (47%) in the 35 to 44 age group, and

about one fourth each (23% to 24%) in the 25 to 34 and 45 to 64 age ranges. Fewer than one tenth (6%) of the respondents were 55 to 64 years old. None was under 25 or over 65 (see Appendix).

Every class from 1970 through 2002 was represented in the survey, with participation ranging from a low of 0.7% of total participants from the classes of 1971, 1978, and 1989, to a high of 7% from the 1991 and 1993 classes.

Most respondents (70%) were natives of the United States, with others coming from Europe (11%), Latin America (9%), and Asia (7%). Correspondingly, 70% of the respondents counted English as their native language, whereas 9% claimed Spanish as their mother tongue.

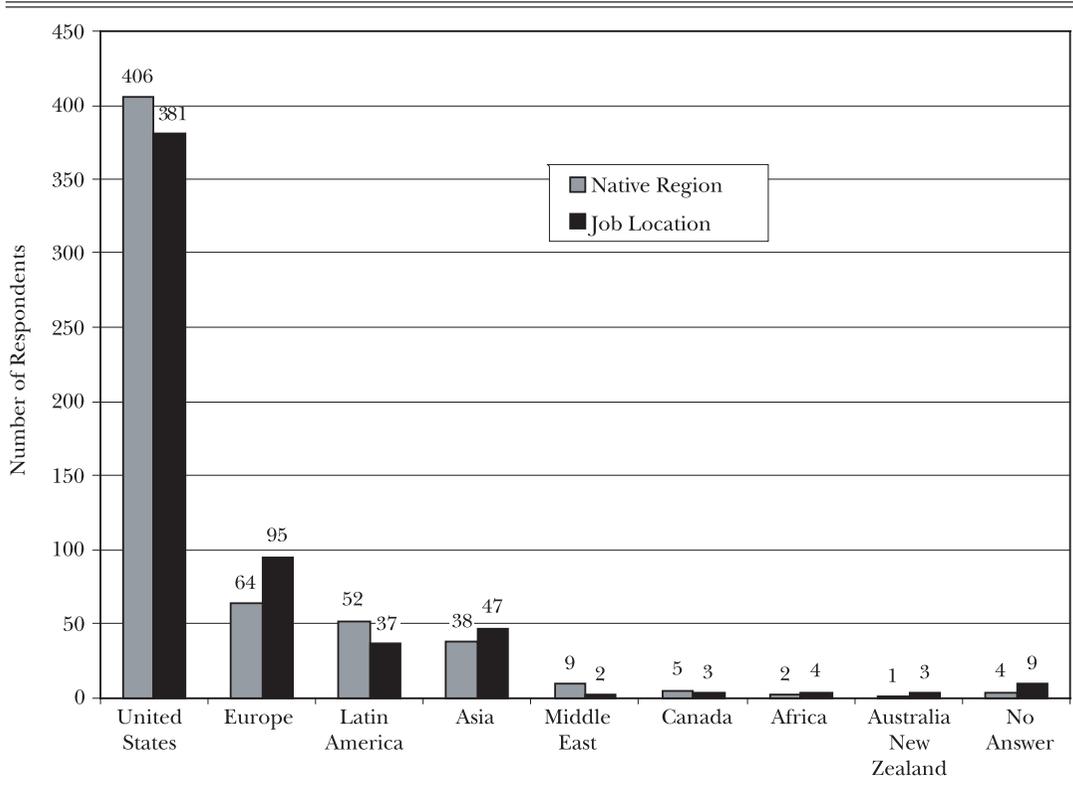
Where are the alumni based? About 66% of them work in the United States, whereas 17% are based in Europe. Fewer than one tenth each work in Asia (8%) and Latin America (7%). The Thunderbird alumni office did not have addresses for 18% of the alumni. (See Figure 1.) This job distribution of the respondents parallels that of the total alumni group: North America (62%); Europe, Middle East, Africa (7%); Asia/Pacific (6%); and Latin America (4%).

With respect to income, slightly over one fifth of the respondents had annual incomes in both the \$75,000 to \$99,999 ($n = 125$) and \$100,000 to \$149,999 ($n = 135$) ranges. About 15% of the respondents ($n = 84$) earned \$50,000 to \$74,999 per year. Just over 10% of them ($n = 60$) had annual earnings of \$200,000 and over. Slightly fewer than 10% of the respondents ($n = 54$) reported income in the under \$50,000 range or the \$150,000 to \$199,999 range ($n = 53$).

The respondents worked in firms of all sizes. About one third worked in large companies with over \$1 billion in annual sales, whereas another third was engaged in small businesses with annual sales of under \$10 million. One fifth of the respondents were employed in businesses with \$10 to \$100 million in sales. Slightly under one fifth of the respondents worked for medium-sized companies with sales between \$100 million and \$1 billion. A few worked in education and the government/nonprofit sector.

In terms of job title, the alumni held positions as manager (23%), director (15%), entrepreneur/business owner (12%), vice president (11%), president/CEO (7%), supervisor (3%),

FIGURE 1
Comparison of Native Region and Job Location of Respondents



and assistant manager (3%). About one fourth had other positions that were not listed in the survey.

The respondents worked in many different industries, with the largest representation in banking/financial services (19%), technology (11%), consulting (11%), industrial products/manufacturing (8%), consumer products (7%), health care/pharmaceutical industry (7%), government/nonprofit (6%), and telecommunications (4%).

With respect to job function, the distribution of respondents was spread out among 20 functional areas. The largest groups of alumni worked in general management (13%), marketing/brand management (12%), sales/sales management (11%), business development (8%), financial/investment management (7%), corporate finance (6%), consulting (6%), project management (6%), and account/relationship management (4%). The lists of industries and job functions used in the survey were obtained from Thunderbird's Career Management Center.

The majority (89%) of the respondents studied a language while they earned their master's degrees at Thunderbird. The rest were able to waive the language requirement due to prior knowledge or study. Four semesters or the equivalent in foreign language were required at Thunderbird from 1948 through 2002. The curriculum at Thunderbird focused on teaching business language from beginning to advanced levels. The courses were designed to help students develop oral and written communication skills, business vocabulary, and cultural knowledge. For teaching materials, the faculty used business language texts, case studies, videos, business news articles, the Internet, and corporate Web sites.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Research Question 1

What languages do Thunderbird graduates speak, and how did the alumni acquire their foreign language skills and cultural competence?

Many graduates of Thunderbird are multilingual. On the survey, they were asked to indicate all foreign languages that they spoke. Survey choices were limited to the languages that were taught for years at Thunderbird: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. An "Other" category allowed respondents to write in languages that were not on the list. Results show that the

greatest percentage of the respondents speak Spanish (50%), followed by French (37%), German (25%), Portuguese (14%), Japanese (11%), Chinese (9%), Russian (2%), and Arabic (1%). Most respondents speak several languages: one foreign language (38%), two (31%), three (18%), four (9%), or five or more (3%). A higher percentage, 54%, of nonnative speakers of English (NNSE) speak three or more foreign languages compared with 21.3% of native speakers of English (NSE; see Appendix).

The respondents identified the three most important sources for acquiring the one foreign language that was most helpful to them at work. Most alumni, over 70%, identified *living abroad* as the most valuable source for learning a foreign language. Next in importance were *other school or classroom setting*, *Thunderbird*, *travel*, and *family or friends*. A comparison the responses of NSEs and NNSEs reveals that about the same percentage (over 70%) indicated that living abroad helped them learn their foreign languages. A higher percentage of NSEs than NNSEs named Thunderbird as a place where they learned foreign languages (see Figure 2).

In their comments, several respondents emphasized the importance of study abroad components in a university's language program.

I believe that any Japanese language program must include a 1- or 2-month stay in the country after the first 3 months of training.

I think you have to live in the country to really learn the language.

Languages are learned in the country, in the culture. . . if this type of environment can be created in the educational system then learning of the language is strengthened.

