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**Exploring the Impact of Chatting with Native Speakers
Of English Language on Students' Intercultural
Communicative Competence: The Case of Masters
One Students of MMUTO**

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Dedications

In the tapestry of my academic journey, I dedicate this work to my mother a constant and unwavering foundation in my life. Her enduring love and unwavering support have illuminated my path, making every milestone achievable.

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Abstract

The present study investigates the impact of chatting with native speakers on the English language of Master one students' linguistic and intercultural communicative competences at the English department of Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. It examines the influence of these interactions on fluency and understanding perceptions. By exploring the dimensions of ICC, this research sheds light on how such digital interactions contribute to students' linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and their ability to engage in intercultural interactions respectfully and effectively. To align with the study's objectives, I incorporated Michael Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) theory. Data collection involved 40 students who completed questionnaires, and 4 teachers who responded to written interviews. I adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The research findings revealed that the majority of students recognize the value of interacting with native English speakers through chat platforms. They acknowledged the positive impact on their fluency and reduction of misunderstandings toward cultural differences. This perception is reinforced by the insights gained from interviews with teachers who also expressed a favorable view of the effectiveness of these interactions in enhancing students' ICC, language skills, knowledge and cultural awareness about native speakers' culture. Overall, the research findings underscored the positive influence of chatting with native speakers on students' language skills and their ability to engage in intercultural interactions effectively.

Key term : Chatting with native speakers, Cultural awareness, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Knowledge, Language skills.

List of Abbreviations

CC : Communicative Competence

CMC : Computer-Mediated Communication

E-Mail : Electronic Mail

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

FL : Foreign Language

FLT : Foreign Language Teaching

IC : Intercultural Communication

ICC : Intercultural Communicative Competence

IT : Information Technology

MMUTO : Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

QCA : Qualitative Content Analysis

SLA : Second Language Acquisition

SNS : Social Networking Sites

TL : Target Language

TTYL : Talk to You Later

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General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In today's interconnected and multicultural world, effective intercultural communication and English language proficiency are not merely beneficial but essential skills for individuals in the pursuit of success in a variety of personal, academic, and professional endeavors. The ability to engage in cross-cultural interactions and communicate fluently in English opens doors to academic opportunities, fosters international career prospects, and enriches personal experiences. Language learners, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, recognize the paramount importance of engaging with native speakers to enhance their language abilities and gain deeper insights into cultural nuances and communication norms.

The development of intercultural communicative competence among EFL learners extends beyond the traditional focus on grammar and vocabulary acquisition for effective communication with native speakers. To truly succeed in authentic communication settings with native speakers, learners must not only master the linguistic aspects of a language but also acquire a profound understanding of its cultural contexts that shape the communication norms, values and expectations. It is through this lens that language learners can appreciate the subtleties of cross-cultural interactions and navigate them successfully.

EFL students, who may have limited exposure to the target language and culture, are particularly susceptible to misunderstandings when interacting with native English speakers. These misunderstandings often stem from learners' tendencies to evaluate and interpret the behavior and intentions of native speakers based on their own cultural norms and experiences, which can lead to unintended miscommunication and cultural insensitivity.

This dilemma highlights the need for an active and multifaceted approach to intercultural competence development. Passive language learning, including classroom instruction, may not suffice in preparing EFL students for effective intercultural

communication. Instead, active engagement in authentic communication settings, such as participating in online chat conversations with native speakers, may hold promise as a valuable avenue for enhancing intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Active participation not only exposes learners to the language as it is naturally spoken but also immerses them in the cultural context; thereby, facilitating a more profound understanding of the cultural factors influencing communication.

Various studies in the English department of Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou have indeed explored intercultural communicative competence from different perspectives. For instance, a study by Chaibi Karima and Bareche Rezika in 2015 in MMUTO under the theme: *“Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Algerian Middle School: an Investigation of its Teaching Focusing on English book”* aims to explore the teaching methods used in English books of Algerian middle schools to enhance interculturality. Another research conducted by Lounes and Sonia in 2019, entitled *"A Comparison of How Interculturality is Presented in Both at The Crossroads and Getting Through Textbooks"* aims to examine the incorporation of interculturality in Algerian secondary school English textbooks. Furthermore, *“The Development of Intercultural Communicative Competence through Online Communication”* which has been conducted by Agrouche Kenza and Abdellaoui Sabrina in 2019 also at MMUTO, aspires to figure out the attitudes of first year master students’ use of online communication as a tool to intensify students’ intercultural communicative competence. However, to the best of my knowledge, there have been no previous studies conducted on the impact of chatting with native speakers of English language on the intercultural communicative competence of master one students. This research intends to address this gap by granting a deeper understanding of how these chat interactions can collaborate to learners’ skills and their ability to communicate effectively across diverse cultural contexts.

Aims and Significance of the Study

This study stresses the importance ICC for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, spotlighting that effective communication with native speakers goes beyond linguistic proficiency. Learners must also perceive cultural nuances and adapt their communication styles accordingly, as cultural differences can lead to miscommunication and cultural insensitivity. The active engagement in authentic communication settings such as online chat conversations with native speakers provides a unique opportunity to enhance intercultural competence. Such interactions expose learners to natural language use and immerse them in cultural contexts, enabling a deeper understanding of the cultural factors shaping communication norms (Deardorff, 2006; Kinginger, 2011). The central objective of this research is to empirically explore the impact of chatting with native speakers on the development of ICC among English language learners in the department of English in MMUTO. This exploration includes analysing specific mechanisms and factors contributing to improved IC and English language proficiency through these interactions.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The conducted research raises the following inquiries:

Q1: To what extent does interacting in conversations with native speakers of foreign languages enhance the intercultural communicative competence of language learners?

Q2: Which aspects of intercultural competence can these interactions enhance more?

We suggest the following hypotheses for the above-mentioned inquiries:

H1: Engaging in online conversations with native speakers of foreign languages, motivated by language improvement, cultural curiosity, and personal growth, significantly enhances the intercultural communicative competence of language learners.

H2: These interactions can lead to increased cultural knowledge, skills of interaction, sensitivity, adaptability, and a more open-minded attitude toward diverse cultures, ultimately resulting in improvements in linguistic skills, cultural awareness, and a deeper understanding of intercultural communication.

Research Techniques and Methodology

The research will utilize a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The target population will consist of Master one “Language and Communication” students of Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, selected through stratified random sampling. Quantitative data will be gathered through structured surveys to measure intercultural communicative competence and learners' engagement in chat interactions with native speakers of English language. Qualitative data will be collected through in-depth interviews with English teachers of MMUTO in order to explore teachers' experiences, strategies, and attitudes related to intercultural communication.

Undertaking this research entails an investigation to be conducted with a sample of 40 M1 students of English at the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-Ouzou, to enable demonstrating the effectiveness of chatting with native speakers of English language on intercultural communicative competence.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation adheres to a conventional structure, comprising six main sections: a General Introduction, a General Conclusion, and four chapters. The general introduction encompasses the problem statement, research questions, study's objectives and their significance, research methods, and the dissertation's overall organization. Moving on, the first chapter, titled “Literature Review” entails a critical analysis of existing studies related to the subject matter. In the subsequent chapter, “Research Design” I will elaborate on the

methodology and tools employed to collect and analyze data. The third chapter, named “Presentation of the Findings” will present the results obtained from the data collection. In the fourth chapter, “Discussion of the Findings” I will interpret and discuss the implications of the gathered data. Lastly, the dissertation concludes with a “General Conclusion” that provides a comprehensive summary of the research and suggests potential avenues for future investigations in this field.

Chapter One

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In today's digital landscape, communication transcends geographical borders, facilitating the exchange of cultures and perspectives within virtual environments. This inaugural chapter establishes the groundwork for our exploration into “the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence”. We commence by providing an in-depth exploration of online communication, dissecting the intricacies of chatting and its core components. Subsequently, we turn our focus to the significance of recognizing intercultural communicative competence within the context of online interactions, recognizing its central role in shaping cross-cultural dialogues. Lastly, we introduce the guiding framework of Michael Byram's “Intercultural Communicative Competence” which underpins the theoretical framework of our research. This chapter initiates a comprehensive inquiry into the transformative potential of online language exchange and its profound implications for intercultural competence.

I Communication

I.1 Definition of Communication

Communication is an extensive concept with numerous interpretations. In essence, it involves the exchange of information between two or more individuals. However, when searching into more intricate definitions, communication can be perceived as the transmission and comprehension of cognitive contents with varying levels of consciousness (Allwood, J. 2013). According to Allwood, communication serves as a means of interaction and relationship maintenance within the boundaries of a community. Fisk (1990, p.2) defined the community as “social interaction through messages”. Pursuing, Corner and Hawthorne (1993) connect communication studies to the process of creating human meanings through the

production and reception of various sign types. This encompasses visual and verbal sign systems and the technologies employed to articulate, record, and convey them. Consequently, this perspective leads to the understanding that communication operates as a system for deciphering the diverse signs expressed by humans to construct meanings.

I.2 Online Communication

According to Wood and Smith (2005), online communication consists of the exchange of information through networked computers during physical interactions. This process requires participants to use various tools, such as e-mails, social networks, bulletin board systems, and the World Wide Web, to transfer their messages effectively. This modern form of communication has gained immense popularity among users. Online communication can be categorized into two primary forms: synchronicity and asynchronicity. On the one hand, synchronicity refers to real-time communication, where participants engage in chat discussions simultaneously. On the other hand, asynchronicity describes communication that occurs with a time delay between participants (Warschauer, 2001).

I.3 Computer-Mediated Communication

The important role of the internet and its ever-increasing influence on our lives cannot be neglected. It has transformed the world into a tight global village, where information is easily accessible with just a click of a mouse. The rapid advancement in computer technology has captivated the interest of numerous researchers and experts in the field.

The internet's pervasive presence in our lives has led to a more stylish and sophisticated form of communication. Naughton (1999) recognized the swift progress of computer technology and its immediate influence on communication. He emphasized that the internet deserves attention as it surpasses expectations and profoundly impacts various aspects of life, including social, cultural, pedagogical, medical, economic, and political domains. Regarding

its societal impact, Naughton (1999, p.45) asserted that the internet has revolutionized the communication landscape, prompting people to connect through networked computers. He compared the internet's significance to other transformative facilities and services like television, print, railway, telegraph, and automobile, making it one of the most powerful and valuable creations in the human history.

1.3.1 Definition of Computer-Mediated Communication

Wood and Smith characterize the dynamic nature of communication technologies as the process through which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networking telecommunication systems that facilitate the encoding, transmitting, and decoding of messages. They further assert that the field of CMC examines how human behaviors are influenced or transformed by the exchange of information through machines (2005, p.5)

Alderish (2008, p13) defines CMC as any form of communication in which information transmitted between the sender and receiver travels over a computer network. Herring (1996, p.3) offers a more traditional definition, stating that CMC refers to communication occurring between human beings via computer systems. According to Badomo (2010), CMC refers to “the coding and decoding of linguistic and other symbolic systems between sender and receiver for information processing in multiple formats through the medium of the computer and allied technologies such as PDAs, mobile phones, and blackberries; and through media like the internet, email, chat system, text messaging, YouTube, Skype, and many more to be invented” (Badomo, 2010, p.6).

The development of CMC has significantly influenced the way we engage in chatting. CMC, encompassing various forms of communication facilitated by computers and digital devices, has expanded the scope of chatting beyond traditional methods (Walther, 1996) With the advent of modern technological devices and the evolution of communication technologies over the past 50 years, chatting now extends beyond text messages and encompasses

platforms such as instant messaging, social media, and video conferencing (Papacharissi, 2009). CMC has revolutionized the way we connect and communicate, providing us with diverse channels and modes for engaging in conversations and exchanging messages in real-time or synchronously (Haythornthwaite, 2005; Walther & Boyd, 2002).

1.3.2 Characteristics of Computer-Mediated Communication

Scholars delve into the subject of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) with a keen interest in comprehending its characteristics and its impact on the evolving nature of human interaction. Murry (2000, p.397) reveals that CMC exhibits features that resemble simplified registers found in both spoken and written language. Furthermore, she highlights specific norms that are particular to CMC, such as the use of standard expressions, abbreviations, acronyms, symbols and a simpler written structure (2000, p.397). Additionally, Murry notes that the manner in which people initiate and conclude conversations in CMC differs from face-to-face interactions (2000, p.397).

CMC exhibits additional characteristics, including encouraging active participation from participants, fostering an engaged role in communication (Smith, 2008, p.82). It also facilitates the development of self-confidence in language skills, particularly for students (Jones, 2015). CMC enables cooperative learning activities, promoting collaboration among participants (Brown & Green, 2012). A key distinction in CMC is the division between synchronous communication (occurring in real-time) and asynchronous communication (with a time delay) (Herring, 2004). Overall, CMC plays a multifaceted role in enhancing communication dynamics and collaborative engagement in various contexts

I.4 Modes of Computer-Mediated Communication

CMC has two main modes:

1.4.1 The Synchronous Mode

In this context, communication takes place between a sender and receiver allowing for the simultaneous exchange of information or data. This real-time interaction enables the receiver to read the message as soon as the sender presses the send button, facilitating instant responses. Strate (1996, p.275) highlights that messages exchanged over the internet transcend not only physical space but also time, emphasizing the instantaneous nature of communication in online contexts. Aldrish (2008, p.12-13) highlights the characteristics of synchronous mode in communication, stating that: communication where a sender and a receiver are operating in the same interval, the message exchanged is synchronized. The sender and receiver do not have to be in the same place, but they do in essence, have to be in the same time frame. A phone conversation or instant messenger conversation are examples of synchronous communication.

1.4.2 The Asynchronous Mode

Asynchronous communication refers to the situation where there is a delay between sending a message and its reception. The key aspect of asynchronous communication is that data is not transmitted at regular intervals, and the sender and receiver are not required to be synchronized constantly. Aldrish (2008) defines asynchronous communication as the process where a sender can transmit a message in one time interval, and the receiver can read or listen to it in the subsequent time interval. Examples of asynchronous communication include voice mail and email. It is commonly utilized in various forms such as electronic letters, fax, websites, and weblogs (or blogs). Blogs enable writers or groups of writers to post comments regularly, allowing readers to engage in discussions asynchronously, thereby exemplifying the nature of asynchronous communication.

I.5 Social Media

I.5.1 Definition of Social Media

Social media refers to websites, mobile applications and computer software that serve as platforms for facilitating communication among individuals. According to Huang & Benyoucef (2013, p.246), social media are “internet-based applications built on Web 2.0” whereby Web 2.0 encompasses both a concept and a platform for harnessing collective intelligence. Another definition provided by Magrets et al. (2015, p.5) defines social media as “internet-based platforms that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content, typically utilizing mobile or web-based technologies.” While various definitions exist, they all converge on the understanding that social media entails utilizing the internet to engage in activities such as sharing ideas, interacting, commenting and creating diverse content like videos, tutorials and perspectives. This content is then shared with other users through various platforms accessible on different devices, including social networking websites, blogs, forums and media sharing sites.

I.5.2 Types

According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media platforms are classified into six distinct categories:

- **Blogs and Micro-blogs:** According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010, p63), blog sites serve as the social media equivalent of personal web pages and exhibit a wide range of variations. They can range from personal diaries, where authors share details about their lives, to comprehensive compilations of relevant information within a specific content area. Notable examples of blog sites include Twitter, KnowTechie, and Edudemic.

