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**Investigating the Role of Online Exchanges through
Facebook in Developing Learners' Intercultural
Awareness**

**The Case of Master Two Students of English at the University of
Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master Degree in
English Didactics

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Dedication

“In the name of Allah the most Merciful the most Compassionate”

This modest research work is dedicated to all those who overwhelmed me with loads of love,

care, and support; my nearest and dearest:

my cherished, caring, and loving parents,

my two lovely sisters and sole little brother,

my dearest friend and partner Samah,

all my friends with whom I spent unforgettable joyful moments

KHADIDJA 😊

In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate

This dissertation is dedicated,

to the light of my eyes, my mother “Hadjira” for her love, care, and prayers,

to my sort of power, my lovely dad “Djamel” for his support and encouragement,

to my sole brother “Mohammed” and his wife,

to my dearest sisters “Hala”, “Wissem” and her husband,

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Abstract

In the recent time and with the advancements of new technologies, it is unquestionable that communication across cultures is becoming paramount for contemporary communities. In a few words, intercultural awareness appears to be imperative for foreign language learners as it is more likely for them to experience intercultural communication. In light of this, the main concern of the current research is to probe into the scope and nature of the role that online exchanges through Facebook play in enhancing Master Two students' intercultural awareness. On the grounds of this, it is hypothesized that if Master Two students of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel use Facebook appropriately as a means for the intercultural online exchange, then they will develop their intercultural awareness. Therefore, to collect necessary data for the current study, two main research instruments were adopted, a questionnaire and a test. They were both addressed to all Master Two students of English (nearly 126) at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel; however, only (53) of them responded to the questionnaire and (39) to the test. The results obtained reveal that the informants under investigation, to certain extent, have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow them to operate adequately in intercultural communication situations, that they hold the view that the online exchange via Facebook contributes to the promotion of their intercultural awareness; consequently, they take advantage of using it to know more about other cultures, develop empathy, and then avoiding misunderstandings, conflicts, prejudices, and stereotypes. In a nutshell, it is safe to state that the research hypothesis on which the study at hand is constructed was confirmed. On this account, it is recommended for teachers to give more importance to the teaching of culture and interculturality as well as taking into consideration the vital role of integrating technology in education.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

Big C: Big Culture

CA: Cultural Awareness

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CC: Communicative Competence

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication

COIL: Collaborative Online International Learning

C1: Native Culture

C2: Target Culture

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

E-learning: Electronic-learning

ELF: English as a Lingua Franca

E-mail: Electronic-mail

FB: Facebook

FL: Foreign Language

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

F-t-F: Face to Face

IA: Intercultural Awareness

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

ICA: Intercultural Awareness

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IT: Information Technology

LC: Linguistic Competence

NC: Native Culture

NS: Native Speakers

OIE: Online Intercultural Exchange

Small c: Small Culture

SNS: Social Networking Site

SNSs: Social Networking Sites

TC: Target Culture

%: Percentage

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table2.1. The Use of Social Media..... | 59 |
| Table2.2. The Period of Being FB Users..... | 60 |
| Table2.3. The Extent to which FB is Used..... | 61 |
| Table2.4. The Time Spent on FB on a Daily Basis..... | 62 |
| Table2.5. Learners' Willingness to Know New People Online..... | 63 |
| Table2.6. Learners' Views about Online Interaction in Comparison to F-t-F Interaction..... | 64 |
| Table2.7. Chatting with Native Speakers or People from Distinct Cultural Backgrounds..... | 65 |
| Table2.8. Learners' Perception Concerning the Role of Culture and Context for Successful Interpretation of Meaning..... | 66 |
| Table2.9. Learners' Opinions about the Importance of Learning about the Local Culture when Dealing with the Culture of a Foreign Language..... | 67 |
| Table2.10. The Role of English as a Lingua Franca in Facilitating Communication with Various People around the World..... | 67 |
| Table2.11. Learners' Attitudes towards the Algerian Culture and the Cultures of the Others..... | 68 |
| Table2.12. Learners' Willingness to Learn about Other Cultures | 72 |
| Table2.13. The Extent to which Learners Feel Uncomfortable when Having Intercultural Exchange | 73 |
| Table2.14. The Role of Intercultural Communication | 74 |