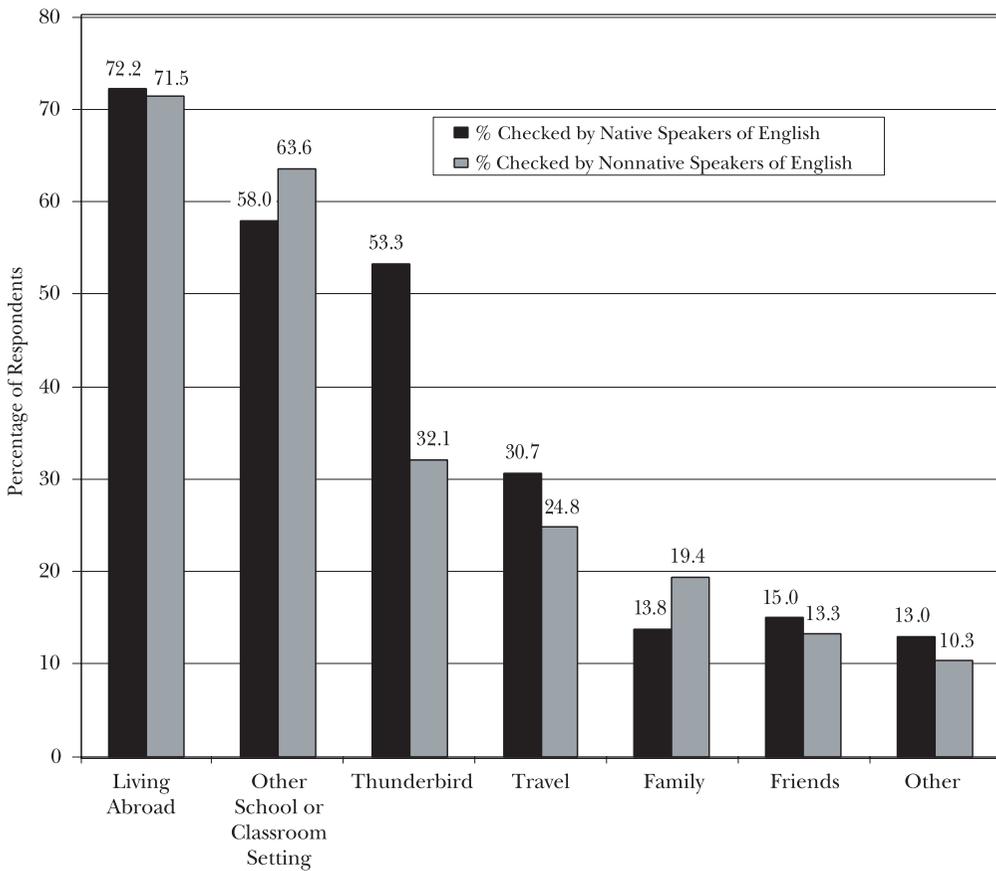
Research Question 2

What competitive advantage do foreign language skills and cultural competence give executives at work?

The majority of those surveyed responded that foreign language skills (82%) and cultural knowledge (89%) gave them a competitive advantage in the workplace. Over half of them (53%) claimed a *significant* advantage from their language skills. Another 28% believed they gained *some* competitive edge, whereas 18% said they received *none*. These figures give strong evidence of the value of foreign languages and cultural competence in the workplace. In their comments, the alumni gave examples of how foreign languages and cultural knowledge had benefited them and their careers. Two respondents said:

FIGURE 2

How Native Speakers of English and Nonnative Speakers of English Learned Foreign Languages



Language skills and the ability to adjust to multiple cultures raise the level of effectiveness significantly. It becomes much easier to “get things done,” and lowers the stress level associated with being an expat to manageable proportions.

Language and cultural skills are mandatory for local acceptance and setting one apart in a foreign setting. Those that do not make an attempt to learn the language are looked down upon not only by the locals, but also by the expatriate community that has taken the time to learn the language and with it, the culture.

Data analysis suggested that the better an alumnus knew a foreign language, the more likely it was to be helpful at work. A large percentage (64%) of the respondents self-reported a high level of proficiency in these languages. One fourth of them self-described their language competence as *like a native*, while 40% rated themselves as *fluent in most business and social situations*. Over one fourth *communicate fairly well* in the sec-

ond language. Only 8% reported a *basic survival level*, and 2% could say only *a few words or phrases*.

A comparison of the the foreign language proficiency of NSEs and NNSEs reveals that both groups have about the same percentage of people who reported being *fluent in most business and social situations*. However, 48% of the NNSEs reported *like a native* in proficiency compared to just 14% of the NSEs. In addition, higher percentages of NSEs than NNSEs had self-reported proficiency at the lower three levels (see Table 1).

An analysis of the survey results finds a strong relationship between reported language proficiency and competitive advantage ($\chi^2 = 158.587$, $df = 8$, $p < .01$). Many people who reported proficiency at the two higher levels, *like a native* and *fluent in most business and social situations*, reported that their foreign language skills have given them a significant competitive advantage at work. A number of people with language skills at the lower three levels, *can communicate fairly*

TABLE 1
Foreign Language Proficiency of Native and Nonnative Speakers of English

Proficiency Level	Native Speaker of English	Nonnative Speaker of English	Total
Like a Native	55 (13.7%)	80 (47.9%)	135 (23.7%)
Fluent in Most Business and Social Situations	159 (39.6%)	68 (40.7%)	227 (39.9%)
Can Communicate Fairly Well	135 (33.6%)	14 (8.4%)	149 (26.2%)
Basic Survival	44 (10.9%)	4 (2.4%)	48 (8.4%)
A Few Words/Phrases	9 (2.2%)	1 (0.6%)	10 (1.8%)
Total	402 (100.0%)	167 (100.0%)	569 (100.0%)

well, basic survival level, and a few words or phrases, reported *no* competitive advantage from foreign languages. The data suggest that the better one believes he or she knows a foreign language, the more likely the language is to be helpful on the job. In addition, they suggest that the lower the reported proficiency level, the less likely a person is to derive a competitive advantage from the foreign language skills. See Table 2 for a comparison of foreign language proficiency and competitive advantage.

Several executives mentioned this relationship in their comments:

I have found that language skills are not as important in business unless one is truly fluent in the language. My language skills have never been good enough to negotiate in, but they gave me an understanding of the people I was negotiating with, and

even a few words of the language gave the people I was doing business with some comfort that I was interested in them and their way of business.

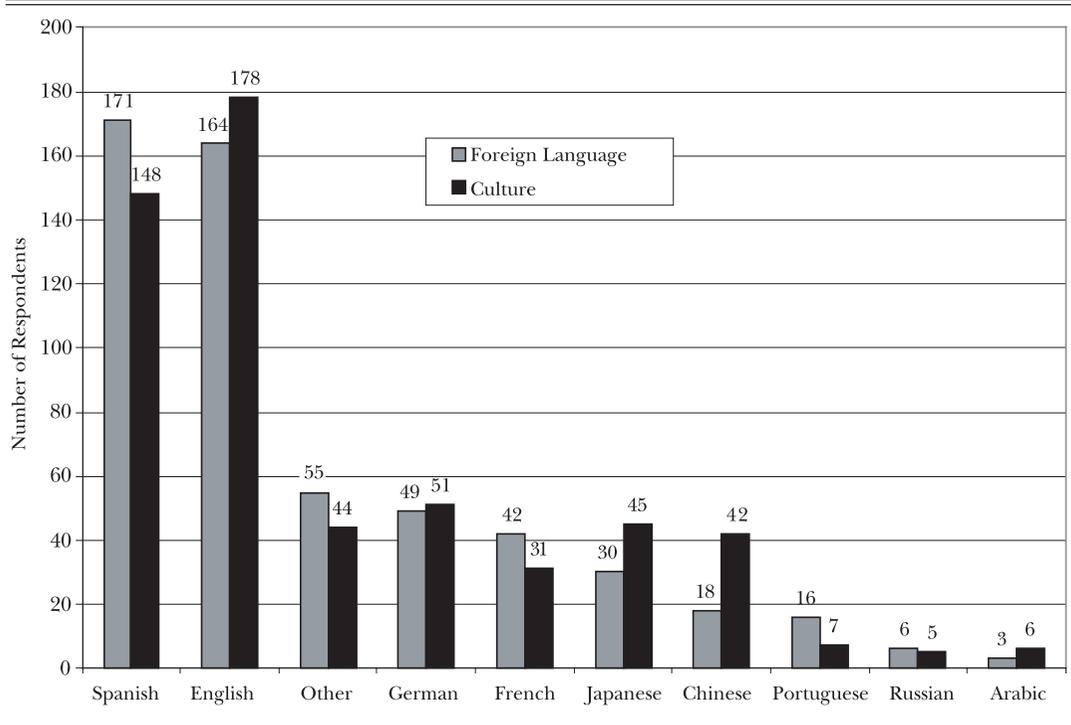
I don't speak Spanish well enough for there to have been any value or different opportunities for me.