- **Collaborative Projects:** Collaborative projects facilitate the collective and simultaneous creation of content by multiple end-users (2010, p.63). The first type is represented by wikis, which are websites that permit users to contribute, modify, and revise text-based content. The second type is social bookmarking, which allows groups to gather and rate internet links or media content collectively (2010, p.63).

- **Content Communities:** The primary purpose of content communities is to facilitate the sharing of media content among users. These communities serve a diverse array of media types, such as videos (e.g., YouTube, Netflix) and PowerPoint presentations (e.g., Slideshare) (2010, p.63).

- **Virtual Game Worlds:** Virtual worlds are interactive platforms that simulate three-dimensional environments. Within these worlds, users can take on the appearance of personalized avatars and engage in interactions with each other, much like they would in real-life scenarios (2010, p.64).

- **Virtual Social Worlds:** The second category of virtual worlds, also known as virtual social worlds, grants inhabitants greater freedom to choose their actions, enabling them to essentially lead a virtual life similar to their real-life experiences (2010, p.64).

Various research studies in the field of online social networking have shown that platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Skype significantly impact the lives of young individuals. Social media sites have created opportunities for the youth to form groups and pages based on shared interests, fostering connections and interactions through discussions on various topics. Many interviewed youths express that social media has become an integral part of their lifestyle, making their lives more convenient and efficient.

However, despite the benefits, social media usage has been associated with negative aspects. Research has shown that it may lead to poorer spelling and grammar among users (Rosen, Lim, Carrier, & Cheever, 2011, p. 1578) and enable the spread of misinformation,

which is sometimes perceived as factual (Pennycook & Rand, 2020, p. 4146). Additionally, excessive usage of social media can decrease productivity, as individuals spend more time chatting on these platforms instead of focusing on their work or other responsibilities (Andreassen, et al.,2012, p. 507).

I.6 Chat

I.6.1 Definition

Chat, also referred to as chatting, online chat or internet chat, involves the synchronous process of communication, interaction and message exchange over the internet between two or more users via computer. Once a chat session begins, users can enter text by typing on the keyboard and the entered text will appear on the screens of other participants. Chat can be delivered through various means, including text, verbal, audio, visual or audio-visual interaction, all promoted via the internet. According to O'Hagan & Ashworth (2002) and Purvis & Savarimuthu (2009), chat represents an early innovation that has gained widespread popularity worldwide. Additionally, Lamy & Hampel (2007, p115) assert that chat programs were among the initial synchronous CMC tools utilized for language learning and teaching. Chat serves as a valuable resource for learners, aiding in the enhancement of their studies by facilitating the exchange of information such as documents, courses, PDF books, and articles. Furthermore, it enables learners to share their knowledge with others, creating a collaborative and interactive learning environment.

I.6.2 Features of Chat

Scholars demonstrate a keen interest in comprehending and studying the language used in chat communications. However, their initial focus lies in grasping the distinctive characteristics of this language. Chat language has evolved into a distinct linguistic form,

encompassing unique features derived from the internet, and it is extensively utilized in the contemporary era.

- ***Synchronicity***

The popularity of synchronous exchanges is increasing in different types of CMC. In its straightforward version, synchronous chat involves two participants interacting in real-time. Individuals experiencing synchronous communication join chat rooms while in front of their computer screens. Everything they type is simultaneously displayed on the computer screens of other participants (Wood & Smith, 2005). However, in its more complex form, synchronicity refers to the participation of various individuals communicating in a highly advanced way within networked computers (Rheingold, as cited in Herring, 1996).

- ***Pseudonymity and Anonymity***

When users connect to chat sites, it is essential for them to choose names or personal descriptions to represent themselves. Therefore, selecting a pseudonym is crucial to establish a comfortable environment for engaging in activities and also to avoid potential social responsibilities (Wood & Smith, 2005). According to Danet (1998), users conceal their real identities and adopt a virtual name known as a “Nickname”. Crystal (2001) describes this nickname as an identity marker used by participants to present themselves in online communication. Furthermore, it is practically significant to use an online name during interactions in the virtual communication.

- ***Linguistic Features***

Since the mid-1980s, linguists have shown a particular interest in the linguistic characteristics of the different forms of CMC. Danet (as cited in Bieswanger, 2013, p. 464) put a list of nine common features found in chat: multiple punctuations, unconventional

spelling, the use of capital letters, asterisks for emphasis, written expressions of laughter, descriptions of actions, “smiley” icons, abbreviations, and the preference for all lower case. Additionally, the occurrence of non-standard orthographic and typographic forms has been frequently noted as characteristic of language use in chat (Danet & Herring, as cited in Bieswanger, 2013, p. 472). The linguistic aspects of CMC are widely recognized and understood, particularly abbreviations and acronyms. In contrast, other features are less familiar as they may not serve practical purposes.

I.7 Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

I.7.1 Definition of Social Networking Sites

Social networking involves creating an online profile by providing personal information such as profile name, age, gender, and marital status. This profile is then connected to various other social network sites (Chiu et al., 2008). Boyd & Ellison (2008, p.211) define “SNS” as a web-based service that allows individuals to generate a public or semi-public profile within a confined system. Users can form relationships with others on the platform, view their connections and the connections of other users, and share content within the system (cited in Gremu & Halse, 2012).

Individuals create online profiles with the primary purpose of connecting with known acquaintances or forming new relationships to exchange personal or professional information on topics of shared interest. According to Michael Peacock (2009:8), a fundamental aspect of social networking involves building connections with others, either to sustain existing offline relationships or strengthen offline connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p.221).

In the present context, social networking has evolved into a worldwide phenomenon, crossing borders and reshaping mobile technology. It has garnered a massive and indispensable following, transitioning from small user-based niches to platforms embraced by

billions of individuals globally, encompassing diverse backgrounds, languages, and identities (Rushantha, 2016). With the increasing integration of social networking, communicative competence plays a crucial role in navigating and effectively engaging within this dynamic online outlook.

II The significance of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Perception as an Element in Online Interaction.

II.1 Definition of Culture

Culture has become a focal point in recent research due to its ambiguous nature. Its complexity and multidimensional nature have led researchers to perceive it from various angles, resulting in a multitude of definitions associated with the term. Culture studies are at the heart of various research disciplines, including anthropology, ethnography, psychology, and sociology, as highlighted by Atamna (2008).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the concept, it is essential to clarify the terminology of culture. Barnard and Spencer (1996), as cited in Shaules (2007, p. 25), observed that culture has roots in words like “cultivate” and “cultured” denoting the potential for human development. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1959), as cited in Baldwin et al. (2008, p. ix), emphasized the ancient origins of the principal idea of culture, evident in references found in the Bible, Homer, Herodotus, and the Chinese scholars of the Han dynasty. However, this concept remains a subject of intense debate, with researchers emphasizing the importance of pursuing it further and exploring diverse perceptions of culture.

Beginning in the 1870s, the anthropologist Tylor (1871, p.1) introduced a definition of culture, stating that it encompasses “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of

society” (cited in Baldwin et al., 2008, p.219). This definition focuses on the idea that human society is distinguished by various elements like traditions, morals, rituals, behaviors, and knowledge among others. However, it is essential to recognize that these features are not innate in human beings from birth and their acquisition is necessary for individuals to be accepted as members of a specific community.

Similarly, Shaules (2007) asserted that culture is not static but rather undergoes continuous transformations, constantly adapting to suit the needs of each era. This perspective finds further reinforcement in Verma's statement, as cited by Baldwin et al. (2006, p. 220), that culture is a dynamic entity that evolves and changes throughout time.

The term “culture” encompasses a wide array of elements and activities in life, leading to numerous definitions associated with this concept (Juang & Matsumoto, 2007, p. 107). One way to proceed toward this definition is by considering two models of culture: The small “c” culture which is related to the daily life practices of specific social groups (Halliday et al., 2004), and the big “C” culture which contrives the contributions and creations of a society, such as architecture, literature, art, music and other forms of expression (Juang & Matsumoto, 2007, p. 17).

Sociology, cognition, and semiology have all approached the concept of culture, each examining it from different perspectives. In the sociological view, culture emerges as a contentious subject, with discussions revolving around the impact of globalization, ethnicity, diversity, and the formation of multicultural societies on the sociocultural process. Consequently, the fundamental notion of culture plays a significant role in debates concerning the consequences of globalization and the focus on broader social issues at a macro-level (Shaules, 2007, p. 24).

Symbolically, culture serves as a framework for creating and understanding cultural meanings. Within social groups, behaviors are commonly shared among their members, leading to the idea that these behaviors act as symbols through which people communicate meanings and interpret the world around them. For example, greetings, food consumption habits, and specific ways of presenting oneself all carry symbolic significance, contributing to a culture's identity and distinctiveness compared to others (Roberts et al., 2001).

This perspective finds support in the work of Geertz (1973), who defined culture as “shared systems transcending individuals” (cited in Peterson, 2004, p. 10). This implies that culture exists beyond individual actions and becomes a collective phenomenon that shapes the way people perceive and interact with their environment.

II.2 Language and Culture: Exploring their Interconnection

The relationship between language and culture has been a subject of interest in integrative research. Anthropology stands as trailblazer in exploring the correlation between language and culture. Throughout history, anthropological investigations have closely linked the concept of culture with language. Merouche (2006) asserted that language and culture are inseparable, as without language, culture would lose its essence, and without culture language would lack its defining form. The existing belief is that language serves as the medium through which a community expresses thoughts, emotions, and fundamental beliefs. As a result, language reflects the worldview of social groups and their interpretation of the surrounding reality. This fundamental idea formed the core of the prominent Sapir/Whorf hypothesis (2006).

According to Nunan & Choi (2010, p05): “cultures sharing a language share a way of thinking and these ways of thinking constitute the psychology of culture”. This perspective implies that language functions as a system that controls and regulates perceptions of reality.

In addition, Juang and Matsumoto (2007) argued that culture and language are intricately linked because culture influences the way language is used. Consequently, language can be seen as a reflection of culture, where words, expressions, and their usage by a particular group, such as British people incorporate and illustrate the characteristics of their culture.

Kramsch (1998) highlighted the strong connection between language and culture, particularly evident in the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It is believed that individuals possess an innate capacity for learning languages from birth, making formal instruction unnecessary. Additionally, people can naturally acquire a language by immersing themselves in its cultural context.

According to Boas (as cited in Stern, 1983, p. 207), the comprehension of a language is totally linked to its cultural context. He argues that to completely understand language, one must persistently consider the culture in which it is used. Boas believes that language is best explained when considered in relation to the specific context or situation in which utterances occur, making them more comprehensible.

From a psychological standpoint, Mead (1934) proposed a theory asserting that an individual's self-image is influenced by their social interactions within the community. According to this perspective, language plays a crucial role in defining one's identity, as it is through verbal symbols and communication that these roles are shaped (Stern, 1983, p. 209). Mead believed that language is instrumental in fostering interpersonal connections and significantly impacts individuals' perceptions of themselves.

II.3 The Role of Culture in Technology and Online Communication: Exploring the Dimensions

In the age of the internet and technology, individuals have undergone a fashionable shift in understanding their identities and cultures. The online communication now serves as a

window to the world, enabling people to influence one another by sharing customs, traditions, beliefs, and opinions. As a result, online communication has emerged as a powerful tool for realizing cultural norms and transferring living standards, capturing the attention of participants. Individuals exhibit positive attitudes towards CMC for its role in appreciating the concept of culture. Shilling (2005) has observed that technology users actively and positively respond to the social relations that encompass them.

The incorporation of culture into technology has gained recent attention. Blanchard et al. (2011) highlighted the consideration of culture during the design of internal processes and technological applications, aiming to develop systems that cater to diverse cultural groups. For example, high-resolution graphical user interfaces facilitate system utilization in different cultural contexts. Research on user-specific cultural aspects at runtime has also emerged, with engineers now taking various considerations and techniques into account when designing software that reflects cultural content. Koeda et al. (2009) illustrated how culturally diverse populations may interpret iconic faces differently.

II.4 Intercultural Communicative Competence

Recognizing the strong interconnection between language and culture inevitably leads us to acknowledge that teaching and learning any language involves teaching and learning its associated culture (Piasecka, 2001). This understanding has given rise to various approaches in the field of foreign language teaching. Throughout the history of foreign language teaching, the communicative approach has notably emphasized the functional aspect of language, emphasizing learners' ability to use the target language (TL) in social interactions. Its primary goal is to equip learners with communicative competence, enabling them to effectively communicate in the TL.

First, it is of utmost importance to examine the concept of "competence" a term originally introduced by Chomsky (1965, p.31) in his work on the theory of syntax. Chomsky proposed that language operates as a system comprising elements formed by a finite set of rules. He also asserted that native speakers of a language have the innate ability to generate an endless array of sentences due to their inherent knowledge of grammar.

Chomsky provided distinct definitions for "competence" and "performance". According to him, "competence" refers to a speaker-hearer's internal knowledge of their language, while "performance" relates to the actual use of language in real-life situations. When considering these definitions, it becomes evident that competence is perceived as a stable mental capacity that enables individuals to comprehend, produce, and construct sentences they have never encountered before. In essence, this linguistic competence acts as a measure to determine the syntactic correctness of sentences (1965, p.31).

However, Chomsky contradicted the idea that performance accurately reflects competence, except in an idealized scenario. The concept of the ideal speaker-hearer, possessing complete mastery of their language and unaffected by external factors, remains difficult to establish unanimously. He pointed out that natural speech recordings often reveal false starts, rule deviations, mid-course plan changes and more, his linguistic theory not only captured the attention of numerous scholars but also contributed to the development of new insights and perspectives, particularly concerning the term "competence" and its application in social contexts (Jordan, 2004).

According to Campbell and Wales (as cited in Llorca, 2000, p. 86) Chomsky's theory does not account for "the ability to produce or understand utterances that are contextually appropriate." As a result, Chomsky's work faced criticism for examining language as an isolated construct, disregarding its social interactions, which contemporary research has shown to be an integral part of the social context.

Following Chomsky's distinction in linguistic theory, Hymes (1972) took a different approach. He introduced the concept of “communicative competence” considering Chomsky's linguistic competence as merely one component within this broader framework. Hymes (1972) defined CC as the part of our overall competence that empowers us to convey and understand messages effectively while engaging in interpersonal interactions within specific contexts (as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 246). Boughouas (2012) emphasized that CC is a concept supported by a strong foundation, and any FLT approach should be constructed based on its underlying principles, which can be summarized as follows:

- Grammaticality: Refers to what is formally possible in terms of language structures (Boughouas, 2012).
- Feasibility: Considers what is practically achievable based on the available means of implementation (Boughouas, 2012).
- Appropriateness: Takes into account what is suitable and fitting in relation to the specific situation in which it is used and evaluated (Boughouas, 2012).
- Probability: Involves what is actually done, performed, recognized, and realized in practice (Hymes, 1972).

Furthermore, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a significant model that encompasses various integrated components within the concept of communicative competence. These components include grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

- Grammatical competence is a fundamental part of communicative competence (CC) that involves the understanding and recognition of various language elements like vocabulary, sentence structure, phonology, morphology, and more. As Chomsky previously highlighted, these elements are crucial for achieving language proficiency and form the foundation of a grammatically governed linguistic competence.

▪ Discourse competence complements grammatical competence by involving the skill of connecting and combining sentences, creating a coherent and meaningful flow of communication. Discourse encompasses both verbal (conversations) and non-verbal (texts, books, and articles) communication. Discourse competence revolves around establishing connections between utterances to construct meaning, while grammatical competence centers on arranging sentences according to grammatical rules.