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

| | |
|--|----|
| Table2.15. Learners' Intercultural Awareness Level..... | 75 |
| Table2.16. Learners' Best Tool for Developing Intercultural Awareness..... | 76 |
| Table2.17. Learners' Views about the Incorporation of Intercultural Awareness in the Language Classroom..... | 77 |
| Table2.18. Learners' Attitudes towards Having Intercultural Exchange..... | 78 |
| Table2.19. Learners' Interaction Experience with People from Different Cultural Groupings | 79 |
| Table2.20. The Extent to which Some Difficulties in Intercultural Exchange are Experienced..... | 79 |
| Table2.21. Following FB Pages and Groups to Know More about Other Cultures..... | 80 |
| Table2.22. Learners' Opinions about the Role that Online Exchanges through Facebook Play for Successful Intercultural Exchange..... | 82 |
| Table2.23. Learners' Views about the Role of Facebook in the Development of Intercultural Awareness..... | 83 |
| Table2.24. The Extent to which Lecturing has Affected Learners' Intercultural Awareness Level..... | 83 |
| Table2.25. Learners' Participation in International Online Exchange Programs (Erasmus+)..... | 84 |
| Table2.26. The tool that has Affected Learners' Intercultural Awareness Level the Most..... | 85 |
| Table2.27. Students' Responses to the Test..... | 87 |

List of Graphs

| | |
|--|----|
| Graph2.1. The Most Common SNS Used for Communication and Interaction | 60 |
| Graph2.2. The Purpose behind Using Facebook..... | 63 |
| Graph2.3. The Meaning of Intercultural..... | 75 |
| Graph2.4. Learners' Stances about the Role of Facebook in Developing their Cultural and Intercultural Knowledge..... | 81 |

List of Figures

Figure1.1. Twelve Components of ICA.....49

Figure1.2. A Model of Intercultural Awareness.....50

Table of Contents

Dedications 1

Acknowledgments 3

Abstract 4

List of Abbreviations 5

List of Tables 7

List of Graphs 9

List of Figures 10

Table of Contents 11

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study 16

2. Statement of the Problem 17

3. Aims of the Study 18

4. Research Questions 18

5. Hypothesis 19

6. Means of Research 19

7. Structure of the Study 19

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Introduction 21

Section One: Facebook and Online Exchanges 22

| | |
|--|----|
| DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK | 12 |
| 1.1.1. Introducing Computer-Assisted Language Learning | 22 |
| 1.1.1.1 Definition of Computer-Assisted Language Learning | 22 |
| 1.1.1.2. Background of Computer-Assisted Language Learning | 23 |
| 1.1.1.3. Types of Learning Environments | 24 |
| 1.1.1.4. Teachers' Role in Computer-Assisted Language Learning | 26 |
| 1.1.1.5. Learners' Role in Computer-Assisted Language Learning | 27 |
| 1.1.2. Computer-Mediated Communication | 28 |
| 1.1.2.1. Definition of Computer-Mediated Communication | 28 |
| 1.1.2.2. Types of Computer-Mediated Communication | 29 |
| 1.1.2.3. Computer Mediated-Communication and Language Learning | 30 |
| 1.1.3. Online Exchanges | 31 |
| 1.1.4. Facebook | 32 |
| 1.1.4.1. Facebook as a Communication Platform/Social Media | 32 |
| 1.1.4.2. Facebook and Language Learning | 33 |
| Section Two: Developing Intercultural Awareness | |
| 1.2.1. Definition of Culture | 35 |
| 1.2.2. The Relationship between Language and Culture | 37 |
| 1.2.3. Intercultural Communication | 38 |
| 1.2.4. Intercultural Communicative competence | 39 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK | 13 |
| 1.2.4.1. From Communicative Competence to Intercultural Communicative Competence | 40 |
| 1.2.4.2. Definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence | 41 |
| 1.2.4.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Teaching | 42 |
| 1.2.4.4. Components of Intercultural Communicative Competence | 43 |
| 1.2.5. Intercultural Awareness | 44 |
| 1.2.5.1. Definition of Intercultural Awareness | 44 |
| 1.2.5.2. Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Awareness | 46 |
| 1.2.5.3. Intercultural Awareness in Foreign Language Teaching | 47 |
| 1.2.5.3.1. Components of Intercultural Awareness | 48 |
| 1.2.5.3.2. A Model for Intercultural Awareness | 50 |
| 1.2.5.3.3. Applying Intercultural Awareness in the Classroom | 51 |
| Conclusion | 52 |
| Chapter Two: Field of Investigation | |
| Introduction | 54 |
| Section One: Research Design and Methodology | |
| 2.1.1. General Design and Population | 54 |
| 2.1.2. Questionnaire for Students | 55 |
| 2.1.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire | 55 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK | 14 |
| 2.1.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire | 56 |
| 2.1.3. The Test | 56 |
| 2.1.3.1. Description of the Test | 56 |
| 2.1.3.2. Administration of the Test | 57 |
| 2.1.3.3. Research Extraneous Variables | 57 |
| Section Two: Data Analysis and Discussion of Results | |
| 2.2.1. Data Analysis | 59 |
| 2.2.1.1. Analysis of Students Questionnaire | 59 |
| 2.2.1.2. Analysis of the Test | 86 |
| 2.2.3. Discussion of the Results | 89 |
| Limitations of the Study | 93 |
| Recommendations for further Research | 94 |
| Conclusion | 94 |
| General Conclusion | 96 |
| References | 97 |
| Appendix | |