According to other comments received, the languages studied at Thunderbird did not always prove relevant to the business career. Realizing that it was impossible to predict where their careers would take them, some alumni wrote about the disconnect between the language they studied at Thunderbird and the language they needed in the workplace. For example, one respondent stated: "The reason my Thunderbird language skills were not of use during my career is because the language studied, Spanish, had no relevance to my assignments in the Middle East, Asia, and the UK."

TABLE 2
Comparison of Foreign Language Proficiency and Competitive Advantage

Proficiency Level	Competitive Advantage of Foreign Languages			Total
	Significant	Some	None	
Like a Native	105 (34.0%)	18 (11.0%)	12 (13.0%)	135 (24.0%)
Fluent in Most Business and Social Situations	150 (49.0%)	57 (35.0%)	17 (18.0%)	224 (40.0%)
Can Communicate Fairly Well	45 (15.0%)	66 (41.0%)	36 (38.0%)	147 (26.0%)
Basic Survival	2 (.01%)	21 (13.0%)	23 (24.0%)	46 (8.0%)
A Few Words/Phrases	3 (.01%)	0 (0%)	7 (.07%)	10 (2.0%)
Total Number of Respondents	305 (100.0%)	162 (100.0%)	95 (100.0%)	562 (100.0%)

FIGURE 3
Comparison of Most Helpful Foreign Languages and Cultures at Work



Concerning which foreign language was most helpful to alumni at work, Spanish (31%) and English (30%) got the most votes, followed by Other (10%), German (9%), French (8%), Japanese (5%), Chinese (3%), Portuguese (3%), Russian (1%), and Arabic (<1%). For 80% of the NNSEs, English was the most helpful foreign language at work, followed by Spanish (10%), French (2%), and German (2%; see Figure 3).

Although the language they studied at Thunderbird was not always the most useful one later on in their careers, most respondents reported that their Thunderbird language studies had been of *great* (17%), *significant* (22%), or *some* (29%) value. Other respondents found their studies of *little value* (13%), *no value* (9%) or they *did not study a foreign language at Thunderbird* (11%). The comments included criticism of and praise for their graduate school language experience. Criticism generally related to a specific professor or language class taken at Thunderbird. One typical comment reflecting praise of the program was “The language classes were probably the most beneficial out of all the courses I took at Thunderbird.”

It is generally believed that language study provides culture knowledge as well as language

TABLE 3
Cultures Other than Their Own with Which Respondents Are Familiar

Culture	Native Speakers of English	Nonnative Speakers of English
Spanish/Latin American	237 (57.4%)	62 (36.9%)
American/English	57 (13.8%)	155 (92.3%)
Other	118 (28.6%)	34 (20.2%)
German	139 (33.7%)	38 (22.6%)
French	132 (32.0%)	54 (32.1%)
Japanese	97 (23.5%)	29 (17.3%)
Chinese	81 (19.6%)	29 (17.3%)
Portuguese/Brazilian	67 (16.2%)	25 (14.9%)
Russian	21 (5.1%)	10 (6.0%)
Arabic	27 (6.5%)	12 (7.1%)
Total Respondents	413 (100.0%)	168 (100.0%)

proficiency. In the survey, the alumni respondents indicated cultures other than their own with which they were familiar (see Table 3). The largest percentage of them (52%) reported having an understanding of Spanish or Latin American cultures. Other respondents were familiar with the following cultures: American or English (37%), French (32%), German (31%), Japanese (22%), Chinese (19%), Portuguese (16%), Arabic (7%), and Russian (5%). See Figure 4 for a comparison of languages and cultures that are familiar to the respondents.. Approximately equal percentages of NSEs and NNSEs (about 32%) are familiar with two cultures other than their own.

The respondents identified which cultural knowledge helped them the most at work. About a third of the NNSEs cited *American or English* culture, whereas over one fourth considered a knowledge of *Spanish or Latin American* culture to be the most valuable. The rest benefited most from their understanding of cultures related to *German* (9%), *Japanese* (8%), *Chinese* (8%), *other cultures* (8%), *French* (6%), *Japanese* (5%), *Chinese* (3%), *Portuguese/Brazilian* (1%), *Arabic* (1%), and *Russian* (1%). The majority of the respondents checked more than one culture.

Most of the alumni (84%) reported a high degree of familiarity with the one culture that helped them the most at work. They considered their level of familiarity with these cultures to be: *like a native* (28%), *very familiar* (56%), and *somewhat familiar* (14%). Only 1% responded *a little familiar* and 0.18% were *barely familiar* with the culture.

The majority of the respondents (89%) received a *significant* or *some* competitive advantage at work from their cultural competence. Almost half (48%) of them gained a *significant* competitive edge, whereas 41% of them acknowledged receiving *some* competitive advantage. Only 11% of the participants derived *no* competitive advantage from cultural understanding. (See Figure 5.) One respondent made the following comment on the importance of cultural understanding to business: “Cultural understanding, and the enhanced cultural understanding that language studies provide, is vital to success in the international business community.”

An interesting relationship exists between income and competitive advantage realized from cultural knowledge ($\chi^2 = 32.107, df = 12, p < .01$). Many of the respondents whose annual income places them in the highest categories of