▪ Sociolinguistic competence pertains to individuals' awareness of sociocultural norms and their ability to navigate language in various social contexts. Hymes (1972) characterizes this competence as the skillful execution of social interactions through language. It involves understanding how language operates within social environments and adapting communication accordingly.

▪ Strategic competence, as defined by Canale and Swain (1980), encompasses both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that individuals employ to overcome communication breakdowns caused by insufficient language proficiency (as cited in Brown, 2007, p. 218-219). In essence, strategic competence enables individuals to maintain the smooth flow of communication by using appropriate tactics to navigate challenging situations.

Consequently, the recognition of the importance of equipping foreign language learners with a robust cultural foundation, enabling them to effectively understand and use the foreign language in social settings, gave rise to the concept of ICC. Byram (1997) identified four distinct competences that form the essence of ICC: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and intercultural (cited in Arabski & Wojtaszek, 2011, p. 69). As a result, this notion has significantly transformed the landscape of foreign language learning and teaching.

II.5 Engaging in Cross-Cultural Communication and Interaction

One of the central concerns in intercultural contexts is the nature of mutual contact between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The cultural exchanges between such diverse interlocutors make communication and interaction a complex process. As a result, misconceptions and misunderstandings often arise due to cultural differences and misinterpretations of sociolinguistic norms (Boughouas, 2012).

The above considerations and viewpoints have sparked preliminary investigations into IC as a distinctive area of study, aimed at understanding the origins of these misunderstandings. According to Baraldi (2009, p.11), IC is inherently influenced by culture, meaning that the cultural differences individuals contribute can impact their communication. The behaviors and attitudes displayed by members of cultural groups shape and contextualize the interaction process. In essence, IC is described as being driven by “cultural variability” (FitzGerald, 2003; Hofsted, 1980; Triandis, 1995, cited in Baraldi, 2009, p. 10).

Additionally, Allwood (1985) defined IC as any interaction that occurs between two people with diverse backgrounds and perceptions. Considering the aforementioned claims, it becomes evident that IC is a consequence of globalization, which, in turn, unites societies and forms a closely connected global village thriving within an online environment.

According to Toomey and Chung (2005) (as cited in Otay & Franklin, 2009, p. 55), intercultural communicators must adapt to the cultural context, modify their interaction behaviors to align with the main goals of the situation, and employ creativity to effectively convey meanings and foster relationships. In contrast, if individuals engaged in intercultural communication exhibit racist or ethnocentric attitudes, the communication is likely to fail. In essence, intercultural communication strives to create a third-place atmosphere where everyone can thrive (Byram, 2003).

II.6 Intercultural Exchanges in the Online Sphere

In the present day, it is inarguable that IC has progressed into a more advanced and refined process, largely due to computer technology. With the internet being an integral part of our daily lives, people count on it for various transactions, ranging from economic and social to medical, educational and cultural aspects. This modern mode of communication promotes global cultural exchanges, allowing individuals to share their cultures and identities across national borders through online communication.

From an educational standpoint, transitioning from CC to ICC lies at the heart of enhancing FL learners' cultural sensitivity and awareness. This transformation allows learners to improve and expand their cultural perspectives in various communication scenarios (Byram, 1997). Consequently, numerous educators in the field of foreign language teaching (FLT) recognize the potential of networked technologies to enhance and extend traditional classroom activities, which may have limitations in terms of information exchange (Block, 2001; Grenfell, 2000, as cited in O'dowd, 2007, p. 3). Thus, any opportunity to involve learners in online collaboration with individuals from different cultures proves to be a valuable experience for enriching their intercultural competence. Arguably, online interaction encompasses both the exchange of information and the development of identity in intercultural interactions, fostering meaningful relationships (Block, 2001; Grenfell, 2000, as cited in O'dowd, 2007, p. 3).

Studies have shown that synchronous or real-time communication, such as chat rooms, fosters high interactivity, motivating learners to engage in meaning negotiation and gain insights into the social norms that arise during online interactions (Long & Robinson, 1998; as cited in O'dowd, 2007, p. 7). And this since in term f pedagogy, "online intercultural exchange" denotes the capacity to involve language learners in interactive and collaborative

projects with partners from different cultures through the utilization of online communication (Belz, 2003, as cited in O'dowd, 2007, p. 4).

Regarding social and cultural perspectives, online conversations prominently exhibit social patterns. These patterns are often visualized through pictures and applications, aiding participants in better comprehending communicated behaviors and interpreting the meanings of different cultural groups. Within platforms like Facebook, researchers have developed various applications to foster an inclusive environment for intercultural interaction. Furthermore, the synchronous nature of social networks encourages online intercultural exchanges, allowing communicators go beyond the limitations of co-presence in time and space (Chen & Kelliher, 2011).

III Theoretical Framework

III.1 Michael Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Michael Byram is a famous scholar in the field of language education and intercultural communication. He is widely acknowledged for his work in developing the concept of ICC which has had a profound impact on language teaching and learning practices globally. Byram's contributions to the field arise from his extensive research and expertise in language education. His work has been influential in reshaping how educators approach the teaching of languages and the integration of IC into language curricula. One of his most significant works "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence" (Byram & Nichols, 2001) co-authored with Adam Nichols, has served as a mainspring in the development of the ICC framework.

Essentially, Byram's ICC framework emphasizes the importance of going beyond mere linguistic proficiency when learning a foreign language. According to Byram, true language

competence extends to the ability to effectively communicate and interact with speakers of the target language while also understanding and respecting their cultural norms, values, and perspectives. In essence, ICC involves a deep appreciation of the interconnectedness of language and culture. His framework describes several key components of ICC, including linguistic competence, sociocultural competence and intercultural competence. Linguistic competence, while essential, is just one part of the equation as Byram places a strong emphasis on sociocultural competence which involves understanding the social conventions and practices of the target culture. Intercultural competence, the cornerstone of the framework focuses on the ability to engage in meaningful and respectful cross-cultural interactions. By developing these competencies, language learners can not only communicate effectively but also navigate and adapt to different cultural contexts (Byram, 1997).

Byram identified five key elements that constitute ICC, which he termed "savoirs". These elements can be summarized as follows:

1) "Savoir" (Knowledge) refers to the awareness and understanding of social groups, their customs, and products in both one's own country and the country of one's conversation partner. It also encompasses knowledge of the broader processes of social and individual interactions (Byram, 1997 p. 58).

2) "Savoir comprendre" (Skills of interpretation and relating) defined as "the ability to interpret a document or event from one's own perspective" (1997, p.58) It involves the capacity to comprehend and make sense of information or situations based on one's own understanding and background.

3) "Savoir apprendre /faire" (Skills of interaction) refers to the skill of discovering and engaging with a culture, encompassing the ability to acquire new knowledge about cultural practices and effectively apply that knowledge, along with attitudes and skills,

in real-time communication and interactions (1997, p.58). It involves the capacity to both learn about a culture and apply that knowledge successfully in practical social interactions.

4) “Savoir s'engager” (Critical cultural awareness and attitudes) is characterized as "critical cultural awareness/political education," signifying the capacity to assess, in a critical manner and based on explicit criteria, the viewpoints, practices, and products within one's own culture as well as other cultures and countries (1997, p.58). This involves being able to critically engage with and evaluate cultural perspectives and practices with a keen awareness of their political and societal implications.

5) “Savoir être” (Disposition) pertains to “curiosity and openness, a willingness to suspend preconceived notions about other cultures and beliefs about one's own” (1997, p.58) It involves possessing an inquisitive and receptive attitude, being open-minded, and being willing to question and set aside existing beliefs to better understand and engage with different cultures.

According to Green (2009), ICC is an ongoing learning process that evolves as learners integrate social competence and interpersonal skills to form relationships. The latter aspect involves responding appropriately to what others write or say, taking into consideration their cultural contexts. In essence, he argues that merely acknowledging the significance of ICC is insufficient. Instead, there is a need to actively develop ICC through training methods and programs to effectively put it into practice (Green, 2009).

Conclusion

In this first chapter, I have gone through the miscellaneous concept of ICC. I began by exploring the fundamental role of communication in our interconnected world, highlighting the importance of effective cross-cultural communication as a driving force in the digital age. I then turned my attention to the perceptual dimension of ICC, highlighting its crucial role in

shaping online interactions. Understanding how individuals perceive and engage with intercultural communication in online settings serves as a foundational aspect of my exploration. Finally, I introduced the comprehensive framework developed by Michael Byram, which forms the backbone of my research. Byram's ICC framework offers a structured and full approach to understanding the intricacies of ICC, emphasizing linguistic, sociocultural and intercultural competencies. To conclude, these foundational elements will guide my investigation into the impact of chatting with native speakers on IC, providing the groundwork for a deeper exploration of this transformative dynamic in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter serves a methodological purpose aiming to clarify the research design employed in my study. Its objective is to offer a comprehensive overview of the procedures utilized for data collection and analysis. The chapter elaborates on the research methods chosen to investigate the impact of chatting with native speakers of English language on intercultural communicative competence within the students of Master One at UMMTO, using interviews and questionnaires. These distinct methods were chosen to directly address the research questions outlined in the General Introduction. Additionally, the chapter gives a detailed explanation of the techniques used to analyse both qualitative and quantitative data.

I Research Paradigm

In my study, I utilized a mixed methods research approach to efficiently acquire the necessary data for investigation. This approach involves the gathering, examination and synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative data within unified research framework (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). By integrating these two distinct methodologies, my study seeks to attain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic in question, surpassing the insights that could have been obtained by using either method in isolation (Cresswell, 2009).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), the qualitative approach enables researchers to acquire descriptive data concerning variables that are not easily measurable through empirical research while providing a perspective from the subjects' viewpoints. The qualitative approach places emphasis on gathering descriptive data about challenging-to-measure variables. Additionally, the utilization of quantitative methods allows for the measurement and analysis of numerical data related to the phenomenon being investigated, as noted by

Carla and Wendy (2017). Overall, the adoption of a mixed methods research approach enables us to capture a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, as highlighted by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). In a mixed methods research approach, qualitative and quantitative methods are combined to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation offering valuable insights that go beyond the capabilities of each method individually.

I.1 Procedures of Data Collection

I.2 Sample and Strategy

This research was carried out at the English department of Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. The deliberate choice of employing a random sampling technique to determine a sample size of 40 students and 8 teachers aimed to ensure the credibility and broader relevance of the study's findings. This approach aligns with established research practices, as it guarantees a fair representation of the wider student population, enhancing the validity of probability sampling among Master One students. Probability sampling, renowned for its random and unbiased selection process, offers an equitable opportunity for every Master-level student to participate, preventing any form of bias or favoritism. My selection methods solely considered the students' level of study (Masters) to maintain fairness and impartiality. This ensured a diverse range of perspectives enriching the comprehensiveness of the study and the applicability of my findings to the Master-level student body.

Regarding the selection of teachers, a non-random approach was employed, focusing on their involvement with intercultural modules. Specifically targeting teachers who were recently teaching or had previously taught “Teaching Interculturality” module allowed for a concentrated and thorough exploration of the research topic, providing valuable insights and enriching the qualitative aspect of the study. This approach was carefully designed to align

with the research theme of “The Impact of Chatting with Native Speakers of the English Language on Intercultural Communicative Competence” and ensure the relevance of the data collected from both students and teachers.

II Data Collection Tools

As mentioned earlier, the primary aim of this research is to assess the impact of chatting with native speakers of English language on ICC among Master students in the English department at UMMTO. To achieve this goal, two distinct research methods were utilised to gather data: a questionnaire distributed to students and structured interviews conducted with teachers.

II.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a meticulously crafted collection of inquiries employed to gather information and viewpoints from individuals, enabling researchers to acquire valuable insights and comprehension about a specific subject. As noted by Kothari (2004), a questionnaire essentially consists of printed or mimeographed questions that respondents fill out to express their opinions. This description underscores the essential purpose and nature of a questionnaire as a tool for gathering data and insights from individuals.

This study aims to gain insight regarding the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence. To accomplish this, a questionnaire comprising 15 questions was specifically crafted on September 17, 2023. This questionnaire was distributed to Master one students attending Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. The distribution occurred through the department's official Facebook group, known as “Département D’Anglais Officiel UMMTO”. This questionnaire encompasses a mix of eight (08) open-ended and seven (07) closed-ended questions, strategically designed to

comprehensively explore students' viewpoints regarding the impact of chatting with native speakers of English language on ICC.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section is labeled “Knowledge about Interculturality” and it contains three (03) questions. The second section is called “Understanding and Skill of Interculturality” and it consists of six (06) questions. The third part is named “Willingness to Engage in Intercultural Exchanges”. The fourth and last part of the questionnaire is entitled “Attitudes of Students toward Interculturality” and it is composed of three (03) questions.

To enhance the precision and reliability of my research tool, I initially conducted a pilot study before the data collection phase. The questionnaire was piloted with four students and no issues were encountered prior to distribution.

II.2 Interview

Interviews serve as a widely employed method of data collection in research, entailing direct interaction between the interviewer and the respondents (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). These interviews come in various forms including structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In this research, a written interview, also referred to as a structured interview or a questionnaire-based interview, was selected as the research method. In this approach, respondents receive a predetermined set of written questions to answer. The choice of a written interview format is based on its advantages, including enhanced flexibility, the elimination of geographical constraints and time limitations, the assurance of standardized questions, streamlined data analysis, and the provision of respondent anonymity, which encourages more candid responses (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Structured interviews, as defined by Kumar (2011) and Gill et al. (2008), are a method of data collection characterized by the use of a

predetermined set of questions designed to elicit specific responses from participants in a standardized and consistent manner. This approach ensures data reliability and comparability that may not be achieved through other means such as questionnaires.

Structured interviews were carried out in written and email formats, transmitted to teachers in the department of English at MMUTO. The research involved eight participants, all serving as instructors for Master one modules. The selection of teachers, evenly distributed across genders, was specialized, comprising six female teachers and two male teachers. This research method allowed me to glean valuable insights into the thoughts, perspectives, and experiences of these participating teachers regarding the impact of chatting with native speakers of the English language on intercultural communicative competence.

III Procedures of Data Analysis

For a comprehensive analysis of the gathered data, this research employs a dual methodology: statistical techniques for quantitative analysis, visually represented through pie charts, histograms and bar graphs featuring calculated percentages, as well as Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) for handling open-ended responses. The fusion of these methodologies offers a complete understanding of the data, encompassing both numerical trends and the nuanced viewpoints expressed by the participants. Furthermore, the integration of “Intercultural Communicative competence” theory by Michael Byram (1997) which this study has embraced as its primary theoretical framework, enhances both facets of the analysis. This theory not only aligns with a thorough research insight but it also provides a theoretical foundation for comprehending language acquisition patterns and enriching the interpretation of participants' responses within the context of language learning theories.

III.1 Statistical Method

The quantitative findings are visually presented through pie charts, histograms and bar graphs revealing the total number of responses along with their respective percentages. These percentages are computed using the rule of three, which is applied as follows: $X = Z \times 100 / Y$. In this formula, X represents the calculated percentage, Z corresponds to the count of similar responses, and Y indicates the overall number of participants. In situations involving open-ended questions, the interpretation of data is conducted through the utilization of Qualitative Content Analysis, as further detailed in the subsequent section.