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study
2. Statement of the Problem
3. Aims of the Study
4. Research Questions
5. Hypothesis
6. Means of Research
7. Structure of the Study

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The field of foreign language teaching (FLT) has gone through a diversity of phases in parallel with the development of events throughout history. The very first methods to language teaching and learning were merely based on teaching the linguistic aspects of a language such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and so forth. The core aim was to promote learners' linguistic competence (LC) that was introduced by Chomsky; that is, the focus was on teaching the system of the language with the negligence of the contextual factors of language use. Notwithstanding, in the past several decades and with the emergence of communicative language teaching (CLT), the purpose behind FLT has shifted from the emphasis on the linguistic competence to the emphasis on the communicative competence (CC) introduced by Hymes reacting against Chomsky's LC.

As the literature shows, there have been growing appeals for the inclusion of other features far beyond the linguistic in FL classes namely the 'cultural component'. Cakir (2006) pointed out "...understanding a language involves not only knowledge of grammar, phonology, and lexis but also a certain features and characteristics of the culture" (p. 154). In a similar vein, Sellami (2002) noted "there is a developing consensus that it is important to include culture learning as part of language learning with a primary goal of making students aware of alternative ways of interpreting personal and social experiences" (as cited in Kourova and Modianos, 2013, p. 60). By all means, in order for communication to be successful, a deep understanding and awareness of culture is required. Lately and as a result of the technological advancements in the present time, the field of FLT has witnessed a shift from teaching CC to teaching Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). This is, basically, because contemporary societies are to communicate and interact with each other

more frequently than ever before. To this end, it is worthwhile to mention that an intercultural awareness (ICA or IA) is highly recommended and required for FL learners to operate and interact adequately across the national borders.

In the modern time, new innovations and technologies have been integrated in FLT. “...it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the significance of technology in FL learning” (Avgousti, 2018, p. 2). This has resulted in bringing computer-assisted language learning (CALL), which refers to the use of computers or any other sort of technologies for educational purposes, to the fore. CALL technologies could contribute in fostering learners’ intercultural awareness and develop their communication abilities through computer-mediated communication (CMC) along with other social platforms such as Facebook (FB). According to Kramsch (2013), “The increased use of CMC to develop communicative competence in the L2 has led to a reorientation of language learning toward conversational fluency, online chatting ability, the negotiation of surface features of speech” (p. 70).

2. Statement of the Problem

In the recent years, more emphasis has been devoted to heighten learners’ ICC. For this purpose to be realized, developing an intercultural awareness, in the first place, seems to be imperative. Considering the fact that EFL learners are not interculturally aware, then they may come to interpret the cultural norms of the others by referring to their own cultural norms in intercultural communication (IC). Consequently, they are likely to encounter the problem of misunderstanding. Probably, one way to enhance intercultural awareness could be through using communication technologies namely social media, more precisely, Facebook. As a matter of fact, insights drawn from scholarly literature show that a wide amount of research has been dedicated to the study of ICC and cultural awareness (CA). Conversely, little research has been devoted to the study of ICA (Donald, 2019, p. 37). Similarly, it is the case

in the Algerian context in general and at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University in particular. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to conduct such research to investigate the role of online exchanges via FB in ameliorating Algerian EFL learners' ICA.