FIGURE 4
Comparison of Foreign Languages Spoken and Cultural Familiarity

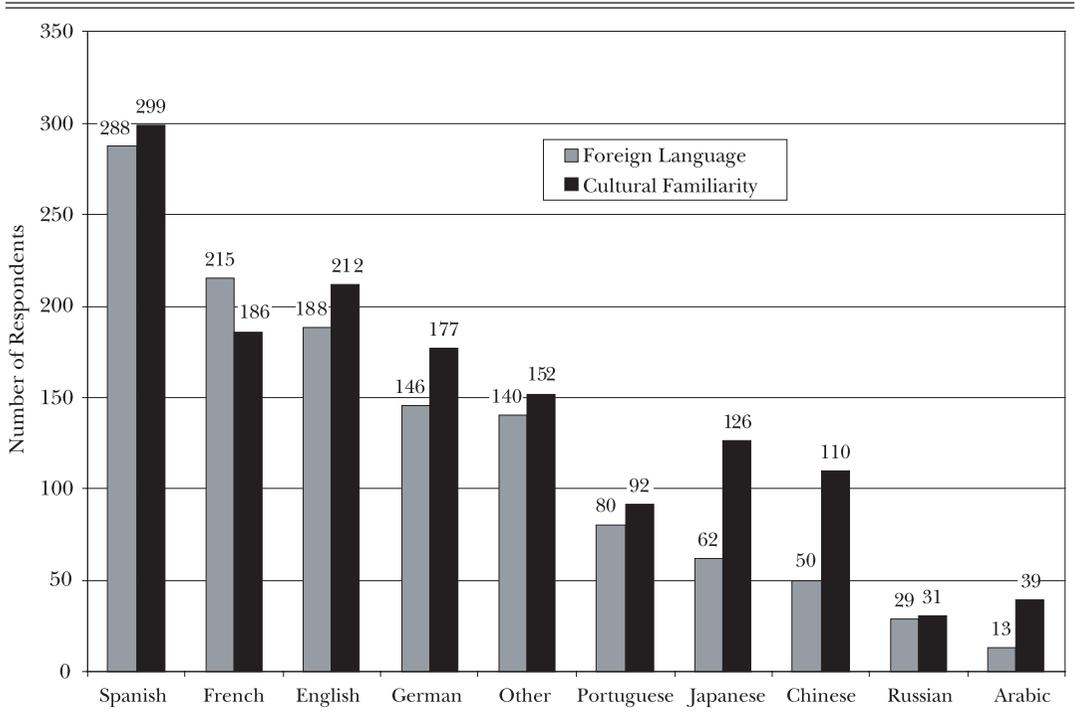
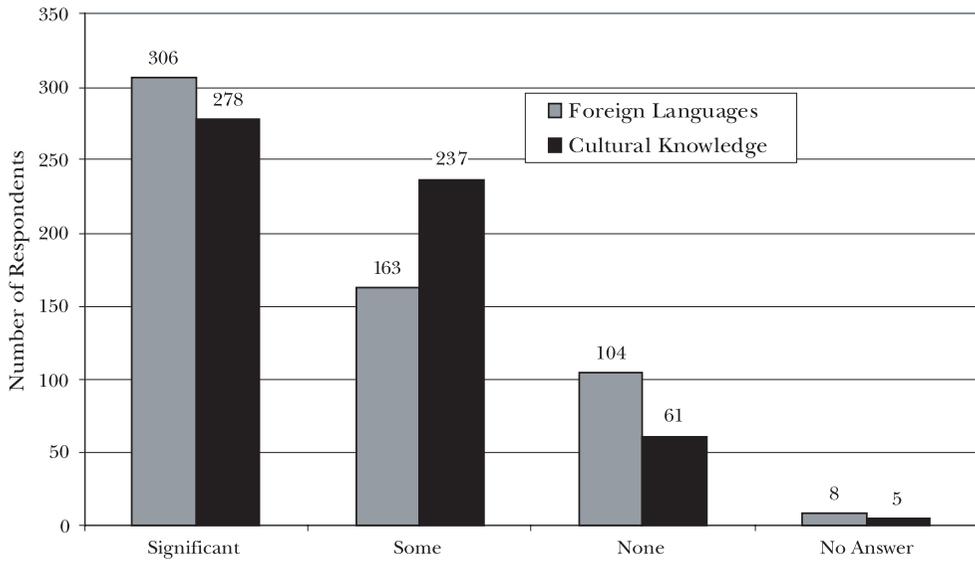


FIGURE 5
Competitive Advantage of Foreign Language Proficiency and Cultural Knowledge



over \$200,000 (10%) and \$150,000 to \$200,000 (9%) reported a *significant* competitive advantage from their cultural knowledge. In contrast, many of those who earn \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year (15%) reported *no* competitive advantage from their cultural knowledge.

Another relationship worthy of note occurs between job title and competitive advantage from cultural knowledge ($\chi^2 = 51.880, df = 14, p < .01$). Many respondents who hold positions as *president/CEO* (7%), *vice president* (11%), and *business owner/entrepreneur* (12%) report a *significant* competitive advantage rather than *some* or *none*, due to their cultural knowledge.

When in a Career Is Language Most Helpful? The alumni indicated when in their professional lives foreign languages have been most important, checking all responses that applied. The results show little difference in the time period when languages are most helpful. The responses were as follows: *when I was hired* (40%), *early years* (44%), *mid career* (33%), and *currently in my career* (46%). Several people commented on how their language skills helped them to get their first job:

Without my language and cultural skills, I would not have been hired for the job I have now!

Without a foreign language it would have been almost impossible for me to start a career on continental Europe. My first job was with PricewaterhouseCoopers in Prague, which hired me primarily because of my language skills. The ability to

speak three languages is very uncommon for an American, but not so in other countries.

In their comments, several alumni reported receiving value from languages early in their careers, even though they no longer use them:

My language skills truly helped me early in my career when I was working in International Banking. I have been out of the international workplace for the past 5 years and have been involved exclusively in a domestic real estate development business.

Language skills were of great value in the early part of my career. For the past 12 years, I have not used foreign languages in my career.

Time Spent in International Business. Given the high percentage of alumni who acknowledged that language and cultural skills have given them a competitive advantage at work, one would expect most alumni to spend a majority of their time on international business (IB). The respondents did not indicate this distribution of their time: About half of them spend 50% or more of their time on IB, and half spend less than 50%. Specifically, one third of them devote most their time (75% to 100%) on IB, while another third spend little time (0% to 25%) on it.

A significant relationship exists between the time spent in IB and competitive advantage from language skills ($\chi^2 = 119.022, df = 6, p < .01$) and time spent in IB and competitive advantage from cultural knowledge ($\chi^2 = 100.673, df = 6, p < .01$). Many of those respondents who dedi-

TABLE 4
Time Spent in International Business versus Competitive Advantage of Foreign Language Proficiency and Cultural Knowledge

Time Spent in International Business	Competitive Advantage						Total	
	Significant		Some		None		FL	C
	FL	C	FL	C	FL	C		
75%–100%	148	129	29	56	11	4	188	189
50%–74%	53	56	24	29	11	3	88	88
25%–49%	40	33	27	34	6	6	73	73
0%–25%	63	56	80	115	75	47	281	218
Total Respondents	304	274	160	234	103	60	567	568

cate most of their time (75% to 100%) to IB reported a *significant* competitive advantage from their language and cultural skills. Conversely, many who spend only 0% to 25% of their time working in IB reported that they receive *no* competitive advantage from language and cultural skills (see Table 4).

Another relationship exists between job location and time spent in IB ($\chi^2 = 46.010, df = 3, p < .01$). A number of respondents whose jobs are based in the United States spend 0% to 25% of their time on IB. Quite a few people whose jobs are located outside the United States dedicate 75% to 100%, or 50% to 74% of their time on IB. Higher percentages of alumni with non-U.S.-based jobs spend 50% to 100% of their time in IB than alumni whose jobs are based in the United States (see Table 5).

One respondent commented: “Speaking Spanish and studying and living in Latin America have made my chances of business success increase by 50%. In Latin America, it is a relationship-based business environment.” Another wrote, “Speak-

ing Spanish is a MUST while living in Miami. I use it at work to speak with my co-workers in the office and with co-workers and customers internationally.”

Research Question 3

How have companies recognized and rewarded foreign language and cultural competence of alumni?

How do companies value and reward employees’ foreign language skills and cultural knowledge? Thunderbird alumni reported that companies reward their foreign language skills in a variety of ways. Over half of the respondents (302) checked more than one way that their companies valued their skills, 108 checked two ways, and 70 respondents marked three ways. Fewer than one third (31%) of the respondents reported that their companies make *no acknowledgment of value* of their foreign language expertise. The alumni indicated that they received the following corporate rewards and recognition for their foreign language skills: *travel opportunities* (41%), *overseas assignments* (33%), *written or oral recognition* (30%), *promotion* (18%), and *raise* (14%).

The following comment shows how one individual’s company took advantage of his language skills.

I studied Arabic at Thunderbird. I waived the language requirement because of fluency in French and already spoke Italian. I know my language skills helped me in job interviews with banks and getting me a higher salary. I went to work for Chase Manhattan Bank in New York and was quickly assigned to French West Africa and the Italian correspondent banking area because of my language skills in addition to my credit skills.