III.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

This research employs QCA to analyze the responses to open-ended questions within the questionnaires and interviews. This approach involves the identification and interpretation of data that convey the viewpoints and perceptions of the participants.

Qualitative Content Analysis, as defined by Mayring (2000), is a research method that involves systematically examining and interpreting textual or visual data to identify patterns, themes, and insights within the data. It is a qualitative research technique used to understand and describe the content of data, often in a systematic and structured manner. This process typically includes the identification of key themes and the exploration of underlying meanings within the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). As per Hsieh and Shannon (2005), Qualitative Content Analysis encompasses a broad spectrum of interpretive practices involving the systematic categorization of qualitative data, the extraction of themes and patterns, and the formulation of interpretive inferences regarding the data's significance. This approach involves the recognition and analysis of data that faithfully reflect the perspectives of the participants, achieved through the efficient categorization of qualitative data, pattern identification, and interpretation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Additionally, this research is informed by

“Intercultural Communicative Competence” introduced by Byram (1997) which will serve as the theoretical underpinning for both the quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design and the methodologies employed to investigate the impact of chatting with native speakers of the English language on intercultural communicative competence. The chapter introduced the selected research paradigm, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to address the research questions effectively. It also detailed the data collection procedure introducing the two primary methods used in this study: questionnaires and interviews. The final section of this chapter was dedicated to the data analysis process, introducing the two techniques utilized to analyze the collected data: the statistical method for numerical data and Qualitative Content Analysis for qualitative data.

Chapter Three

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to showcasing the outcomes derived from a survey consisting of 40 questionnaires, each comprising 15 questions. These questionnaires were distributed among Master one students enrolled in the department of English at MMUTO. Additionally, the chapter also encompasses insights drawn from 8 interviews conducted with Master one Language and Communication teachers from the same department at MMUTO.

This chapter is structured into two primary sections. The first part illustrates the findings from the questionnaire analysis using pie charts, bar graphs and histograms. Subsequently, the second part provides an overview of the outcomes derived from the analysis of the interviews with the teachers.

I Results of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire responses were subjected to analysis using the rule of three, where all the quantitative data were transformed into percentages. The ensuing outcomes are as follows:

I.1 Knowledge about Interculturality

Q1 : “What motivated you to engage in chats with native speakers of the English language?”

The motivation of the participants behind engaging in chats with native speakers of English language reveals a multifaceted set of motivations among the participants. A significant number of respondents expressed a keen interest in improving their language skills, emphasizing the benefits of interacting with English native speakers for fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary expansion. Another prevalent motivation was the desire to gain a deeper understanding of the culture and way of life of the native English speakers,

highlighting language as a gateway to cultural immersion and more authentic travel experiences. Additionally, some participants saw these conversations as an opportunity to break down language barriers, foster international friendships and develop a more global perspective. Personal growth and challenge were also mentioned, with individuals embracing the opportunity to step out of their comfort zones. A couple of respondents cited curiosity and a love for cultural diversity as their driving force, while others underscored the dual purpose of language learning and cultural exchange in their motivations.

Q2 : How often do you seek information about the culture of English native speakers you chat with?

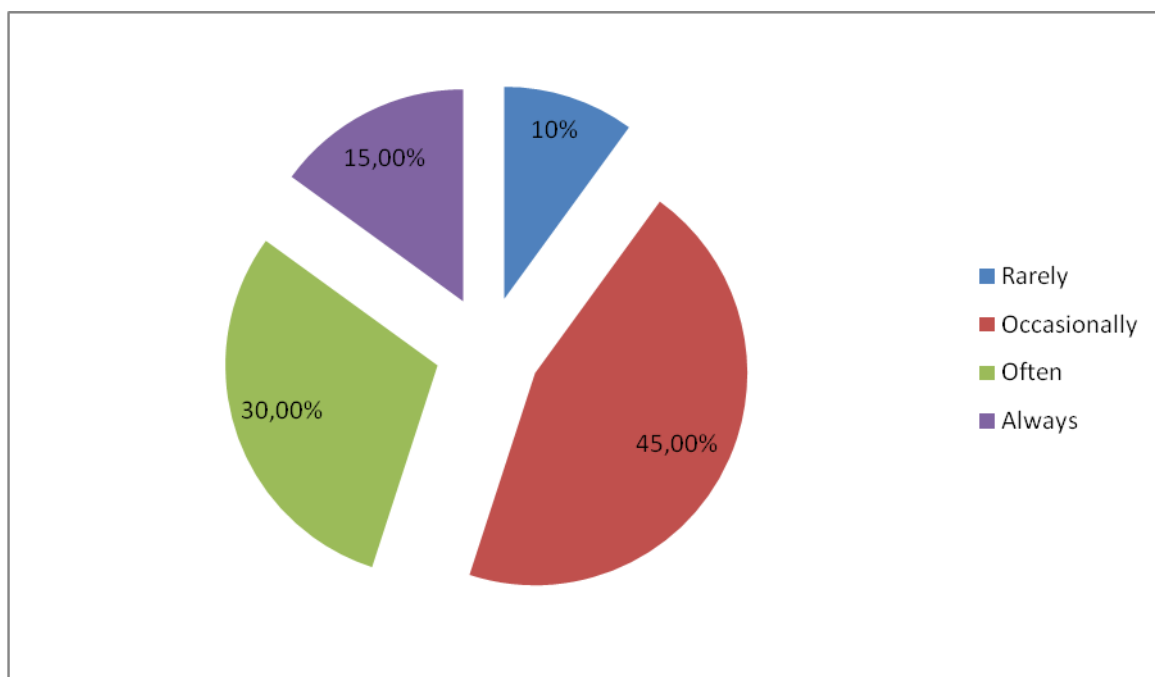


Diagram 1. Frequency of Seeking Information About Native Speakers' Culture

The responses to the frequency of seeking information about the culture of english native speakers participants chat with show that 45% of respondents occasionally seek information about native speakers' culture, while 30% show consistent interest, choosing "often" and 15% indicating "always." Only 10% rarely do so, indicating varied levels of cultural curiosity.

Q3: “Can you share an experience where you unexpectedly gained knowledge about culture while chatting with English native speaker?”

The responses to the question regarding unexpected cultural insights gained while conversing with native English speakers underscore the diverse and enriching experiences participants encountered during their interactions. These experiences encompassed the discovery of unique facets of American and English cultures, such as music genres, culinary traditions, social norms and cultural symbols. For instance, participants gained knowledge about the cultural significance of traditional American barbecue, the historical roots of British afternoon tea rituals, and the subtleties of greetings in both American and British cultures. Moreover, insights into American practices like Thanksgiving celebrations and English customs like the Changing of the Guard ceremony offered a deeper insight into daily life and values in these cultures.

I.2 Understanding and Skills in Interculturality

Q1: “In your interactions with native speakers, how often do you find yourself intuitively understanding their cultural nuances or unspoken cues?”

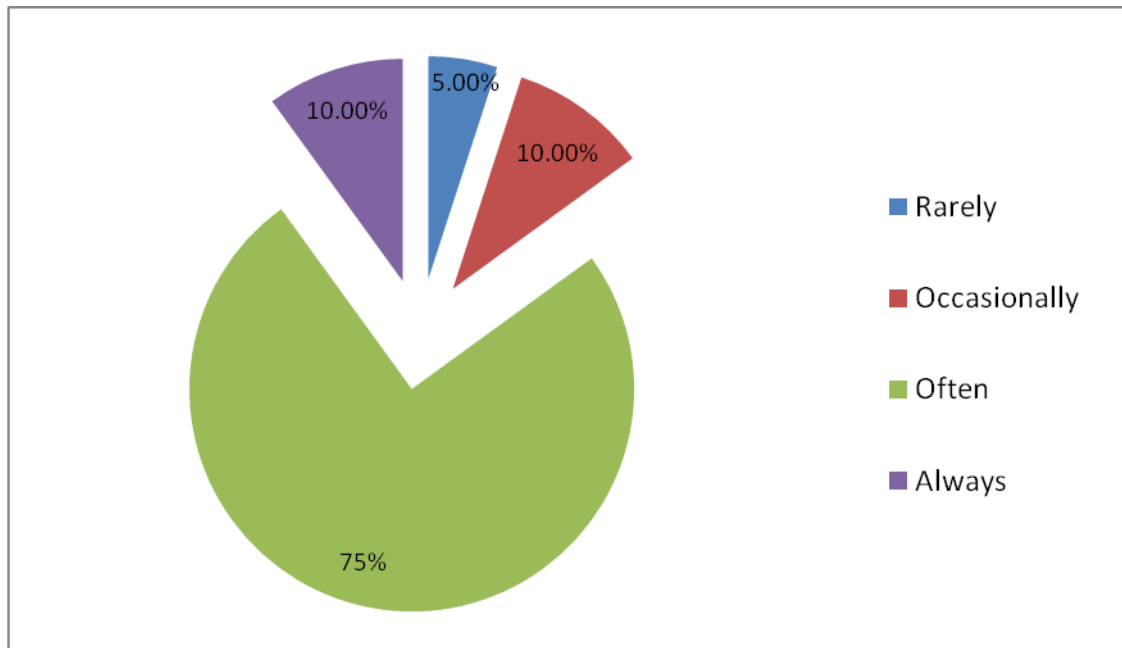


Diagram 2. Frequency of Intuitively Understanding Cultural Nuances and Unspoken Cues in Interactions with Native Speakers

This diagram provides valuable insights into the frequency with which students report intuitively understanding cultural nuances and unspoken cues in their interactions with native speakers of the English language. Notably, a substantial 75% of respondents indicated that they 'often' grasp native speakers' cultural perspectives or unspoken cues, suggesting a commendable level of cultural sensitivity among a significant majority. Additionally, 10% reported 'occasionally' experiencing such understanding, another 10% claimed to 'always' possess this ability, indicating a consistent capability of perceiving cultural nuances. However, a smaller proportion of 5% admitted to 'rarely' having a constant understanding,

highlighting a minority who may face challenges in consistently interpreting cultural cues in their interactions.

Q2: “Have you ever encountered cultural misunderstandings while chatting with English native speakers? If yes, can you provide with an example?”

The analysis of responses to the question regarding encounters with cultural misunderstandings while conversing with native English speakers reveals a spectrum of experiences and reflections among the participants. Many respondents admitted the importance of cultural sensitivity in their interactions and shared instances where they unintentionally caused offense or discomfort due to differences in the American and English customs. Examples ranged from inquiries about personal age in the American culture being perceived as impolite to comments on food spiciness in the British culture being misinterpreted as criticism. These anecdotes reinforced the significance of being attuned to cultural nuances and practices to foster smoother cross-cultural communication.

Furthermore, some respondents viewed these misunderstandings as valuable learning opportunities, enhancing their appreciation of diverse culture and guiding them towards greater cultural awareness. Conversely, a few participants did not recall such encounters, suggesting that cultural misunderstandings may not always be distinctly memorable but remain an integral part of the ongoing process of intercultural learning.

Q3: “How do you interpret non-verbal cues or gestures in your chats with English native speakers?”

The analysis of responses concerning the interpretation of non-verbal cues and gestures during conversations with native English speakers highlights a variety of approaches among participants. While some individuals primarily participated in text-based communication, limiting their exposure to gestures, others assigned significant importance on

the contextual cues provided within the discourse to decipher non-verbal cues. A portion of respondents indicated a preference for text-based chats, thus minimizing direct engagement with gestures and non-verbal communication.

Conversely, certain participants highlighted the significance of observing body language, facial expressions and tone of voice in their chat interactions. They acknowledged that these cues offer valuable context and emotional depth to the conversation. Furthermore, a few respondents emphasized the importance of cultural awareness, recognizing that gestures can hold different meanings in diverse cultural contexts.

Q4: “How has chatting with native speakers improved your language skills without deliberate effort?”

Informal conversations with English native speakers have enhanced the language skills of the participants in many ways and this learning process has positively influenced them. Many respondents emphasized that exposure to authentic language usage in these conversations has played a pivotal role in their language development. They have absorbed proper grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation seamlessly, without the need for structured study, which has resulted in noticeable improvements in their language proficiency over time. The immersion in real-life language contexts has facilitated the natural acquisition of linguistic subtleties, idiomatic expressions and colloquial language. Furthermore, participants highlighted that chatting with native speakers has boosted their confidence in using the language, as they became more accustomed to the rhythm and flow of genuine conversations.

Q5: “How would you describe the changes in your ability to adapt your communication style when chatting with different native speakers?”

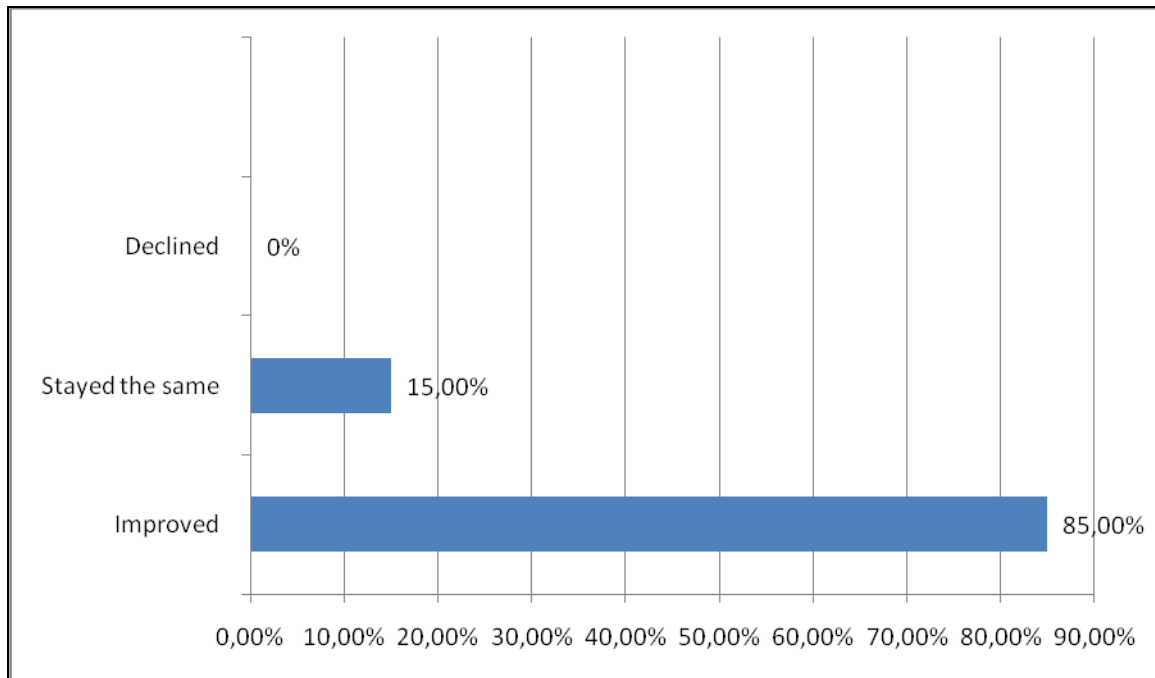


Diagram 3. Adaptation of Communication Styles When Chatting with Native Speakers.

Participants' responses regarding their ability to adapt their communication styles when conversing with native speakers reveal that none of the students (0%) reported a decline in this skill. 15% of the students indicated that their ability to adapt their communication style remained unchanged. The majority of students, constituting 85% of the participants, asserted that their ability to adapt their communication style had improved.

Q6: “Have you ever found yourself naturally avoiding potential cultural misunderstandings in your conversations with English native speakers? If yes, please provide an example.”