3. Aims of the Study

The major concerns of the present study are as follows: to investigate the extent to which the informants under investigation are interculturally aware, to investigate their views on whether online exchanges through Facebook contribute to the enhancement of their intercultural awareness, and last but not least, to check whether they benefit from these online exchanges to know more about other cultures, develop empathy, and then avoiding misunderstandings, conflicts, prejudices, and stereotypes.

4. Research Questions

The study at hand seeks to answer the following questions:

- Do Master Two students of English have the sufficient knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow them to function effectively and adequately in intercultural communication situations?
- Do they hold positive attitudes towards the role of online exchanges via Facebook in the development and promotion of their intercultural awareness?
- Do they benefit from Facebook to know more about other cultures and then avoid misunderstandings and mismatches?

5. Hypothesis

In light of the above raised questions, it can be hypothesized that if Master Two students of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel use Facebook appropriately as a means for intercultural online exchange, then they will develop their intercultural awareness (ICA).

6. Means of Research

For the sake of testing the hypothesis and answering the aforementioned research questions, quantitative research methods were adopted. These two research methods were administered to all Master Two students of English (nearly 126) at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel. To put it more simply, a questionnaire and a test were adopted.

7. Structure of the Study

The current research work comprises two chapters. The first chapter figures the theoretical part while the second is concerned with the practical part (field of work). The theoretical part is further separated into two sections: the first, on the one hand, is concerned with integrating technology (CALL) in language teaching and learning, more precisely, the use of social media including FB as a medium for online exchanges. The second section, on the other hand, is devoted to the development of intercultural awareness in EFL teaching. The second chapter, on the part, is split out into two other sections. The first deals with the research methodology and the second addresses the data analysis and discussion of the results obtained from both the questionnaire and the test administered to Master Two students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel University.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

Introduction

Section One: Facebook and Online Exchanges

1.1.1. Introducing Computer-Assisted Language Learning

1.1.1.1 Definition of Computer-Assisted Language Learning

1.1.1.2. Background of Computer-Assisted Language Learning

1.1.1.3. Types of Learning Environments

1.1.1.4. Teachers' Role in Computer-Assisted Language Learning

1.1.1.5. Learners' Role in Computer-Assisted Language Learning

1.1.2. Computer-Mediated Communication

1.1.2.1. Definition of Computer-Mediated Communication

1.1.2.2. Types of Computer-Mediated Communication

1.1.2.3. Computer Mediated-Communication and Language Learning

1.1.3. Online Exchanges

1.1.4. Facebook

1.1.4.1. Facebook as a Communication Platform/Social Media

1.1.4.2. Facebook and Language Learning

Section Two: Developing Intercultural Awareness

1.2.1. Definition of Culture

1.2.2. The Relationship between Language and Culture

1.2.3. Intercultural Communication

1.2.4. Intercultural Communicative competence

1.2.4.1. From Communicative Competence to Intercultural Communicative Competence

1.2.4.2. Definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence

1.2.4.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Teaching

1.2.4.4. Components of Intercultural Communicative Competence

1.2.5. Intercultural Awareness

1.2.5.1. Definition of Intercultural Awareness

1.2.5.2. Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Awareness

1.2.5.3. Intercultural Awareness in Foreign Language Teaching

1.2.5.3.1. Components of Intercultural Awareness

1.2.5.3.2. A Model for Intercultural Awareness

1.2.5.3.3. Applying Intercultural Awareness in the Classroom

Conclusion

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

In the modern time, the world is increasingly turning to be one global village due to the rapid diversifying changes of technologies. In such a globalized world, intercultural communication (IC) among distinct communities and cultures has become a necessity; consequently, this has resulted in integrating the ‘intercultural dimension’ into FLT. In addition, IC can be realized through technology and online exchanges coupled with a variety of social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook. On the grounds of this, the present chapter sheds light on two central areas chiefly technology in FLT and interculturality.