Another respondent took a dim view of how U.S. companies ignore the value of languages and cultures: “I believe American firms continue to

TABLE 5
Time Spent in International Business versus Job Location

Time Spent in International Business	Job Location		Total
	United States	Outside United States	
75%–100%	100 (26.5%)	89 (45.9%)	189 (33.0%)
50%–74%	48 (12.7%)	40 (20.6%)	88 (15.4%)
25%–49%	48 (12.7%)	26 (13.4%)	74 (12.9%)
0%–25%	182 (48.1%)	39 (20.1%)	221 (38.6%)
Total Respondents	378 (100.0%)	194 (100.0%)	572 (100.0%)

disregard the value of foreign language study and cultural studies, and I believe American firms will continue to do so at their peril and loss.”

According to the alumni responses, corporate rewards for cultural competence followed patterns similar to those for foreign language skills. The most common form of corporate reward for an executive’s cultural knowledge was *travel opportunities* (39%). Other corporate forms of recognition included: *overseas assignments* (32%), *written or oral recognition* (32%), *promotion* (18%), and *raise* (12%). Similar to the responses obtained in the foreign language question, over half of the respondents (314) checked just one way in which the company rewarded cultural skills, and 109 checked two. About 32% of the alumni’s companies give *no acknowledgment of value* for cultural competence, a percentage that is close to the percentage of companies that place no value on foreign language competence (see Figure 6). One individual had this comment concerning how companies value cultural knowledge:

Generally find that cultural awareness is critical—but is not valued by most organizations directly. It impacts by enabling one to be more effective, but

this is more of an intangible benefit that is hard to quantify and directly associate with promotions/progression.

Many alumni described the benefits that they have derived from their knowledge of foreign language and cultures. Their additional comments expressed how they feel about the importance of language and culture.

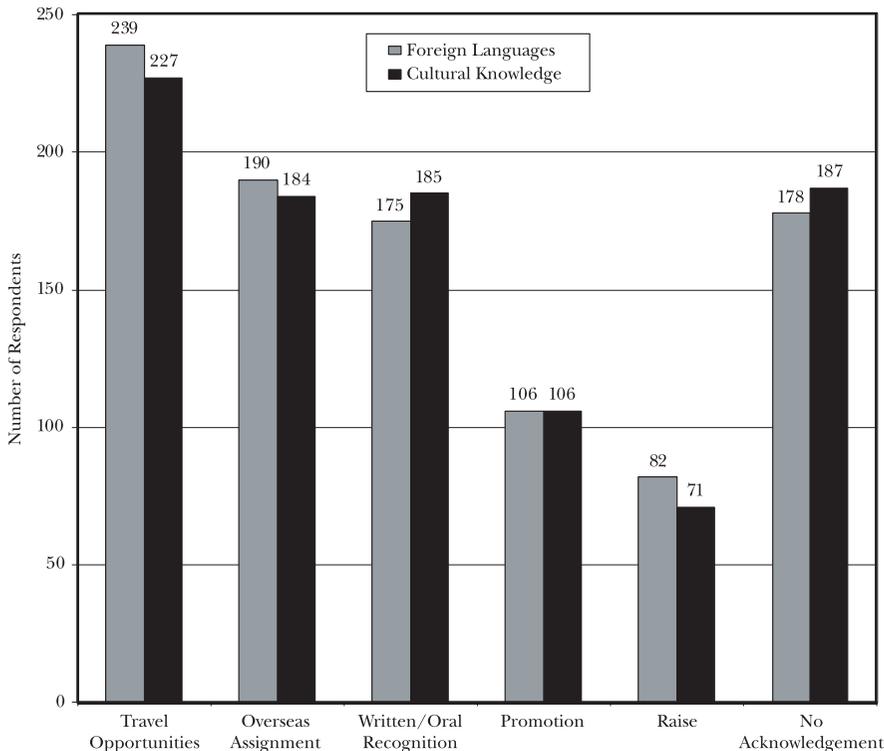
The benefits, though primarily intangible, of speaking a foreign language and understanding other cultures are not rated highly enough. I once gained the trust of a Swedish executive by speaking Spanish with him. He had spent his youth in Argentina and was more comfortable speaking Spanish than English. I had a similar experience with a Japanese exec.

The decision to study Japanese at Thunderbird profoundly changed my life, creating invaluable opportunities both commercially and socially.

Many alumni reiterated the importance of knowing another language in their comments. Some examples appear below.

Speaking more than one language is a must in today’s world, regardless of country of origin or field of endeavor.

FIGURE 6
Comparison of How Company Rewards Foreign Language Proficiency versus Cultural Knowledge



Learning a foreign language is extremely helpful to learning further languages as it changes or trains one's mind set to be more open and flexible.

Foreign language skills are more than understanding another language—they train the mind to deal with imprecise and often vague communication and information.

A strong correlation existed between an individual's self-reported degree of proficiency in the foreign language or knowledge of a culture and a company's recognition value of these skills ($\chi^2 = 70.639$, $df = 4$, $p < .01$). For example, many employers reward and recognize the skill of respondents who reported that they speak a foreign language *like a native* or are *fluent in most business and social situations*. A number of employers of people who rated themselves at the three lower levels of proficiency (*can communicate fairly well, basic survival level, a few words or phrases*) did not acknowledge the value of these skills.

A very strong relationship existed between companies that reward their employees' foreign language skills and employees who reported a competitive advantage from these skills ($\chi^2 = 249.253$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$). Statistical results showed a similar relationship between the respondents whose companies value cultural knowledge and the respondents who realize a competitive advantage from their cultural knowledge ($\chi^2 = 155.381$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$).

Although the study focused on professional competitive advantage, for many alumni, the personal advantages mattered as much, if not more. In their comments on the survey, several individuals expressed the personal enrichment that they have derived from foreign languages and cultural understanding. This satisfaction is reflected in the following comments.

Foreign languages are a labor of love and what they can return to someone is truly priceless.

While I value this knowledge in my business life, I feel that the study of language has added an incredible richness to all facets of my life. There is so much of the world's beauty that I would miss without even knowing, had I not studied language from an early age. It literally opened up entire new worlds for me.

Language and cultural studies have significantly enriched my career as well as personally and spiritually.

Knowing another language is equal to gaining another soul in the richness and depth it adds to my life.

Their language learning and cultural understanding made an important difference in their lives, not just in their professional careers. Al-

though this study focused on the competitive advantage of foreign language and cultural knowledge in business, many alumni perceived benefits in other aspects of their lives as well.

Research Question 4

How do alumni use their foreign language skills and knowledge of other cultures at work?

The survey respondents use their language at work for different purposes including: *conversation* (81%), *meetings* (62%), *email* (59%), *presentations* (52%), *negotiations* (47%) and *reports* (37%). Many respondents (171) checked all six items, whereas 137 of them checked only one item. Only 14% of the respondents *don't use* foreign language at work.

Most alumni also indicated ways in which their cultural knowledge has helped them at work, checking the multiple ways that applied: (a) feel comfortable with people and culture (86%), (b) understand the business environment (77%), (c) gain respect and credibility (65%), (d) function better in country (66%), (e) reduce chance for misunderstanding (68%), (f) work on multinational teams (56%), and (g) enhance negotiation success (53%). About 30% of the respondents (177) checked all seven ways. Only 5.5% responded that their cultural knowledge *has not helped* them at work.

There is considerable variation in how often the respondents use their foreign language skills at work. Slightly over half use their skills *daily* (38%) or *frequently* (13%), whereas slightly fewer than half work with foreign language *occasionally* (15%), *seldom* (21%), or *never* (13%). In their comments, several alumni explained that their responses to the survey did not reflect accurately how much they valued their languages. For example, although they replied to survey questions that they did not use a foreign language or cultural knowledge often at work, if at all, they stated that they still valued these skills, as seen in the following comments.

Though I don't often use my language skills currently, at work they know I can, and that sets me apart. Actually, it makes me part of the club, because many of us here have knowledge of other languages and cultures.