Based on the responses to the question regarding whether participants have ever found themselves naturally avoiding potential cultural misunderstandings in conversations with native speakers, a majority of the respondents indicated that they did indeed make efforts to

avoid such misunderstandings. They highlighted instances where their heightened awareness of cultural differences led them to adapt their behavior and communication styles while chatting. For example, one respondent mentioned refraining from discussing controversial political topics when conversing with a native American speaker, demonstrating an understanding of the potential for cultural clashes. Another cited the practice of avoiding discussions about cricket when chatting with a native English friend to avoid potential misinterpretations. Similarly, participants mentioned respecting American traditions by being mindful of personal space and adapting their communication style when conversing with a native New Yorker.

I.3 Willingness to Engage in Intercultural Communication

Q1: “Has chatting with native speakers stimulated your interest in learning more about their culture outside of the conversations?”

Based on the responses to the question regarding whether conversing with native speakers has ignited an interest in further exploring their culture outside of the conversations, it is clear that the majority of participants have indeed been motivated to delve more deeply into the cultures of their conversation partners. These responses illustrate that engaging in conversations with native speakers has a substantial impact that extends beyond language acquisition. Respondents expressed a genuine curiosity about the cultures they encountered, motivating them to investigate various aspects such as language intricacies, traditional cuisines, customs, festivals and historical backgrounds. Several participants shared specific instances where their interactions prompted them to conduct research and even experience elements of their conversation partner's culture, such as preparing American dishes or learning about the historical significance of Stonehenge in the English culture.

Q2: “Do you feel more self-assured in intercultural interactions after chatting with native speakers?”

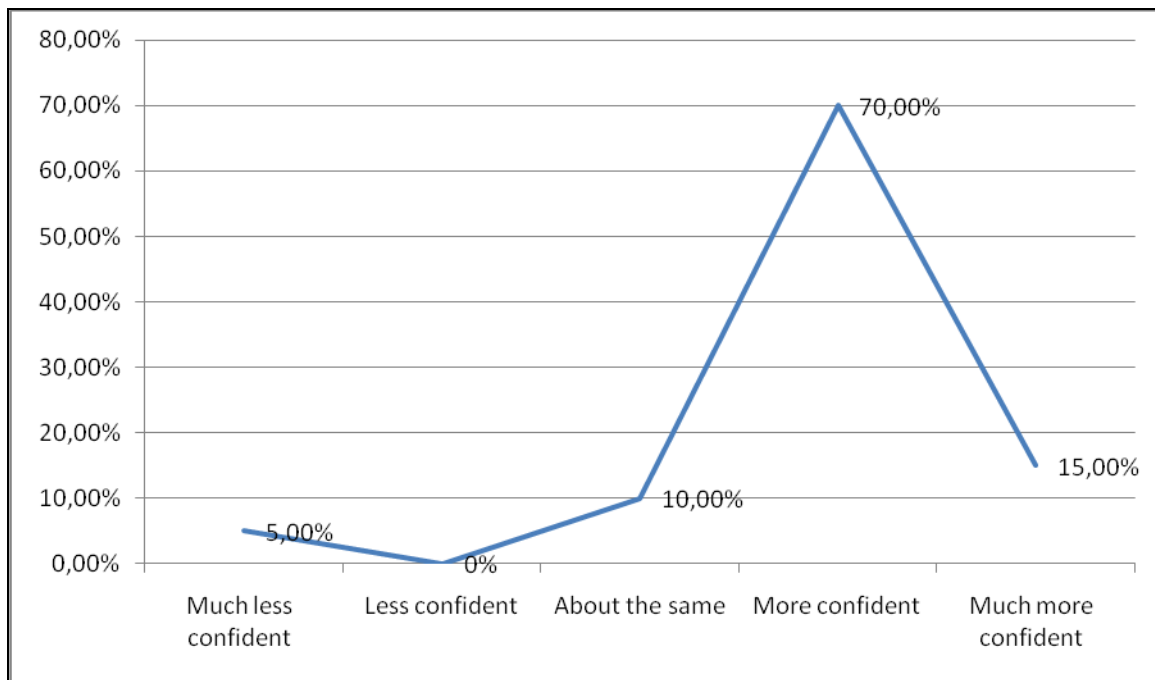


Diagram 4. Self-Assurance in Intercultural Interactions after Chatting with Native Speakers.

The diagram illustrates participants' self-assuredness levels in intercultural interactions following their conversations with native speakers. Significantly, a substantial majority, accounting for 70%, reported feeling more confident. Another 15% mentioned feeling much more confident. Notably, no participants expressed feeling less confident and approximately 10% stated that their self-assurance remained about the same and only 5% reported feeling much less confident.

Q3: “To what extent have your chats with native speakers influenced your perceptions of cultural stereotypes?”

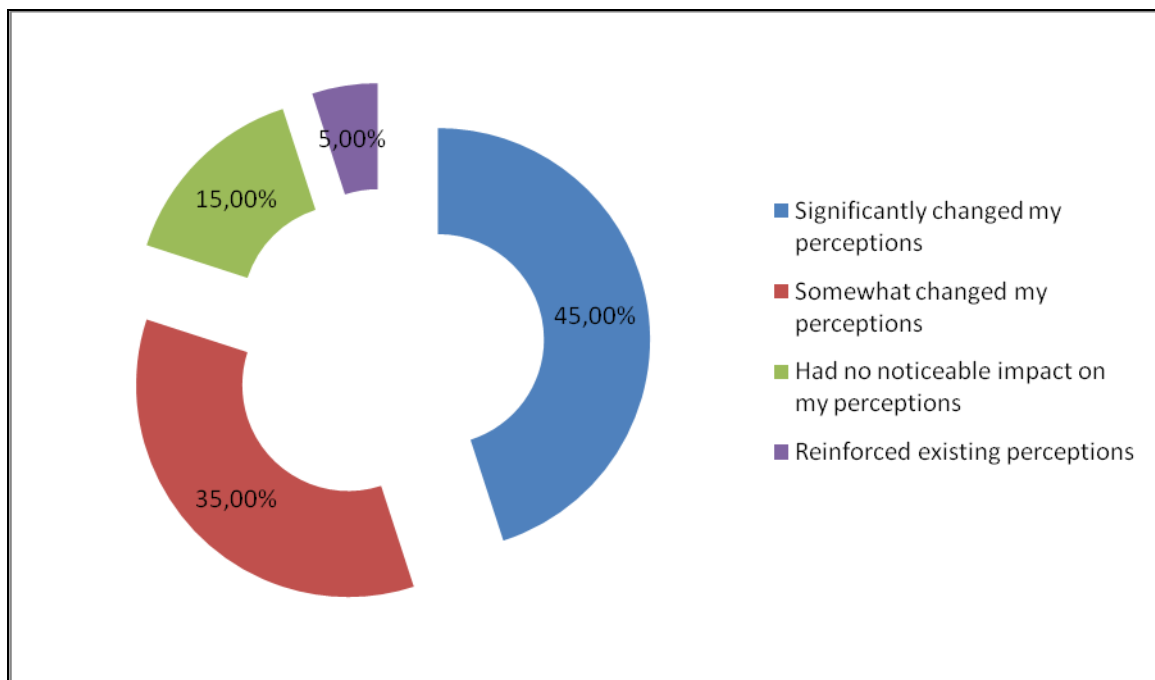


Diagram 5. The Influence of Chats with Native Speakers on Cultural Stereotype Perceptions.

The diagram illustrates the influence of chats with native speakers on participants' perceptions of cultural stereotypes. Significantly, 45% of respondents reported experiencing a substantial shift in their perceptions. Another 35% noted a somewhat altered perspective, while 15% mentioned no discernible impact. Only 5% indicated that their existing perceptions were reinforced.

I.4 Attitudes of Students toward Interculturality

Q1: “To what extent do you actively seek out opportunities to chat with native speakers to enhance your intercultural communicative competence without conscious effort?”

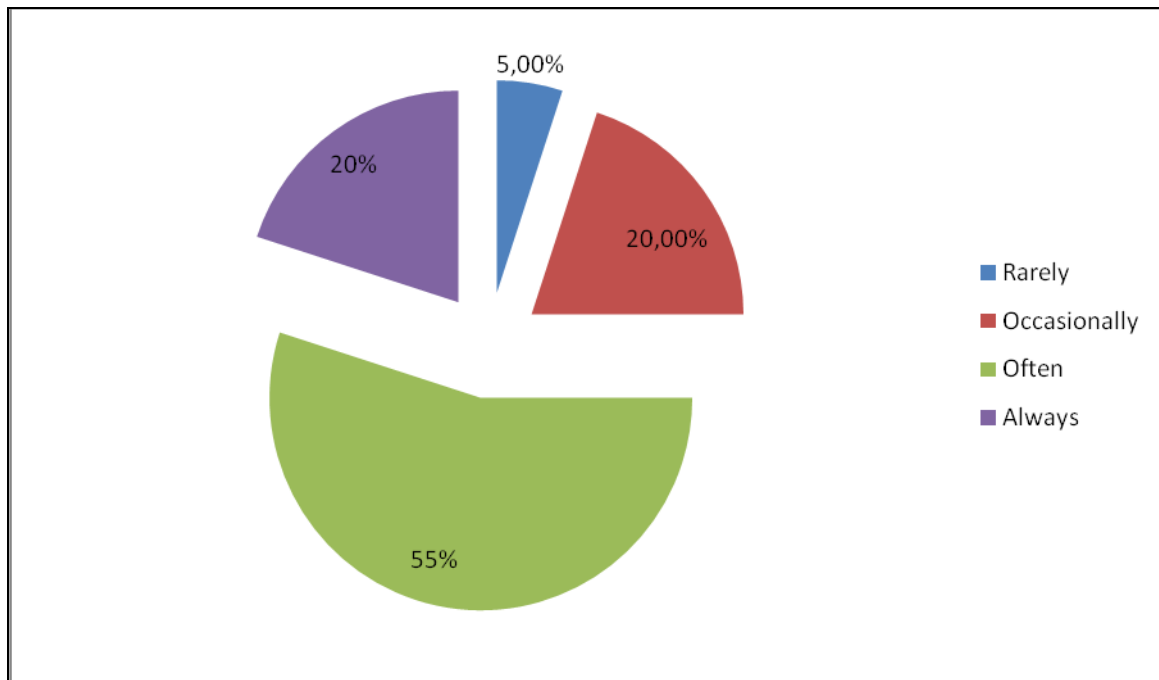


Diagram 6. Proactive Engagement with Native Speakers for Intercultural Communicative Competence.

The participants' efforts to enhance intercultural communicative competence through interactions with native speakers can be categorized as follows: 55% often seek such opportunities, 20% do so occasionally, another 20% pursue them always and only 5% rarely seek out these experiences.

Q2: “Do you find yourself naturally approaching chats with native speakers with an open and accepting attitude?”

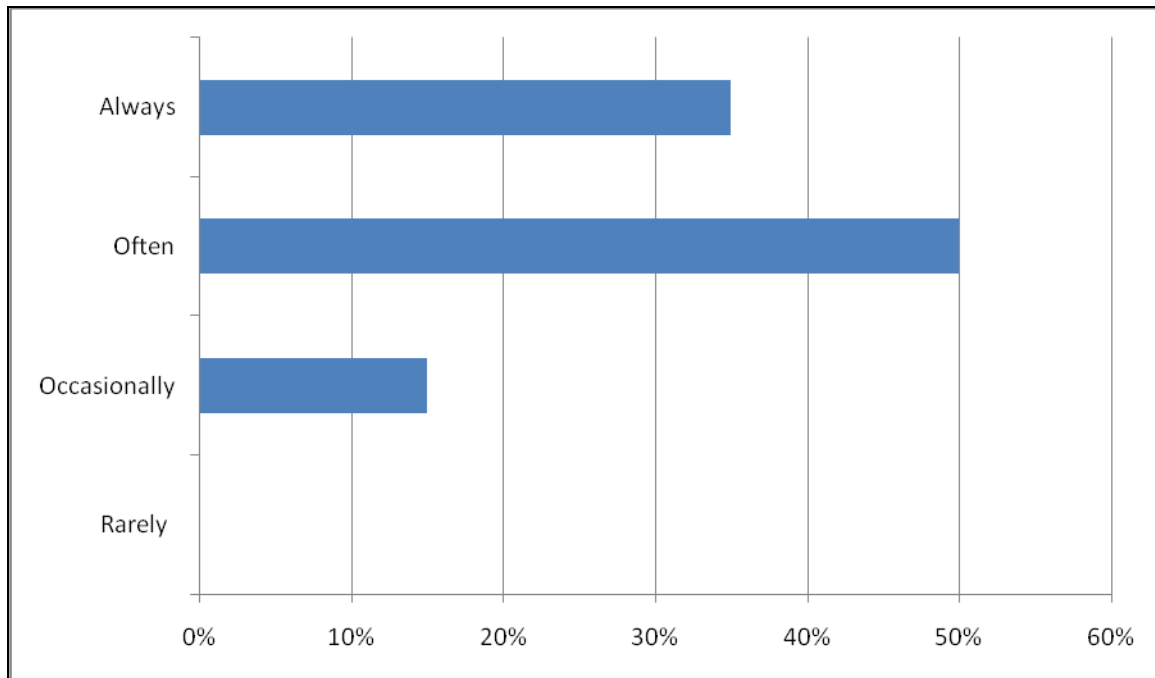


Diagram 7. Approach to Chats with Native Speakers: Openness and Acceptance.

This diagram demonstrates that a majority (50%) of participants consistently exhibit an open and accepting attitude when engaging in conversations with native speakers, with 35% responding that they always do so. Notably, there is a complete absence of individuals who adhere to a different approach, underscoring the prevailing trend of open-mindedness. Only a minor fraction of participants, comprising 15% occasionally deviates from this pattern.

Q3: How has your respect for other cultures evolved through these interactions?

Participants' respect for other cultures has evolved through interactions with native English speakers. Many respondents noted an enhancement of their regard for various cultures, elucidating their newly acquired comprehension of customs, traditions, and world views within American and English contexts. These interactions have led to a greater

appreciation for the richness and uniqueness of each culture, fostering empathy and reinforcing the importance of embracing differences. Participants emphasized the value of firsthand insights gained from native English speakers, which have contributed to their cultural sensitivity and respect.

As I conclude my analysis of the student questionnaires, I shift my attention towards the valuable insights shared by teachers during interviews. While the questionnaires have provided me with both qualitative and quantitative data, the forthcoming examination of teacher interviews will contribute qualitative depth to my study. Through these interviews, I aim to elucidate nuanced perspectives and experiences that transcend numerical representations, enriching my understanding of the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence.

II Results of the Interviews

The objectives of the section involve analyzing the findings from written interviews conducted with eight teachers in the English department at MMUTO, noting that only four (04) interviews from eight (08) were completed and returned. These interviews sought insights on intercultural communicative competence and its relevance in today's globalized world. They aimed to uncover how chatting with native speakers can enhance language and culture exchange, explore the benefits and challenges of virtual interactions, investigate the role of technology in facilitating intercultural communication learning, gather recommendations for productive chat-based exchanges, and examine whether the impact of such interactions varies across languages and cultures.

Q1: “In your opinion, what specific aspects of language and culture exchange do you believe are enhanced by chatting with native speakers?”