For simplicity sake, the chapter at hand is divided into two sections. The first section, Facebook and online exchanges, is basically concerned with the definition of related terms linked to the integration of technology into FLT such as computer-assisted language learning, computer-mediated communication, Facebook, and their place in education. The second section, developing intercultural awareness, tackles some other fundamental concepts linked to developing intercultural awareness namely: culture, intercultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, cultural awareness, and eventually intercultural awareness. As a last note, the present chapter aims at restating previous literature relevant to both online exchanges via Facebook and intercultural awareness.

Section One: Facebook and Online Exchanges

1.1.1. Introducing Computer-Assisted Language Learning

In response to the invention of the computer in the 1960s, interest and research studies that deal with its use for education have grown steadily. Following this, various terms have been associated with the use of computer in foreign language teaching and learning like “Computer Assisted Language Learning” or CALL (LeBaron-Earle, 2013).

1.1.1.1. Definition of Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CALL, as an acronym, refers to computer-assisted language learning. Kedromics and Watanable (2006) claimed that CALL, in fact, is used to refer to computer-assisted language learning (as cited in Elimat & Abu Seileek, 2014, p. 22). Thus, CALL can be defined as “the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning” (Levy, 1997, as cited in Guarda, 2012, p. 18). Similarly, Al-Nafisah (2013) put the claim that CALL is a language teaching and learning approach where the computer with its resources such as the Internet are used to be present, reinforce, and assess material to be learned (p. 78).

Apart from the above-mentioned definitions, it is worth noting that computer-assisted language learning or CALL is related to other terms and terminologies. To illustrate this point, Beatty (2010) listed some of these terms as follows: computer-assisted language instruction (CALI), computer-aided language learning, computer-assisted language teaching (CALT), computer-assisted teaching (CAT), computer-based training (CBT), computer-mediated communication (CMC), intelligent computer-assisted language learning (ICALL), technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), and so forth (pp. 10-11). Despite the diversity in their names, they all belong to the same field.

1.1.1.2. Background of Computer-Assisted Language Learning

The process of integrating CALL technologies in FLT has gone through a set of phases. On this account, the development of CALL in FLT can be divided into three main eras namely: the behaviouristic, the communicative, and the integrative era.

The first era in CALL development is *the behaviouristic era* (1960s-1970s). CALL applications in this era were based on drills, vocabulary, and grammar exercises (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 51). In addition, in this era, the computer functioned as a ‘tutor’ (Guarda, 2012). Far from this, the behaviouristic CALL is illustrated by the ‘Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations’ project (PLATO) and ‘Time-Shared, Interactive, Computer Controlled Information Television’ project (TICCIT) (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 51).

The second era is known as *the communicative era* (1980s). Communicative CALL rejected behaviouristic CALL. The latter focused only on teaching grammar and vocabulary; whereas, the former favored communicative competence and focused on the four language skills which reinforce the correlation of language and communication (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, as cited in LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 51). Therefore, the role of the computer changed from a ‘tutor’ to a tool for learning (Guarda, 2012). As a matter of fact, three main projects exemplified this era: the Athena Language Learning Project (ALLP), the Computer-Assisted Multimedia Interactive Language Learning Environment (CAMILLE) project, and the Minitel project (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 52). First, ALLP programs offered for learners the opportunity to interact with ‘characters’ rather than with a machine (Morgenstern, 1986, as cited in LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 52). Second, CAMILLE project “supports the acquisition of foreign languages (Dutch, Spanish, French, and English) and cultures with a communicative approach in an interactive multimedia environment” (Ingraham, 1993, as cited in LeBaron-Earle, 2013). Last, the Minitel “is an online service made accessible through telephone lines

provided by *Poste, Telephone, et Telecommunication (PTT)*” (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 54). However, the fact that this project allowed for intercultural exchanges between L2 learners, it might be apparent that it belongs to the next era, the integrative CALL (LeBaron-Earle, 2013).

The integrative era (1990s) is the last era in the development of CALL. The fast development of computers and technology led educationists and researchers to move the emphasis from artificial communicative learning situations to actual authentic and social learning contexts (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 55). On the light of this, there was a need to integrate technology in education. In this period, language teachers and researchers increasingly made use of internet tools including the ones which were not designed for learning e.g. e-mails. Therefore, two projects illustrated this era: the International E-mail Tandem Network or eTandem (two language learners who both want to learn the language of each other interact via e-mails) and the Cultura Project which aimed at developing learners’ intercultural communicative competence (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 57). Furthermore, a blended learning approach was adopted; meanwhile, a combination of online and face-to-face activities in the classroom (LeBaron-Earle, 2013). To simplify it more, learners can have some online activities and then the latter followed by classroom discussions in a form of face-to-face interaction.