Although I have not directly used my Chinese in my career, it does not diminish the value I place on it or the value of understanding culture and language along with business.

I believe that language skills are very valuable and will become only more so. It has not affected my ca-

reer because I am an entrepreneur/President. I wish my language skills were better and that I had the opportunity to use a foreign language more often.

My language skills are extremely valuable to me personally. Unfortunately, I have not had an opportunity to utilize them in my career. That does not mean, however, that I don't believe language skills are important. I would study more if I could.

Although I don't frequently use my Spanish language skills, the knowledge of another language greatly enhances my credibility with all foreign counterparts and clients.

Foreign language skills do not play a large role in my CURRENT daily job responsibilities. However, language and cultural skills have and will increase my chances for rapid advancement as my company looks for senior management candidates.

In contrast to the application of language skills, how often do the Thunderbird alumni use their cultural knowledge? Most alumni reported regular use: either *daily* (44%) or *frequently* (26%). Another 17% said they apply it only *occasionally*. The minority apply their cultural knowledge *seldom* (8%) or *never* (4%) on the job. According to these

results, the respondents tend to use cultural knowledge more often than foreign language skills at work.

Unless you work abroad, U.S. companies do not value foreign language skills. Even then they expect everyone else to speak English. Having said that, I still value that I speak and understand other cultures.

I would say that language skills are most useful in a career overseas. Language skills are not appreciated as much in the U.S. In my career, when I was working in the U.S. my ability to speak Japanese was treated as an interesting skill, but it was a very rare situation where it actually made a difference in my job. Within U.S. companies, I have never seen ability to speak a foreign language result in better pay.

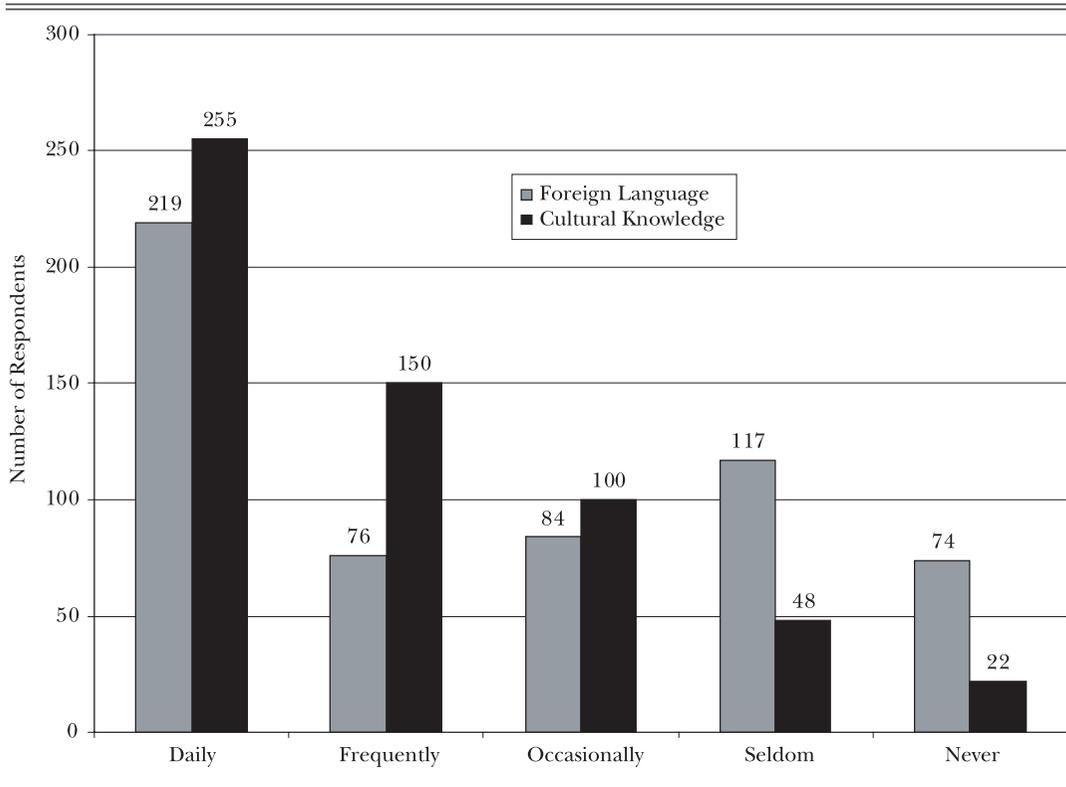
See Figure 7 for a comparison of frequency of use of foreign languages and cultural knowledge at work.

Research Question 5

What are the future plans of alumni for foreign language and cultural study?

Almost half the respondents (47%) had no

FIGURE 7
Frequency of Use of Foreign Languages and Cultural Knowledge



plans to study another foreign language or to improve their existing skills over the next 12 months. In contrast, 29% of them planned on studying another language, while 24% were considering doing so. Job location had no significant relationship to their plans to study another foreign language ($\chi^2 = 4.056, df = 2, p > .01$). Some alumni commented on the reasons behind their plans.

It will be next to impossible in the next decade to use the opportunities arising in markets such as China, without thorough preparation and immersion in the language and culture.

I personally feel language is the most important of the skill set enhanced at Thunderbird. I am currently studying Italian intensely for my current job.

Which language would these alumni study next for business purposes if they had time? *Chinese* received the most votes (25%), followed by *Spanish* (20%). Other participants would prefer to study *French* (9%), *German* (8%), *Portuguese* (8%), *Japanese* (8%), *Russian* (4.5%), and *Arabic* (4.5%). Only 9% of the respondents selected *none*. The responses of the NSE and NNSE groups followed

much the same patterns. Similar percentages of NSEs and NNSEs preferred to study Chinese, Spanish, French, Japanese, Russian, and Arabic (see Table 6).

When asked which culture they would study for business if they had the time, the alumni made similar choices. Again, the most popular selections were *Chinese* (30%), and *Spanish/Latin American* (17%). Others preferred to study *Japanese* (10%), *Portuguese/Brazilian* (7%), *Arabic* (6%), *French* (6%), *Russian* (5%), and *German* (3%). About 12% of the alumni responded *none*, indicating that they would not study another culture. Similar percentages of NSEs and NNSEs indicated that they would study Chinese, French, Portuguese/Brazilian, and Russian if they had time (see Table 7).

FUTURE RESEARCH

The present survey could be replicated with the alumni of other institutions to compare results. Additional questions for future research might include: What types of preparation did alumni find most useful in their lives after gradu-

TABLE 6
Foreign Languages that Respondents Would Like to Learn

Foreign Language	Native Region of Respondent		Total
	United States	Outside United States	
Chinese	98 (24.4%)	44 (25.3%)	142 (24.7%)
Spanish	80 (20.0%)	34 (19.5%)	114 (19.8%)
French	36 (9.0%)	14 (8.0%)	50 (8.7%)
German	25 (6.2%)	22 (12.6%)	47 (8.2%)
Japanese	31 (7.7%)	14 (8.0%)	45 (7.8%)
Portuguese	35 (8.7%)	9 (5.2%)	44 (7.7%)
Russian	19 (4.7%)	7 (4.0%)	26 (4.5%)
Arabic	17 (4.2%)	9 (5.2%)	26 (4.5%)
None	37 (9.2%)	13 (7.5%)	50 (8.7%)
Other	23 (5.7%)	8 (4.6%)	31 (5.4%)
Total Respondents	401 (100.0%)	174 (100.0%)	575 (100.0%)

TABLE 7
Cultures that Respondents Would Like to Learn About

Culture	Native Region of Respondent		Total
	United States	Outside United States	
Chinese	118 (29.9%)	53 (31.4%)	171 (30.3%)
Spanish/Latin American	62 (15.7%)	35 (20.7%)	97 (17.2%)
Japanese	32 (8.1%)	22 (13.0%)	54 (9.6%)
Portuguese/Brazilian	29 (7.3%)	10 (5.9%)	39 (6.9%)
French	23 (5.8%)	12 (7.1%)	35 (6.2%)
Arabic	28 (7.1%)	7 (4.1%)	27 (4.8%)
Russian	20 (5.1%)	7 (4.1%)	27 (4.8%)
German	8 (2.0%)	8 (4.7%)	16 (2.8%)
None	55 (13.9%)	12 (7.1%)	67 (11.9%)
Other	20 (5.1%)	3 (1.8%)	23 (4.1%)
Total Respondents	395 (100.0%)	169 (100.0%)	564 (100.0%)

ation? Which aspects of foreign language study were more effective than others? How well does a particular language program develop its students' sensitivity to the behaviors required to display cultural acumen in business interactions?