One teacher emphasizes that chatting with native speakers enriches language and culture exchange by offering an immersive learning experience, encompassing authentic language use, correct pronunciation, contextualized vocabulary, and insights into cultural nuances. Another teacher highlights the multifaceted benefits, including specific vocabulary exchange and insights into various cultural aspects such as daily life, food, clothing, and social behavior. A third teacher emphasizes the development of language fluency and understanding of the cultural knowledge, recognizing the interconnectedness of language and culture. This includes learning about customs, traditions, values and colloquial expressions like slang and idioms, promoting cultural appreciation and respect. Lastly, one teacher categorizes aspects into linguistic (verbal and non-verbal), non-linguistic, and paralinguistic dimensions, acknowledging the complexity of language and culture exchange.

Q2: “Could you share examples of how interacting with native speakers through chat platforms might positively influence students’ linguistic skills and cultural awareness?”

When asked about the positive influences of interacting with native speakers through chat platforms on students' linguistic skills and cultural awareness, the responses collectively highlight several key benefits. One teacher succinctly emphasizes that this interaction offers real-context learning opportunities, contributing to overall skill development. Another teacher underscores how students benefit from vocabulary acquisition and increased cultural consciousness, which enables them to position themselves in relation to others' cultures. A third teacher provides a detailed account of how students' listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills improve through interaction with native speakers, expanding their

vocabulary and cultural awareness. They note the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural differences, norms, customs, and etiquette for effective intercultural communication. Finally, one teacher categorizes the impacts into verbal and non-verbal dimensions, highlighting aspects like polite forms, greetings, and body gestures, all of which contribute to intercultural awareness by comparing students' source culture to the target culture, with an emphasis on appreciating differences.

Q3: “What potential challenges or drawbacks do you foresee in utilizing chat with native speakers as a tool for developing intercultural communicative competence?”

When examining the potential challenges and drawbacks of utilizing chat with native speakers as a tool for developing intercultural communicative competence, the responses offer a range of perspectives. One teacher identifies a psychological challenge, highlighting that learners may experience anxiety, self-doubt, and a lack of confidence when engaging with native speakers. Another teacher expresses optimism, asserting that when students choose appropriate chat partners, the experience can be largely positive without significant drawbacks. In contrast, another teacher emphasizes a limitation, suggesting that online chats may offer limited opportunities for developing crucial intercultural skills compared to complete immersion in a target culture. They note that online interactions lack non-verbal communication cues, which are essential in intercultural contexts. Lastly, one teacher highlights a potential barrier related to negative attitudes that some natives might hold towards otherness, which can lead to stereotyping and feelings of ethnocentrism.

Q4: “From an educational standpoint, how might the use of technology, like language exchange applications or online platforms, affect the effectiveness of intercultural communication learning?”

Regarding the impact of technology such as language exchange applications and online platforms on intercultural communication learning, the responses collectively highlight its positive influence. One teacher emphasizes access to native speakers, enabling students to engage in authentic interactions. Another teacher expresses a positive view, believing that such technological tools enhance the effectiveness of intercultural communication development. A third teacher underscores the significant impact of technology, emphasizing that it facilitates interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, providing essential cultural experience and enhancing intercultural communicative competence. Finally, one teacher notes that technology profoundly affects intercultural communication learning by allowing remote communication and collaboration, promoting universal cultures, and fostering intercultural sensitivity.

Q5: “In your opinion, what can support and facilitate meaningful interactions between students and native speakers in a virtual environment?”

The answers suggest various ways to support and facilitate meaningful interactions between students and native speakers in a virtual environment. One teacher emphasizes the importance of consistent practice on language exchange platforms, urging students to make it a daily routine while embracing the idea that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process. Another teacher highlights the significance of selecting appropriate chat partners as a means to ensure productive interactions. The third teacher underscores the value of incorporating cultural elements into conversations, making them more meaningful, and

helping students grasp the cultural context of the target language. Additionally, this teacher emphasizes the need to encourage cultural sensitivity and respect. Lastly, one teacher emphasizes key elements such as mutual respect, the avoidance of stereotyping, intercultural awareness, and maintaining a positive attitude towards the cultures of others, including both dominant and minority groups. Collectively, these responses emphasize the importance of consistent practice, thoughtful partner selection, cultural contextualization, and a respectful and open-minded approach for fostering meaningful interactions in a virtual intercultural environment.

Q6: “Are there any specific strategies or guidelines you would recommend to students engaging in chat-based exchanges to ensure their intercultural learning is both productive and conducted with respectful?”

The responses provide valuable recommendations for students engaging in chat-based exchanges to ensure productive and respectful intercultural learning. One teacher advises students to cultivate open-mindedness, shed prejudices, criticism, and feelings of inferiority towards other cultures. This approach is seen as crucial for the development of intercultural communicative competence. Another teacher underscores the importance of embracing cultural diversity, promoting curiosity about other cultures, and approaching interactions with respect, tolerance, and mindfulness of cultural differences. Teacher 3 emphasizes the avoidance of ethnocentrism, emphasizing that no culture is superior, and advocates for intercultural sensitivity and awareness to prevent communication breakdowns and culture shock. Collectively, these responses stress the significance of open-mindedness, cultural appreciation, respect, and sensitivity as key strategies for ensuring productive and respectful intercultural learning in chat-based exchanges.

Q7: “Do you believe that the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence differs across various languages and cultures? If so, how?”

The responses present varied perspectives on whether the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence differs across languages and cultures. One teacher expresses a universal belief in the beneficial impact of such interaction, regardless of the language involved. In contrast, another teacher suggests that differences in complexity, both in language structure and cultural diversity, can influence the impact. They imply that more complex languages and cultures may require additional time and effort to develop intercultural communicative skills. One teacher disagrees with the notion that the impact varies, while another teacher strongly emphasizes the differences in language use and cultural values, pointing out that cultural variations can manifest in aspects like politeness forms and forms of address and illustrating the potential differences in the impact of intercultural communication across various languages and cultures. These responses reflect diverse perspectives on the interplay between language, culture, and intercultural communicative competence, with some seeing universality and others recognizing the potential for variation.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter presented the outcomes derived from the questionnaire responses of the English department’s students at MMUTO and the email interviews conducted with teachers from the same department. The data have been depicted through the application of visual aids, including pie charts, bar graphs, and histograms. These visual representations not only supports my research objectives but also serve as a foundational

framework for substantive discussions and insightful analyses, thereby establishing a strong basis for further exploration in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Four

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of findings obtained from interviews conducted with teachers and questionnaires distributed to Master One students within the English department at MMUTO. It comprises three main sections: The first segment offers a thorough examination of the results from the student questionnaires. The subsequent section provides an in-depth discussion of the insights obtained from interviews with teachers. Both the questionnaires and interviews involve data analysis utilizing Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence framework.

I Discussing the Findings of The Students' Questionnaire

In this discussion section, I explore the findings from the administered students' questionnaire which investigates the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence. I examine various aspects of Interculturality, including motivations, knowledge, skills, attitudes and willingness to engage in intercultural interactions. Through these responses, which are gathered from Master One students of MMUTO, I uncover the effects of such exchanges on cultural curiosity, adaptability, self-confidence, stereotype reduction and respect for diverse cultures. These findings emphasize the pivotal role of intercultural competence in an increasingly interconnected world and underscore how language exchange fosters cultural understanding.

I.1 Knowledge about Interculturality

Diverse motivations drove individuals to engage in intercultural communication through chatting. A recurrent theme in the responses of participants is the aspiration to improve language skills and achieve fluency through interactions with native speakers of English language. Krashen (1982) asserted that language immersion and real-life conversations are

effective for language acquisition. Additionally, a profound curiosity about different cultures and a genuine appreciation for cultural diversity has been highlighted in those students' responses. The majority of participants expressed a genuine curiosity about their conversation partners' cultures which demonstrate a desire for both linguistic and cultural enrichment. This echoes the interplay between language and culture as emphasized in Byram's ICC framework, particularly the "savoir" dimension which entails possessing factual knowledge concerning one's own culture and other cultures, involving comprehension of the historical context, traditions, values, and belief systems of various cultural groups. Mastery in these cultural aspects serves as the cornerstone of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997).

Furthermore, some respondents are motivated by personal growth and the challenge of stepping out of their comfort zones. This dimension of language learning resonates with studies exploring the psychological aspects of language acquisition, particularly the notion that overcoming language barriers can lead to major personal development. Additionally, the desire to enhance travel experiences by speaking the local English language signifies an awareness of the advantages of linguistic proficiency in navigating global cultures (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Lastly, the focus on improving cross-cultural communication skills and fostering international friendships emphasizes the significance of possessing cultural competence in our increasingly interconnected world.

The frequency with which respondents seek information about the culture of the native speakers they engage with (see diagram 1) reveals a range of attitudes toward cultural exploration. A substantial portion of respondents mentioned that they occasionally seek cultural information suggesting that cultural curiosity is not a constant but a recurring aspect of their interactions. Others demonstrated a more consistent interest with some respondents often seeking cultural insights and a smaller percentage rarely pursuing such avenues. These

findings emphasize that individuals engage in intercultural communication with varying degrees of emphasis on cultural learning.

Furthermore, these findings also resonate with studies on intercultural sensitivity, such as Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Milton J. Bennett is a prominent figure in the field of intercultural communication. His framework describes individuals' levels of sensitivity and attitudes toward cultural differences. The model outlines a series of six stages that individuals typically go through as they become more interculturally competent and aware (Bennett, 1993.p21-71). These stages range from a more ethnocentric orientation to a more ethno relative and interculturally competent one. According to Bennett, individuals progress through stages of intercultural sensitivity with higher stages indicating a greater appreciation and curiosity about different cultures. The respondents who often seek cultural insights might be at a more advanced stage of intercultural sensitivity, demonstrating a heightened awareness of and receptivity to cultural differences. In contrast, those who rarely seek cultural information may be at lower stages of intercultural sensitivity where cultural exploration is less emphasized. This variation in the frequency of seeking cultural information among respondents highlights the diversity of attitudes and behaviours in intercultural communication, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches to fostering intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993. P.21-71).

The experiences shared by participants about where they unexpectedly gained knowledge about culture during conversations with native speakers of English provide us with entertaining and enlightening anecdotes that highlight the unpredictability and richness of cultural learning experiences in intercultural communication. These stories range from insights into American traditions, like tailgating at football games and enjoying a classic English afternoon tea, to broader cultural concepts like American “road trips” and British “pub crawls”. These examples highlight the power of English language exchange as a conduit

for intercultural understanding and the potential for these interactions to transcend mere language learning fostering a deeper appreciation of the cultural diversity found within American and English societies.

Byram (1997) emphasized the importance of understanding cultural practices and rituals as a crucial aspect of effective intercultural communication as shared by one respondent who unexpectedly learned about the cultural significance of American barbecue traditions while chatting with a native speaker of American English online. Additionally, Smith (2003) claims that food traditions play an important role in shaping cultural identities. Another respondent mentioned gaining insight into the etiquette of afternoon tea in British culture during a conversation with a native English speaker. This cultural discovery emphasizes the interconnectedness of language and culture, as emphasized by Byram's (1997) framework which highlights how language learners can unintentionally glean cultural knowledge through language exchange, which is precisely what occurred in this scenario.

These experiences shared by respondents correspond with the notion that intercultural communication can provide valuable cultural insights beyond language learning. They illustrate how language interactions can serve as windows into American and British cultures, enhancing intercultural communicative competence by fostering a deeper understanding of cultural practices, traditions and perspectives within these specific contexts. This foundational knowledge « Savoir » about one's own culture and other cultures, encompassing their history and perspectives, is crucial for developing intercultural competence.

I.2 Understanding and Skills of Interculturality

The frequency of intuitively understanding “Savoir comprendre” cultural perspectives or unspoken cues during interactions with native speakers of English varies in terms of the degree of intercultural sensitivity among respondents. An overwhelming 75% of respondents

indicated that they often understand these cultural cues, emphasizing their ability to grasp subtle aspects of intercultural communication, Bennet (1993) in his DMIS posited that individuals at higher stages of sensitivity are more likely to perceive and adapt to cultural nuances, also, Byram (1997) emphasized the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to cultural nuances in communication. In the context of this study, the respondents who reported often understanding cultural cues can be seen as operating at higher stages of intercultural sensitivity as they are more attuned to the cultural dimensions of communication. On the other hand, 10% of respondents reported always understanding these cues, while 15% mentioned occasionally doing so. These variations likely reflect differences in cultural exposure and experience suggesting that some respondents may have more extensive intercultural backgrounds than others. This underscores the multifaceted nature of intercultural communicative competence as individuals' abilities can vary based on their experiences and levels of sensitivity (Byram, 1997).

The occurrence of cultural misunderstandings during conversations with native speakers is an inevitability as several respondents shared concrete instances of such misunderstandings. These examples vividly illustrate the complexities of cross-cultural communication and emphasize the critical role of cultural sensitivity. One respondent shared an example of inadvertently discussing a colleague's salary during a conversation with a native American which is generally considered a sensitive topic in the American culture. This experience highlights the significance of cultural awareness and sensitivity as emphasized by Byram's ICC. He argued that individuals need not only linguistic competence but also the ability to interpret and respond to cultural nuances within intercultural communication. Another respondent mentioned a cultural misunderstanding related to humour during a chat with a native English speaker from England. The misunderstanding arose when the respondent made a self-deprecating joke that was interpreted as offensive by the English speaker. Such

misunderstandings can occur when humour and its cultural connotations differ between cultures, underlining the importance of Byram's framework, which stresses the need for individuals to develop cultural knowledge and skills to navigate such situations effectively (Byram, 1997).

Respondents' interpretations of non-verbal cues or gestures during their chats with native speakers of English language indicated a variety of approaches to understanding non-verbal communication. Some respondents mentioned that they primarily engage in text-based chats or calls limiting their ability to interpret gestures. This highlights the importance of considering the medium of communication and its impact on non-verbal cues (Knapp & Hall, 2010) within the context of Byram's framework. Byram emphasizes that individuals should adapt their communicative behaviour based on the context and medium to effectively engage in intercultural communication.

Other respondents indicated that they rely on the context provided within the text of the conversation to interpret non-verbal cues, as mentioned by Burgoon & Hoobler (2002) who underscore the importance of contextual information in comprehending non-verbal communication, further reinforcing the principles of intercultural competence within Byram's framework which highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context and its influence on communication. A few respondents acknowledged that they use emojis, symbols, or stickers to convey non-verbal cues or gestures. These digital representations of emotions and actions can enhance the richness of online communication (Dresner & Herring, 2010), supporting the adaptability and contextual understanding emphasized by Byram's framework who suggests that individuals should be flexible in their use of language and communication tools to bridge cultural gaps effectively (Byram, 1997).

Several respondents highlighted how they learned grammar, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialisms by observing how English native speakers naturally use the language. This passive learning approach contributes to more accurate and contextually appropriate language use. Other respondents emphasized the enhancement of listening comprehension and the development of an intuitive understanding of language nuances. These improvements reflect the benefits of real-life language exposure, which conforms with Byram's ICC framework's focus on intercultural awareness and intercultural skills (Byram, 1997). Byram suggested that individuals should develop the ability to interpret and respond to cultural nuances within language use which includes listening comprehension and understanding language subtleties.