1.1.1.3. Types of Learning Environments

The globalization and the widespread of technology in recent time have led to the appearance of different ways of learning. As a matter of fact, there was a conflict in defining the new terminologies and the different types of learning environments, namely distance learning, e-learning, and online learning (Moore et al., 2010).

Distance learning, as the name suggests, refers to the learning where the teacher and the learner are distant and far from each other. In this sense, Moore et al (2010) stated that distance learning is when the teacher or the instructor is located in a different place from the learner and probably providing the instruction at disparate times (p. 1). Therefore, it is worth noting that distance learning is mostly associated with the umbrella term ‘Distance Education’. On the one hand, some researchers claimed that the two terms are interchangeable. On the other hand, others have a contrary view to the above-mentioned claim. King, Young, Driver-Richmond, and Schrader (2001) pointed out that distance education and distance learning differ from each other (as cited in Moore et al., 2010, p. 2). The latter refers to an ability; whereas, the former is an activity within the ability of distant learning (Moore et al., 2010, p. 2).

Online learning is that type of learning which takes place via the Internet. In this regard, it can be defined as “access to learning experiences via the use of some technology” (Benson, 2002; Carliner, 2004; Conard, 2002, as cited in Moore et al., 2010, p. 2). Therefore, Benson (2002) and Conard (2002) shared the view that online learning is a new version of distance learning (as cited in Moore et al., 2010).

E-learning can be defined as “the delivery of content via all electronic media, including the Internet, intranets, extranets, satellite broadcast, audio/video tape, interactive TV, and CD-ROM” (Urban and Weggen, 2000, as cited in Anderson, 2005, p. 4). In other words, it refers to learning via electronic tools unlike the traditional method.

Besides, it is necessary to make distinction between e-learning and other types of learning. In this regard, Anderson (2005) put the claim that it is necessary to separate e-learning from distance learning, which generally combines text-based materials and electronic media (p. 4). Furthermore, the Australian National Training Authority (2003) separated e-

learning from online learning by stating that “E -learning is a broader concept [than online learning], encompassing a wide set of applications and processes which use all available electronic media to deliver vocational education and training more flexibly” (as cited in Anderson, 2005, p. 4). In other words, e-learning uses various electronic media, distance learning uses electronic and non-electronic media whereas online learning takes place via the Internet.

Apart from the aforementioned types of learning, there exists another type of learning that mixes the traditional way of learning with online learning, more precisely ‘blended learning’. Blended learning is defined as the kind of learning which combines online and traditional learning approaches and then helps in facilitating online intercultural exchanges (Alkahtani, 2011). Simply, blended learning is adopting the traditional way coupled with e-learning (the use of electronic devices).

1.1.1.4. Teachers’ Role in Computer-Assisted Language Learning

With the advent of technology and the use of computers in foreign language teaching and learning, the role of teachers has changed. In the traditional classes, the teacher was the responsible and the only source of knowledge; thus, he was described as ‘a sage on stage’ (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 70). Meanwhile, the teacher transmitted knowledge for his/her students who later returned it in their exam paper (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 70). However, the integration of CALL in language teaching moves the emphasis from teacher-centered to learner-centered (LeBaron-Earle, 2013). On the light of this, Lengtke et al. (2006) pointed out that there are five roles for online teachers namely: facilitator, pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical role (as cited in Meziene & Sari-Mitchel, 2014, p. 63).

- *Facilitator*: The teacher has to simplify knowledge and minimize learners’ difficulties of learning in various environments.

- *Pedagogical*: The teacher sets the goals that will be achieved at the end by using ICT tools.
- *Social*: Means making a friendly relationship with his/her students to make them more confident and unstressed.
- *Managerial*: It is about selecting groups, forming partner-to-partner pairs, managing time, coping with students' absences, and avoiding silence breaks during video-link, etc.
- *Technical*: The teacher is responsible for familiarizing learners with all technical tools and he also needs to be comfortable with softwares and tools used in the course (Meziane & Sari-Mitchel, 2014, pp. 70-77).