One could also conduct a survey among managers working in different cultures in a variety of areas such as sales, finance, marketing, logistics, and brand management in order to gain specific examples of language use at different levels. How do people in business use their foreign languages? What tasks do they perform with native speakers or others who speak the language? How does speaking a foreign language in a business culture affect one's ability to network socially in the target language?

WAKE-UP CALL FOR U.S. BUSINESS

A number of alumni comments pointed out the blind spots of U.S. companies toward the competitive advantages of foreign language and cultural knowledge. Their remarks issue a wake-up call for business.

Despite U.S. companies saying they are global or indicating they want to move to be global, most management does not fully appreciate and/or value the importance of "understanding other cultures to be truly successful." Many managers give lip service to wanting to understand other cultures, because that is the thing to say, but that is not a true interest. Companies thus sub-optimize without really knowing it.

The greater part of my professional career was in Europe, where language skills are not an advantage, but a requirement for anyone attempting to pursue a business career. My experience in the U.S. Corporate world is that language skills are a benefit at the time of hire, but play very little part in decisions regarding promotions and surprisingly little in obtaining foreign assignments. Of the 50 or so U.S. expats working in a European headquarters where I was employed, NONE spoke any European language (except English) at a functional level.

I have found that, unfortunately, U.S. companies would prefer to send a non foreign language-speaking, non cross-culturally trained employee who was perceived as either knowing the business or who was politically connected WITHIN the company, than send someone trained for an international position. I watched this take place again and again with my clients. Then they would wonder why they did not get the results they expected. In my opinion, this lack of regard for cultural and linguistic understanding really underscores the arrogance of most U.S. businesses that "hey, they want to do business with us, then . . . they better learn to speak English!"

Given the tightness of the job market and the state of the global economy, the competitive advantage of foreign languages and cultural knowledge could help MBA students and others in their careers. More graduate and undergraduate business programs should consider adding foreign language and cultural studies to the curriculum, in addition to sending students abroad for study or internships.

And contrary to the belief that "all you need is English to do international business," the findings here indicate that business people derive professional benefits from knowing another language and culture. The majority of the 581 Thunderbird alumni attested to the competitive advantage that they received from their language and cross-cultural skills. Many of them also mentioned personal advantages that they gained from their knowledge. The results applied to men and women working in the United States and overseas, at all stages of their careers.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Thunderbird alumni spoke out on the value of language and cultural knowledge in business.

Having specialized in consumer marketing, it is absurd to believe that one can competently lead and/or consult without an in-depth understanding of the language and culture in which communications are being crafted!

At senior international business levels, English is spoken by everyone, but the knowledge of a second language—especially by an American—adds credibility when working at an international level.

While I do not use a foreign language to communicate while at work, the learning of another language and culture has helped me to communicate with people of various cultures, nationalities, and even disparate scientific disciplines at work, which I do on a daily basis.

Over 80% of the respondents to this survey indicated that their foreign language skills and cultural knowledge have benefited them in their careers. Half of them acknowledged that their knowledge of foreign languages and cultures has given them a *significant* competitive advantage in business. Only 18% derived *no* competitive advantage from their foreign language skills. Even fewer (11%) of them gained *no* advantage from their cultural competence.

In this survey, proficiency levels in foreign language and degree of familiarity with culture are related to perceived competitive advantage. The

more proficient, the more likely the respondent is to have received a competitive advantage. The same relationship exists between proficiency level and how much the company values the foreign language and cultural knowledge. The better the employee knows the language and culture, the more likely the company is to recognize and reward those skills.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author thanks Anne-Marie Nelson, Vice President of the Office of Alumni Affairs at Thunderbird, for her support and encouragement throughout this project. The author also appreciates the assistance of the North American and European Alumni Council members who pilot tested the survey and gave valuable feedback. Special thanks go to the 581 alumni who took the survey and to the 246 people who wrote in additional comments. Allan Lin, Thunderbird research assistant, generously provided invaluable assistance throughout this project. The author gratefully acknowledges the advice of Anne Stringfellow, Robert Grosse, and Adrian Tschoegl on survey design and surveypro.com. Special thanks to Georgia Lessard, Graphics Design Specialist, for assistance with document design. Finally, the author appreciates the help of graduate assistants Svetla Novoselska and Lade Dada. The author also thanks the Thunderbird Research Center for financial support of the project.

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 APPENDIX
 Survey Instrument

Dear Thunderbird Alumnus:

You have been selected to participate in a Thunderbird-sponsored research project on the competitive advantage of foreign language and cultural knowledge in international business. This study is sponsored by the Thunderbird Research Center and the Office of Alumni Relations. The survey asks how your knowledge of foreign language and other cultures has affected your business career.

We are surveying a random sample of Thunderbird alumni from the classes of 1970–2002. No previous study has looked at the effect of language and cultural knowledge on business careers. *Your responses are very important.*

Survey results will be presented at the CIBER (Center for International Business Education Research) Conference in Miami in April 2003, and submitted for publication in a leading academic journal.

Please click on the link <http://www.surveyprom.com/akira/TakeSurvey?id=5713> to fill out the survey. Your responses are *strictly anonymous, and cannot be linked to you or your email address*. It should take just 5–10 minutes to complete. *Please respond by February 17, 2003.*

Thank you for your participation in this study. The survey results will be posted on MTB.

Survey

1. What is your native language?		
Arabic	6	1.02%
Chinese	9	1.53%
English	413	70.36%
French	16	2.73%
German	16	2.73%
Japanese	8	1.36%
Portuguese	9	1.53%
Russian	4	0.68%
Spanish	53	9.03%
Other	53	9.03%
2. I am a native of		
United States	406	70.36%
Africa	2	0.35%
Asia	38	6.59%
Australia/New Zealand	1	0.17%
Canada	5	0.87%
Europe	64	11.09%
Latin America	52	9.01%
Middle East	9	1.56%
3. What foreign language(s) do you speak? Check all that apply.		
Arabic	13	1.07%
Chinese	50	4.12%
English	188	15.49%
French	215	17.71%
German	146	12.03%
Japanese	62	5.11%
Portuguese	80	6.59%
Russian	29	2.39%
Spanish	288	23.72%
Other	143	11.78%
4. Which foreign language has helped you the most at work?		
Arabic	3	0.54%
Chinese	18	3.23%
English	166	29.80%
French	42	7.54%
German	50	8.98%
Japanese	30	5.39%