In this study, it became apparent that changes in respondents' ability to adapt their communication style when conversing with different native speakers are indicative of their development in the “savoir-être” dimension within Byram's ICC framework. An overwhelming 85% of respondents reported that their adaptability had improved over time (see diagram 3), indicating the dynamic nature of IC. Byram emphasized the importance of developing intercultural skills, including adaptability to effectively engage in communication across cultural contexts. This improvement suggests that individuals can develop greater flexibility in their communication style through exposure to diverse cultural contexts, conforming to with Byram's ICC framework's emphasis on acquiring cultural and intercultural knowledge and skills (Byram, 1997), which encourages individuals to be adaptable in their communication, interpreting and responding appropriately to cultural differences.

In contrast, 15% of respondents reported that their ability to adapt had remained unchanged, none indicated a decline. This observation reinforces the idea that intercultural communication skills are malleable and can be improved over time (Brislin, 1990), aligning with Byram's emphasis on the developmental nature of intercultural competence within his

ICC framework (Byram, 1997). Byram's model underscores that individuals can enhance their intercultural skills through practice and experience.

The exploration of whether respondents naturally avoided potential cultural misunderstandings during their conversations with native speakers of the English language revealed significant insights. A significant majority of respondents (85%) acknowledged their ability to instinctively avoid such misunderstandings. These findings resonate deeply with Byram's ICC framework which emphasizes the development of intercultural skills, including the ability to navigate cultural differences and prevent misunderstandings. Byram's ICC model underscores the importance of fostering cultural awareness and the capacity to adapt communication approaches effectively across diverse cultural contexts. The respondents' experiences align seamlessly with Byram's framework, demonstrating their innate ability to develop intercultural competence by naturally avoiding cultural misunderstandings. These compelling findings not only affirm the effectiveness of Byram's ICC framework but also reinforce the idea that individuals can acquire the skills necessary for successful intercultural communication through experience and awareness (Byram, 1997; Brislin, 1990).

This nuanced relationship between cultural awareness and the prevention of misunderstandings underscores the vital role of cultural competence in fostering effective intercultural communication skills and thus through this study we have encountered the two essential elements of Byram's ICC framework: “Savoir Comprendre” (the ability to understand others' viewpoints) and “Savoir-Etre” (the ability to adapt and behave appropriately), providing a comprehensive understanding of intercultural competence in real-world communication scenarios.

I.3 Willingness to Engage in Intercultural Communication

Exploring respondents' interactions with native speakers revealed that these interactions have ignited curiosity and interest in the cultures of the native speakers. Many respondents actively expressed their desire to learn more about the cultures of their interlocutors, and this active engagement demonstrates the development of cultural and intercultural knowledge “Savoir S’engager” which is one of the key components of Byram's ICC framework. Some respondents demonstrated this curiosity by researching the meanings of words or expressions used by English native speakers, showcasing the importance of linguistic competence within the ICC framework. Others took more immersive steps, such as trying out new foods or engaging in cultural activities associated with the native speaker's culture. Byram put emphasis on intercultural skills, which involve the ability to navigate cultural differences effectively (Byram, 1997). Leask (2015) highlighted the positive impact of intercultural interactions on cultural curiosity and learning, reinforcing Byram's framework which emphasizes the development of intercultural competence and the ability to relate to cultural differences within the context of intercultural communication (Byram, 1997).

Some responses also highlighted that chatting with native speakers serves as a gateway to explore various aspects of their cultures, such as traditions, customs, history, and art forms. Kramersch initiated that the dynamic interaction between language and culture, exemplifying the interconnectedness of these elements, fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of different cultures (Kramersch, 2009). His perspective underscored the significance of the relationship between language and culture. Overall, the responses not only affirm the development of intercultural curiosity but also emphasize that chatting with native speakers of The English language motivates individuals to delve deeper into the cultures of their chatting partners. Byram also promoted the acquisition of cultural and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively engage in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997). This latter

highlight how language interactions can serve as a catalyst for intercultural exploration and understanding enriching individuals' intercultural communicative competence.

Exploring the impact of engaging in conversations with English native speakers on respondents' self-assuredness in intercultural interactions provides valuable insights. The responses clearly indicate that a significant majority of respondents experience increased confidence following such interactions. Approximately 70% of respondents reported a heightened sense of confidence in intercultural interactions, while an additional 15% noted feeling much more confident. Chua (2018) highlighted the positive influence of real-life intercultural experiences on enhancing self-assuredness and cultural competence. Remarkably, none of the respondents reported a decrease in confidence, and only a small percentage (15%) mentioned that their confidence remained relatively stable. These findings collectively suggest that engaging in conversations with native speakers generally fosters a positive impact on respondents' self-assuredness in intercultural interactions. The increased confidence and cultural competence observed in respondents reflect the principles and goals outlined in Byram's framework which emphasizes the development of cultural competence, intercultural skills and self-assuredness in intercultural interactions, all of which are enhanced through engaging with native speakers.

Byram's (1997) ICC framework accentuates the importance of cultivating intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes which equips individuals to engage effectively in intercultural interactions. The increased self-assuredness reported by the respondents reflects their progress in building the intercultural competence necessary to navigate diverse cultural contexts with confidence.

Analyzing the impact of interactions with English native speakers on respondents' perceptions of cultural stereotypes yields valuable insights that correspond with Byram's ICC

framework (Byram, 1997). The responses unveil various effects on these perceptions, showcasing the multifaceted nature of intercultural interactions. A substantial portion (45%) of respondents reported a profound transformation in their perceptions of cultural stereotypes following their chats with native speakers. Viki et al. (2006) suggested that such interactions can challenge and reshape pre-existing stereotypes, fostering a more open and culturally sensitive mindset (Byram, 1997).

In this context, a substantial proportion (35%) indicated that their perceptions towards cultural differences and stereotypes had experienced some degree of change. Devine (1989) claimed that these interactions indeed contribute to more nuanced and balanced perspectives on cultural differences. A smaller percentage (15%) mentioned that their chats had no noticeable impact on their perceptions of cultural stereotypes. This observation aligns with the complexity of stereotypes and the need for ongoing intercultural experiences to challenge deeply ingrained beliefs (Tropp & Mallett, 2011). However, only (5%) of participants reported that their chats had reinforced existing perceptions. This suggests that, in some cases, individuals may encounter native speakers who conform to certain stereotypes, but it is important to remember that these experiences can vary widely. The element of Byram's ICC "Savoir S'engager" emphasizing the ability to engage effectively and meaningfully, can make the difference in these interactions, challenging stereotypes and fostering genuine understanding across cultures.

I.4 Attitudes of Students toward Interculturality

Exploring the proactive approach of respondents in seeking opportunities to chat with native speakers aligns well with Byram's ICC framework component element which is *Savoir Etre*". A significant portion of the respondents (55%) mentioned that they often pursue opportunities to chat with native speakers. Additionally, 20% of respondents indicated that

they always seek such opportunities, further emphasizing their proactive. While a smaller percentage reported occasionally seeking such opportunities (20%), the overall trend demonstrates a proactive and enthusiastic attitude towards intercultural communication among respondents. This reflects the development of intercultural competence, including knowledge and skills necessary for effective communication in diverse cultural contexts. Byram (1997) encourages individuals to actively engage with other cultures, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. The respondents' proactive approach to seeking intercultural conversations is in line with this emphasis on active engagement for competence development

Evaluating the natural inclination of respondents to approach chats with native speakers of English language with an open and accepting attitude reveals a predominantly positive disposition. Around 50% of respondents indicated that they often approach these chats with an open and accepting attitude, while an additional 35% stated that they always maintain this approach. This demonstrates a strong predisposition among respondents to engage in intercultural interactions with a positive and open mindset. This corresponds to Byram's ICC framework which emphasizes the development of attitudes and motivation that promote effective intercultural communication (Byram, 1997). Remarkably, none of the respondents reported rarely approaching such chats with an open attitude, and only 15% mentioned occasionally doing so. This suggests in general that respondents consistently maintain a welcoming and open disposition when engaging with native speakers from diverse backgrounds. These responses collectively indicate a positive transformation in respondents' respect for other cultures as a direct result of these interactions.

Many respondents expressed acquiring a profound appreciation for the richness and diversity inherent in human cultures, this appreciation aligns with Byram's emphasis on critical cultural awareness, which involves recognizing and valuing cultural diversity (Byram,

1997). Furthermore, several respondents highlighted their increased understanding, empathy, and open-mindedness towards cultures that may differ from their own, which is in accordance with Byram's aim of nurturing intercultural abilities, this involves honing the capacity to grasp and interpret various cultural perspectives. Even among those respondents who reported always maintaining respect for other cultures, their interactions have further reinforced their commitment to mutual respect and understanding. This reaffirms the constructive role of intercultural interactions in strengthening pre-existing values of respect.

In conclusion, the responses collectively emphasize the profoundly positive impact of intercultural interactions on the development of respect for other cultures, fostering curiosity, empathy, understanding and a genuine appreciation for the diversity that enriches our global community, all in line with Byram's ICC framework element "Savoir Etre".

II Discussing the Findings from Teachers' Interviews

In this section, our focus shifts to the findings acquired via the interviews conducted with the teachers. These interviews sought to capture nuanced perspectives on the impact of chatting with English native speakers on Master one students ICC development. The interviews revolved around a set of key questions designed to uncover valuable insights from professionals who navigate the intersection of language learning, technology, and cultural exchange. These questions explored their definitions of ICC, the perceived advantages of chatting with native speakers, real-world examples of its impact, anticipated challenges, the role of technology, strategies for effective interactions, and the potential variations across languages and cultures.

II.1 Enhancing Language and Culture Exchange

The responses from the interviewed teachers shed light on the specific aspects of language and culture exchange that are enriched through chatting with native speakers. One teacher highlights the immersive learning experience facilitated by such interactions noting: “Chatting with native speakers enhances language and culture exchange by providing a more immersive learning experience through authentic language use, correct pronunciation, contextualized vocabulary, and cultural issues through idiomatic expressions.”

This immersive learning experience as described by the teacher, corresponds with Byram's theory element “Savoir Comprendre” which emphasizes that effective intercultural communication involves not only language proficiency but also cultural understanding and empathy. The teacher's observation highlighted the importance of cultural issues and authentic language use in the development of ICC. Byram pointed up the acquisition of cultural knowledge and the ability to interpret and mediate between different cultures, claiming that they are crucial aspects of ICC. Moreover, Pérez-Vidal (2014), Vetter & Adolphs (2016) emphasized the benefits of authentic language use and cultural exposure in language learning.

Other teachers underscored the multifaceted nature of language and culture exchange, emphasizing that chatting with native speakers can enhance specific vocabulary while also delving into various cultural aspects such as lifestyle, cuisine, clothing and social communicative behaviour. According to one of the teachers:

In my view, there can be many aspects related to language and culture exchange that might be enhanced by chatting with native speakers, such as exchange of specific vocabulary along with cultural features (way of life, food, clothing, and social communicative behaviour).

Another teacher elaborated on the multifaceted benefits of engaging in cross-cultural communication by emphasizing the link between language fluency and cultural knowledge. The teacher noted that interacting with native speakers not only improves language fluency through correct pronunciation, expressions, vocabulary, and grammar but also enhances cultural awareness. This includes gaining insights into customs, traditions, values, and the appreciation and respect for cultural differences. As mentioned in his quote: “[...] Students can learn about cultural aspects like customs, traditions and values, appreciate and respect cultural differences, and understand colloquialisms like slang and idioms.”

This teacher's perspective emphasizes the integration of language proficiency and cultural understanding. Byram's theory posited that individuals with ICC not only possess language skills but also have the ability to navigate cultural nuances and adapt their communication appropriately. In this context, the two elements of Byram's ICC framework, “Savoir Comprendre” (skills of interpretation and relating) and “Savoir Faire” (skills of interaction) are effectively addressed. These components highlight the importance of understanding cultural differences and being able to interact skilfully in intercultural contexts.

The mention of learning colloquialisms like slang and idioms highlights the importance of grasping language nuances embedded in culture (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008; Liddicoat, 2002). Moreover, other teachers' responses shed light on a comprehensive classification of aspects related to intercultural communication, categorizing them as linguistic (verbal and non-verbal), non-linguistic, and paralinguistic. This categorization reinforces the idea that language and culture exchange during chat interactions encompass a wide range of elements, including not only the spoken words but also non-verbal cues and the nuanced communication styles of native speakers (Gudykunst, 2003).

In essence, the teachers' responses align with existing literature on the benefits of chatting with native speakers for language and culture exchange. They highlight the immersive and holistic nature of these interactions, emphasizing the interconnectedness of language and culture and the richness of the learning experience (Byram, 1997; Pérez-Vidal, 2014; Vetter & Adolphs, 2016).

The teachers in the interview also provided valuable insights into the impact of interacting with native speakers through chat platforms on students' linguistic skills and cultural awareness which refers to an individual's ability to recognize, appreciate, and respect cultural diversity and differences, as well as to understand the potential impact of culture on communication, behaviours and interactions. This awareness extends beyond a mere acknowledgment of cultural distinctions and involves a deeper understanding of how culture influences people's worldviews, values and behaviours (Bennet, 2008, p.167). One teacher focused on the development of intercultural awareness through chat platforms by saying: “chat platforms might influence students' intercultural awareness through comparison of students' source culture to the target one.” This perspective aligns with Bennett's concept of intercultural sensitivity (1986), where individuals learn to appreciate cultural differences without judgment. Byram also emphasized the importance of developing intercultural awareness and the ability to appreciate cultural differences as a key component of ICC, which he named “Savoir S'engager” (Critical Cultural Awareness and Attitudes). This critical cultural awareness involves having a profound understanding of one's own culture, recognizing cultural biases and fostering an open and respectful attitude towards diverse cultures. Together, these elements form a comprehensive foundation for intercultural communicative competence.

II.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of Intercultural Exchanges

Throughout the interviews, the teachers who participated shared valuable insights regarding both the advantages and potential challenges of engaging with native speakers through chat platforms on students' linguistic skills and cultural awareness. Some teachers underscored the positive aspect of learning in a real context, emphasizing its role in helping students develop their linguistic skills and cultural awareness. However, it is essential to acknowledge that this approach is not without its challenges, as some teachers pointed out. These challenges encompass issues such as potential misunderstandings, cultural clashes and the need for careful monitoring to ensure that the interactions are productive. It is important to explore both the benefits and potential pitfalls of these interactions for a comprehensive understanding of their impact

A particular teacher shifted the focus to potential challenges and drawbacks associated with intercultural interactions on chat platforms mentioning both verbal and non-verbal aspects. This teacher also stressed the importance of avoiding ethnocentrism and aiming to appreciate cultural differences, stating: “chat platforms might influence students' intercultural awareness through comparison of students' source culture to the target one focusing on the similarities and differences, and the aim is not ethnocentric but to be able to appreciate the difference.” This involves learning to appreciate cultural differences without judgment. It is in line with Byram's goal of fostering a more inclusive and culturally aware approach “S’avoir S’engager” to intercultural communication.

However, another teacher offered a comprehensive response discussing various aspects of language learning and intercultural competence. This teacher focused on the development of listening and speaking skills, exposure to phonological variations, vocabulary expansion and the crucial aspect of cultural awareness, highlighting that:

Chatting with native speakers exposes students to different cultures and worldviews. This can help them understand and appreciate the differences and similarities between foreign culture and their own. They can become aware of cultural norms, customs, and etiquette. This awareness can help them navigate intercultural interactions with respect, tolerance, and sensitivity.