It is obvious from the above-mentioned concepts that teachers play a central role in CALL. Teachers in CALL are key elements of students learning process (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, p. 73).

1.1.1.5. Learners' Role in Computer-Assisted Language Learning

In response to the use of technology in education, learners have moved from passive participants to more active ones; therefore, learners seem to have four main roles: 'active participants', 'researchers', 'ethnographers', and 'authors' (Dubreil, 2006 as cited in LeBaron-Earle, 2013).

- *Active participants*: Learners are encouraged to be responsible for their learning; thus, they gain information while interacting with others, and with their teachers who facilitate the learning process. With regard to this, learners become active participants rather than passive ones.

- *Researchers*: CALL permits learners to become researchers. In simple words, they look at information, collect it, and develop hypotheses in order to construct meaning and enrich their understanding.
- *Ethnographers*: Learners collect information, observe human interaction, conduct interviews, and collect information about cultural artifacts, human behaviors, and attitudes. Therefore, they take intercultural discussions and write their reactions in field notes or personal journals.
- *Authors*: CALL gives learners the opportunity to write their experiences and reactions while interacting with others and also share them with their teachers (LeBaron-Earle, 2013, pp. 74-75).

Within the light of the aforementioned ideas, it is crystal clear that CALL facilitates learners' needs in the learning process, increases their interests in language learning (Alkahtani, 2011); and develops their autonomy and motivation (Lee, 2011). Furthermore, CALL helps learners to acquire language through the use of multimedia programs and the attendance of virtual classes (Alkahtani, 2011, p. 89).

1.1.2. Computer-Mediated Communication

It is worth noting that the pervasive technology in people's daily life offers new ways of communication among individuals. Therefore, communication through the use of technological tools is well known as "Computer-Mediated Communication".

1.1.2.1. Definition of Computer-Mediated Communication

The term computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been existed since the 1990s. It refers to "a wide range of technologies that facilitate both human communication and the interactive sharing of information through computer networks" (Barnes, 2003, as cited in

Lin, 2013, p. 21). Furthermore, Susan Herring (1996) developed the claim that CMC is the use of computers in interpersonal communication (as cited in Guarda, 2012). In the same vein, Trentin and Benigno (1997) illustrated that computer-mediated communication is the communication that takes place through the use of computer to transfer information between individuals via different tools of communication such as e-mails, audio and video communication (as cited in Guarda, 2012).

From the aforementioned definitions, CMC with its unique features varies from other ways of communication, notably face-to-face interaction (Warschauer, 1997, as cited in Guarda, 2012). Unlike face-to-face communication, computer-mediated communication allows people to interact and exchange ideas with others from anywhere i.e. allows for space-independency, and it also comprises communication through interactive multimedia tools including wikis, blogs, and social networks (Guarda, 2012).

1.1.2.2. Types of Computer-Mediated Communication

Computer-mediated communication can be divided into two forms: *synchronous* and *asynchronous* communication.

Synchronous communication refers to real time communication and it is similar to communication that happens between people in face-to-face conversations (Romiszoucki & Mason, 1996). That is, the interaction between people within the conversation takes place at the same time in order to send and receive messages simultaneously. In this sense, synchronous communication seems to be more effective especially for language productivity (Lin, 2013) i.e. learners can enhance their language better in such form of communication. Therefore, such synchronous communication examples include: Windows Live Messenger, Yahoo Instant Messenger, Google Talk, Skype, and so forth (Lin, 2013, p. 25).

Asynchronous communication, in contrast, is not necessary to take place at the same time. Unlike synchronous communication which refers to real time communication, asynchronous communication is time-delayed (Romiszoucski & Mason, 1996). In simple words, it is not obligatory to send and receive messages at the same time; however, users can respond to their messages at any time. On the light of this, Herring (2003) put the claim that “asynchronous CMC permits users to take their time in constructing and editing messages” (as cited in Lin, 2013, p. 25). Therefore, e-mail is an obvious example of asynchronous communication where sent messages can be read at any time (Romiszoucski & Mason, 1996).