Portuguese	16	2.87%
Russian	6	1.08%
Spanish	171	30.70%
Other	55	9.87%
5. How well do you speak this foreign language?		
Like a native	135	23.73%
Fluent in most business & social situations	227	39.89%
Can communicate fairly well	149	26.19%
Basic survival level	48	8.44%
A few words or phrases	10	1.76%
6. At what point(s) in your career was this foreign language most helpful to you?		
Check all that apply.		
When I was hired	232	24.55%
Early years	258	27.30%
Mid career	190	20.11%
Currently in my career	265	28.04%
7. How did you learn the foreign language? Check the 3 most important sources.		
Family	88	6.14%
Friends	83	5.79%
Thunderbird	270	18.83%
Other school or classroom setting	341	23.78%
Travel	166	11.58%
Living abroad	412	28.73%
Other	74	5.16%
8. What culture(s) other than your own are you very familiar with? Check all that apply.		
American/English	212	14.87%
Arabic	39	2.73%
Chinese	110	7.71%
French	186	13.04%
German	177	12.41%
Japanese	126	8.84%
Portuguese/Brazilian	92	6.45%
Russian	31	2.17%
Spanish/Latin American	299	20.97%
Other	154	10.80%
9. Of all the cultures that you are familiar with, which one has been the most valuable in your career?		
American/English	179	32.02%
Arabic	6	1.07%
Chinese	43	7.69%
French	31	5.55%
German	51	9.12%
Japanese	45	8.05%
Portuguese/Brazilian	7	1.25%
Russian	5	0.89%
Spanish/Latin American	148	26.48%
Other	44	7.87%
10. How familiar are you with this culture?		
Like a native	158	28.42%
Very familiar	311	55.94%
Somewhat familiar	80	14.39%
A little familiar	6	1.08%
Barely familiar	1	0.18%
11. My job is based in		
United States	381	66.61%
Africa	4	0.70%
Asia	47	8.22%
Australia/New Zealand	3	0.52%
Canada	3	0.52%
Europe	95	16.61%

Latin America	37	6.47%
Middle East	2	0.35%
12. How often do you use your foreign language skills at work?		
Daily	219	38.42%
Frequently	76	13.33%
Occasionally	84	14.74%
Seldom	117	20.53%
Never	74	12.98%
13. How often do you use your understanding of other culture(s) at work?		
Daily	255	44.35%
Frequently	150	26.09%
Occasionally	100	17.39%
Seldom	48	8.35%
Never	22	3.83%
14. How much of a competitive advantage have your foreign language skills given you on the job?		
Significant	306	53.40%
Some	163	28.45%
None	104	18.15%
15. How have you used your foreign language skills at work? Check all that apply.		
Conversation	468	22.45%
Presentations	302	14.48%
Email	344	16.50%
Meetings	359	17.22%
Reports	217	10.41%
Negotiations	274	13.14%
Don't use	80	3.84%
Other	41	1.97%
16. How has the company valued your foreign language skills? Check all that apply.		
Written or oral recognition	175	17.11%
Raise	82	8.02%
Promotion	106	10.36%
Travel opportunities	239	23.36%
Overseas assignment	190	18.57%
No acknowledgment of value	178	17.40%
Other	53	5.18%
17. How has your knowledge of other culture(s) helped you at work? Check all that apply.		
Feel comfortable with people and culture	501	18.00%
Understand business environment	446	16.02%
Work on multinational teams	326	11.71%
Gain respect and credibility	378	13.58%
Function better in country	384	13.79%
Reduce chance for misunderstanding	394	14.15%
Enhance negotiation success	310	11.14%
Has not helped	32	1.15%
Other	13	0.47%
18. How has the company valued your cultural knowledge? Check all that apply.		
Written or oral recognition	185	18.48%
Raise	71	7.09%
Promotion	106	10.59%
Travel opportunities	227	22.68%
Overseas assignment	184	18.38%
No acknowledgment of value	187	18.68%
Other	41	4.10%
19. How much competitive advantage has your cultural knowledge given you in your career?		
Significant	278	48.26%
Some	237	41.15%
None	61	10.59%
20. If I had time to learn another language for business, it would be		
Arabic	26	4.50%
Chinese	143	24.74%

French	50	8.65%
German	47	8.13%
Japanese	45	7.79%
Portuguese	45	7.79%
Russian	26	4.50%
Spanish	115	19.90%
None	50	8.65%
Other	31	5.36%
21. Do you plan to study another foreign language, or improve your existing skills within the next 12 months?		
Yes	167	29.20%
No	270	47.20%
Possibly	135	23.60%
22. If I had time to learn about another culture for business purposes, it would be		
Arabic	35	6.19%
Chinese	171	30.27%
French	35	6.19%
German	16	2.83%
Japanese	54	9.56%
Portuguese/Brazilian	39	6.90%
Russian	27	4.78%
Spanish/Latin American	98	17.35%
None	67	11.86%
Other	23	4.07%
23. How much of your time do you spend on international business?		
75%–100%	189	33.04%
50%–74%	88	15.38%
25%–49%	74	12.94%
0–25%	221	38.64%
24. I am		
Male	408	70.71%
Female	169	29.29%
25. My age is		
18–24	0	0.00%
25–34	140	24.22%
35–44	269	46.54%
45–54	135	23.36%
55–64	34	5.88%
65 and over	0	0.00%
26. My approximate yearly income before taxes is		
Under \$50,000	54	9.39%
\$50,000–\$74,999	84	14.61%
\$75,000–\$99,999	125	21.74%
\$100,000–\$149,999	134	23.30%
\$150,000–\$199,999	53	9.22%
\$200,000 and over	60	10.43%
No comment	65	11.30%
27. My job title is		
President/CEO	42	7.37%
Vice president	64	11.23%
Business owner/Entrepreneur	68	11.93%
Director	89	15.61%
Supervisor	15	2.63%
Manager	131	22.98%
Assistant manager	13	2.28%
Other	148	25.96%
28. My company has annual sales of		
Under \$10 million	161	30.49%
Between \$10 million and \$100 million	105	19.89%
Between \$100 million and \$1 billion	91	17.23%
Over \$1 billion	171	32.39%

29. The industry I work in is		
Automotive	13	2.28%
Banking/Financial services	108	18.98%
Consulting	60	10.54%
Consumer products	42	7.38%
Diversified	7	1.23%
Energy	14	2.46%
Government/Non-profit	33	5.80%
Health care/Pharmaceutical	38	6.68%
Industrial products/Manufacturing	46	8.08%
Marketing services	18	3.16%
Technology	64	11.25%
Telecommunications	24	4.22%
Transportation	18	3.16%
Other	84	14.76%
30. My functional area is		
Account/Relationship Management	24	4.36%
Accounting	13	2.36%
Advertising/Public Relations	8	1.45%
Business Development	42	7.62%
Consulting	32	5.81%
Corporate Finance	35	6.35%
Engineering	4	0.73%
Financial/Investment Management	38	6.90%
General Management	72	13.07%
Human Resources	7	1.27%
Import/Export Trade	10	1.81%
Information Technology	16	2.90%
Internal Auditing	4	0.73%
Market Research	8	1.45%
Marketing/Brand Management	68	12.34%
Operations Management	14	2.54%
Project Management	33	5.99%
Sales/Sales Management	60	10.89%
Supply Chain Management	7	1.27%
Other	56	10.16%
31. I graduated from Thunderbird in		
2002	9	1.67%
2001	26	4.81%
2000	32	5.93%
1999	19	3.52%
1998	23	4.26%
1997	28	5.19%
1996	22	4.07%
1995	23	4.26%
1994	21	3.89%
1993	39	7.22%
1992	7	1.30%
1991	41	7.59%
1990	16	2.96%
1989	4	0.74%
1988	17	3.15%
1987	10	1.85%
1986	31	5.74%
1985	11	2.04%
1984	14	2.59%
1983	15	2.78%
1982	18	3.33%
1981	17	3.15%
1980	10	1.85%
1979	10	1.85%

1978	4	0.74%
1977	16	2.96%
1976	10	1.85%
1975	13	2.41%
1974	8	1.48%
1973	7	1.30%
1972	7	1.30%
1971	4	0.74%
1970	8	1.48%
32. Of what value have the language skills you gained at Thunderbird been to your career?		
Great value	99	17.16%
Significant value	125	21.66%
Some value	167	28.94%
Little value	73	12.65%
No value	51	8.84%
Did not study a foreign language at Thunderbird	62	10.75%
Comments:		
null	0	0.00%

*Please note that not all of the 581 respondents answered every question. Therefore not all totals are 581.

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