This inclusive viewpoint is consistent with Byram's ICC framework which underscores the cultivation of linguistic and cultural competence. Byram acknowledged the interdependence of language and culture, emphasizing the significance of nurturing cultural awareness and sensitivity for successful intercultural communication. Collectively, these responses underscore the complex nature of intercultural communication and the importance of considering both its benefits and challenges. They highlight that authentic interactions with native speakers can not only enhance linguistic skills and cultural awareness, but also emphasize the need for cultural sensitivity and awareness of potential pitfalls in cross-cultural communication.

II.3 Strategies of Intercultural Communication and Cross-Cultural Variations

This subsection explores the teachers' strategies for facilitating intercultural learning and considering cultural differences. Teachers have emphasized several key points, one of them stated: "access to native speakers, cultural understanding, peer learning" and the "global perspective of language learning". As another one put it: "access to native speakers is crucial for language learning". Doughty and Long (2003, p. 156) suggest that interacting with native speakers can significantly improve language proficiency and cultural competence. Byram also brings out the importance of practical exposure and authentic contexts, which access to native speakers can provide for language learners. This exposure not only enriches language

acquisition but also cultivates the essential disposition “savoir être”, fostering a positive and respectful attitude crucial in intercultural exchanges. Engaging with native speakers not only refines language skills but also nurtures a mindset conducive to meaningful cross-cultural interactions (Byram, 1997).

The first strategy “Peer Learning” as mentioned by one of the teachers is consistent with findings that peer interactions in online language communities can enhance intercultural understanding and communication (Lam, 2000, p. 263). One of the notable positive perspectives provided by a teacher consists of asserting another strategy “technology” which can have a positive impact on intercultural communication efficacy stating: "In my view, for educational purposes, the use of such technologies can affect positively the efficacy of developing intercultural communication." This perspective is in harmony with Byram's theory which underscores the importance of developing both linguistic and cultural competence in authentic contexts. Technology can provide opportunities for real and meaningful intercultural communication, thereby contributing to the development of ICC. Reinders & Wattana (2014, p. 75) also highlighted that technology's potential increase engagement and motivation in language learning. For example, this research suggests that technology can enhance language learners' enthusiasm and participation in intercultural exchanges within a virtual context, thereby fostering their intercultural competence. Furthermore, this perspective reflects the idea that technology can create interactive and dynamic learning environments conducive to developing intercultural communication skills (Chapelle, 2001).

Moreover, teachers presented comprehensive responses that show how technology can facilitate cross-cultural interactions and experiential learning which are essential components of IC development, as mentioned in this answer: “The use of technology can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of intercultural communication learning”. Another teacher noted: “Such exposure is essential for developing intercultural communicative

competence since it allows students to practice intercultural communication skills". This viewpoint resonates with existing literature emphasizing the importance of exposure to different cultures and the practice of intercultural communication skills in developing competence (Byram, 1997, p. 6; Fantini, 2009, p. 25).

The insights shared in response to the inquiry about enhancing meaningful interactions between students and native speakers in a virtual environment reveal several valuable strategies and considerations. Foremost among these is the teachers' emphasis on the significance of regular practice and embracing the learning process. One teacher stated, "practice makes perfect: using the platforms should become a daily practice of the learners." This advice stresses the value of consistent engagement, "Savoir Etre" (disposition) in which Byram emphasized the importance of practical exposure and engagement in authentic contexts. Emphasizing that "making mistakes is part of the learning process", reflects the concept of a growth mindset which has been shown to be beneficial in language learning (Dweck, 2006, p. 3).

The recommendations provided in response to the inquiry about guiding students in chat-based exchanges to ensure productive and respectful intercultural learning offer a set of clear and comprehensive guidelines. These suggestions harmonize with well-accepted principles in both intercultural communication and education. The first teacher's advice highlights the importance of openness and the rejection of prejudiced attitudes, in his words: "I advise students to be open-minded and get rid of racist thoughts and criticism of others' culture as well as feelings of inferiority to ensure successful chatting". This recommendation reinforces the significance of intercultural sensitivity and cultural empathy, which are essential elements of intercultural competence (Chua, 2018, p. 215). This guidance echoes the idea that developing ICC requires maintaining a positive and non-judgmental outlook when interacting with other cultures (Byram, 1997, p. 50).

The second teacher's suggestions emphasize open-mindedness, appreciation of cultural diversity, curiosity and respect stating: "When students engage in intercultural learning through chat-based exchanges, it is essential to keep an open mind and appreciate the beauty of cultural diversity, show curiosity toward other cultures, and be respectful, tolerant, and mindful of cultural differences". These suggestions echo the principles of intercultural communication, emphasizing curiosity, respect and the recognition of cultural diversity as essential components of successful intercultural interactions (Lustig & Koester, 2013, p. 27; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 66). The third teacher's advice focuses on avoiding ethnocentricity and promoting intercultural sensitivity:

No ethnocentricity (avoid the feeling of superiority of your culture to other cultures, that is, no culture is superior) - Intercultural sensitivity/awareness to avoid communication breakdowns which might result in failure to function effectively in the target culture and in witnessing culture shock.

This recommendation is adequate with the concept of ethnocentrism, which can hinder effective intercultural communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 74).

The inquiry into whether the impact of chatting with native speakers on ICC varies across different languages and cultures elicits a diverse range of perspectives from the teachers. These viewpoints mirror the intricate dynamics of intercultural communication and language acquisition. The teachers shared the belief that the impact of chatting with native speakers is universally beneficial, regardless of the specific language or cultural context. As one teacher expressed: "[...] I do believe that the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence is universally beneficial whatever the language is." Fantini (2009, p. 53) affirmed that exposure to native speakers enhances intercultural competence by providing authentic language input and cultural insights. Conversely, some

teachers contended that the impact of chatting with native speakers does indeed vary depending on the languages and cultures involved. This perspective underscores the significance of considering factors such as language complexity and cultural diversity, as articulated by one teacher:

The impact depends on the complexity of the language being learned (complex grammar and writing system) and the complexity of the target culture (It is more diverse than it appears). Students may require more time and effort to develop intercultural communicative skills if the target language and culture are complex.

Byram & Feng (2006, p. 78) suggested that the complexity of a language and culture can influence the challenges and time required for successful intercultural communication. However, some other teachers held the belief that the impact does not differ across languages and cultures, according to one of the teachers: "No, I don't think it does." While this response lacks extensive elaboration, it suggests a perspective that ICC may be relatively consistent in its impact across different linguistic and cultural contexts.

Furthermore, another teacher emphasized that different countries and cultures have distinct communication norms and cultural values. To illustrate this point, the teacher provided a specific example related to guest etiquette:

[...] For example, while in the Mediterranean culture people often insist that their guest stays much longer because they believe it is a sign of respect, in the Anglo-Saxon culture people do not insist and let the guest decide on his/her own because they believe it is part of his/her autonomy.

In conclusion, Hofstede (1980, p. 25), Ting-Toomey & Chung (2012, p. 65) stressed the vital consideration of cultural variations in ICC. In addition, Byram's ICC theory highlights the necessity for learners to navigate and adapt to these differences, making it an integral part

of IC. This integration incorporates the "Savoir Etre" element, fostering a disposition of openness, respect and adaptability.

Conclusion

This chapter meticulously delved into the study's findings, which were organized into distinct dimensions. The exploration began with a deep dive into the questionnaire responses and a meticulous examination of the teachers' interviews. To synthesize and interpret these findings, the chapter applied Byram's ICC which enriches our understanding of how chatting with native speakers of the English language influences ICC. This theory reinforces the significance of knowledge, understanding, skills, willingness to engage in intercultural communication and attitudes of students toward intercultural exchanges. The insights gathered through this study have the potential to inspire transformative approaches to language education, promoting more inclusive, effective and culturally sensitive language learning experiences. As we navigate an increasingly interconnected world, the development of intercultural competence is not only a pedagogical goal but a vital skill for thriving in our globalised society.

General conclusion

This dissertation represents a comprehensive exploration of the complex cooperation between IC and language learning with a particular focus on students' interactions with English native speakers through digital chat platforms. The primary goal of this study was to investigate the impact of such interactions on the cultivation of ICC as conceptualized by Michael Byram. His framework incorporates linguistic proficiency, cultural understanding and the ability to effectively navigate the complex difficulties of cross-cultural communication. Employing a methodology that combined questionnaires and interviews, data was collected from both students and teachers, providing a broader perspective on the matter.

The results of this investigation resoundingly underscore the pivotal role that engaging in chats with native speakers plays in fostering cultural awareness, empathy and effective cross-cultural communication. The research demonstrated that students who actively engaged with native speakers through chat platforms reported substantial gains in their intercultural competence. Such interactions were found to significantly contribute to a deeper cultural understanding, increased empathy, and the ability to communicate effectively across cultures. These findings substantiate the primary hypothesis of this research, indicating that engaging with native speakers through chat platforms has a positive and transformative impact on the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

To address the first research question, which sought to ascertain the influence of chat-based interactions with native speakers on students' ICC, the data unequivocally highlights the affirmative influence of such interactions. Students who actively participated in such exchanges consistently reported enhanced cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding, empathy, and effective cross-cultural communication. The findings provide substantive evidence that, as anticipated, engaging with native speakers through digital platforms is intrinsically linked to the development of ICC aligning seamlessly with Byram's framework. In response to the second research question, which tackled the aspects of Intercultural

communication that have been enhanced through these interactions with English native speakers, some participants asserted the universally beneficial nature of such interactions on the aspect of knowledge “Savoir”, Understanding “Savoir Comprendre”, skills of interaction “Savoir Faire”, others argued that the outcomes maybe contingent upon language complexity and cultural diversity which influenced their cultural awareness “Savoir S’engager” Additionally, exposure to diverse cultural backgrounds broadened their horizons, leading to a more profound “Savoir Etre” a profound sense of being, emphasizing the importance of empathy, adaptability, and open-mindedness in intercultural interactions

During the research process, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of certain limitations that influenced the study. A significant constraint of this research is associated with the response rate observed in both the teacher interviews and student questionnaires. Despite extensive outreach efforts directed at teachers and students within the English department of Mouloud Mammeri University, the received responses were not as comprehensive as initially anticipated. Specifically, out of the eight teachers invited for interviews, only four participated, and the questionnaires, distributed across Master one students, yielded a total of 40 responses

As future students embark on their academic journeys within the realm of ICC in language education, I offer several valuable pathways that remain largely uncharted. For those seeking to delve into the depths of ICC, the unexplored territories lie in the intersection between emerging technologies and traditional language pedagogy. Investigating how modern technologies such as chat platforms and language exchange apps can be seamlessly integrated in to language curricula to enhance ICC development which represents an exciting avenue. Moreover, exploring the influence of distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds on the acquisition of ICC skills remains an under explored landscape. In the context of my research on English language learners, there is an opportunity for students to focus on other target

languages and examine whether similar patterns or unique challenges emerge. Additionally, delving into the role of various educational settings and program structures on ICC development can shed light on how these skills evolve in different contexts. By emphasizing the adaptation of ICC strategies to the ever-evolving global landscape, future students can contribute fresh insights and perspectives to the discourse on language pedagogy. Recognizing that each student may have unique interests and passions, it's essential to encourage them to chart their own course, aligning their research with their personal educational contexts and the evolving landscape of language teaching

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Appendices

Students' Questionnaire

We would greatly appreciate your participation in the following questionnaire which is intended to gather information about the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence. Your insights and experiences are valuable for this study. Your input will contribute to a better understanding of the effects of language interactions with native speakers on intercultural awareness and communication skills. The responses of all participants will be confidential.

Section 1: Knowledge about Interculturality

1. *What motivated you to engage in chats with native speakers of English as a foreign language?*

2. *How often do you seek information about the culture of the native speakers of English language you chat with?*

Mark only one oval.

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always

3. Can you share an experience where you unexpectedly gained knowledge about the culture of native English language speakers while chatting with them?

Section 2: Understanding and Skills

4. In your interactions with English native speakers, how often do you find yourself intuitively understanding their cultural nuances or unspoken cues?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Often
- Always

5. *Have you ever encountered cultural misunderstandings while chatting with native speakers of English language? If yes, can you provide an example?*

6. *How do you interpret non-verbal cues or gestures in your chats with native speakers?*

7. How has chatting with native speakers improved your language skills without deliberate

effort?

8. How would you describe the changes in your ability to adapt your communication style when chatting with different native speakers?

Mark only one oval.

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Declined

9. Have you ever found yourself naturally avoiding potential cultural misunderstandings in your conversations with native speakers? If yes, please provide an example.

Section 4: Willingness to Engage in Intercultural Communication

10. Has chatting with native speakers of English language stimulated your interest in learning more about their culture outside of the conversations?

11. Do you feel more self-assured in intercultural interactions after chatting with native speakers?

- Much less confident
- Less confident
- About the same
- More confident
- Much more confident

12. To what extent have your chats with English native speakers influenced your perceptions of cultural stereotypes?

Mark only one oval.

- Significantly changed my perceptions
- Somewhat changed my perceptions
- Had no noticeable impact on my perceptions
- Reinforced existing perceptions

Section 5: Attitudes of Students toward Interculturality

13. To what extent do you actively seek out opportunities to chat with native speakers to enhance your intercultural communicative competence without conscious effort?

Mark only one oval.

- Rarely
-
-
-

Occasionally

Often

Always

14. Do you find yourself naturally approaching chats with native speakers with an open and accepting attitude?

Mark only one oval.

Rarely

Occasionally

Often

Always

15. How has your respect for other cultures evolved through these interactions?

Interview

Above all, we want to express our deepest appreciation for your willingness to take part in this written interview. We understand the demanding nature of your profession, the countless hours you devote to planning lessons, evaluating assignments, and shaping our academic paths toward achievement. Despite your numerous responsibilities, you have generously allocated time for this interview, affording us a significant chance to gather your priceless perspectives and encounters. Your steadfast devotion to our learning and individual development acts as a continuous source of motivation for us. We cannot adequately convey

our gratitude for your altruism, enthusiasm, and resolute dedication. This interview aims to explore the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence within the classroom in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. We consider it a genuine privilege to have the honor of learning from your expertise and distinctive viewpoint on this important subject.

Questions:

1. In your opinion, what specific aspects of language and culture exchange do you believe are enhanced by chatting with native speakers ?
2. Could you share examples of how interacting with native speakers through chat platforms might positively influence student's linguistic skills and cultural awareness?
3. What potential challenges or drawbacks do you foresee in utilizing chat with native speakers as a tool for developing intercultural communicative competence?
4. From an educational standpoint, how might the use of technology, like language exchange apps or online platforms, affect the effectiveness of intercultural communication learning?
5. In your opinion, what can support and facilitate meaningful interactions between students and native speakers in a virtual environment?
6. Are there any specific strategies or guidelines you would recommend to students engaging in chat-based exchanges to ensure their intercultural learning is productive and respectful?
7. Do you believe that the impact of chatting with native speakers on intercultural communicative competence differs across various languages and cultures? If so, how?

Thank you for your contribution.



Depuis les notifications



Cherriesberries Onacloud

17 septembre, 12:35 · 🌐



Salut, les M1 je vous invite à répondre a ce questionnaire s'il vous plaît
For data collection purpose



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Students' Questionnaire

We would greatly appreciate your participation in the following questionnaire which is intended to gather information about the impact of chattin...



Shadia Mahmood et 8 autres personnes

4



J'aime



Commenter



Envoyer

Voir plus de commentaires



Cherriesberries Onacloud Auteur

Upp

3 sem

J'aime

Répondre