1.1.2.3. Computer-Mediated Communication and Language Learning

With the integration of technology in education, learners have become more interested in learning via the Internet. Following this, Chun (1994), Warschauer (1997, 1999), and Felix (1998, 1999) argued for the probability of the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in language learning; accordingly, its benefits for intercultural learning has increasingly gained attention (as cited in Stickler & Emke, 2011).

It is worth noting that learning is better enhanced within interaction. In this sense, Ellis (2003) pointed out “learning actually arises in interaction” (as cited in Hample, 2014, p. 2). Simply, learners learn more when interacting with others. With the same stream of thought, CMC is an effective environment for learners to enrich their learning whether in synchronous or asynchronous communication. Therefore, CMC context gives learners the opportunity to control their own learning (i.e. they rely on themselves in their learning rather than the teachers), engage in interactions (Lee, 2011), promote written receptive and productive learning, and foster oral skills (Yanguas, 2010).

Additionally, CMC seems to have many benefits for learners and teachers. CMC allows learners to actually interact with speakers of the language they are learning (Thorne, 2007, as

cited in Guarda, 2012). Therefore, Kramsch and Anderson (1999) stated that the computers and the Internet offer for any language teacher to make the language and culture close to his/her students (as cited in Guarda, 2012).

1.1.3. Online Exchanges

As a matter of fact, the pervasive use of technology with its inclusion in education has changed learners' lives. Besides, social networking sites (SNS), particularly Facebook, have gained most of learners' interest following the fact that the former aims at making users interact and exchange ideas with different people around the world. Therefore, this kind of online communication and interaction is called "Online Intercultural Exchange" (OIE) or "Telecollaboration".

Over previous years, telecollaboration has been known by several terminologies namely: 'Online Intercultural Exchange', 'Virtual Exchange', 'Collaborative Online International Learning' (COIL), and so forth (O'Dowd, 2016). Therefore, the term "Telecollaboration" can be defined as an online communication where members from different countries are joined together for the aim of interacting, exchanging ideas, and developing cultural awareness. In this regard, O'Dowd and Ritter (2006) put forward the claim that telecollaboration is "the use of online communication tools to bring together language learners in different countries for the development of collaborative work and intercultural exchange" (p. 623). In the same vein, O'Dowd (2011) stated that telecollaboration in foreign language education context refers "to the application of online communication tools to bring together classes of language learners in geographically distant locations to develop their language skills and intercultural competence through collaborative tasks and project work".

Within the light of the aforementioned definitions, telecollaboration is the core of intercultural exchange via the Internet. Therefore, the main purpose of telecollaboration is to

engage students in an intercultural exchange with people from different cultural backgrounds (O'Dowd, 2015, p. 66), as well as, developing cultural awareness and other aspects of intercultural communicative competence (O'Dowd, 2016). In other words, it allows learners to discuss some cultural issues with different people around the globe, enrich their intercultural competence, and be aware of the culture of their own and the other.

1.1.4. Facebook

Owing the fact that the use of technology is pervasive in recent time, social networking sites (SNSs) have become important tools among people. SNSs are social tools which make individuals interact with others as well as express themselves. In other words, these tools allow persons to interact with others, express their feelings, and exchange various ideas and thoughts. Examples of SNSs include Facebook, Friendster, MySpace,...etc (as cited in Brady et al., 2010).

1.1.4.1. Facebook as a Communication Platform /Social Media

Facebook is considered to be a widely used social networking site with 55% users around the world (ComScore, 2011, as cited in Halim & Maros, 2014, p. 127) and around 526 million daily active users on average (Facebook Newsroom, 2012, as cited in Halim & Maros, 2014). It was created by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 for the purpose of making people from different countries interact with each other (Facebook, 2011, as cited in Sawyer & Chen, 2012, p. 153).

Apart from what is stated above, Facebook allows users to share their feelings and thoughts with their friends and family members, as well as, connect with new friends from different backgrounds (Zaremohzzabich et al., 2014, p. 107). This could be through posting messages and sharing photos that reflect their thoughts alongside with chatting with friends,

family members, or new people (Mao & Qian, 2015). In a nutshell, FB plays a major role in individuals' lives around the world; accordingly, it allows for communication, interaction, and exchange of ideas with others from different backgrounds.

1.1.4.2. Facebook and Language Learning

Since English is considered as the language of the Internet (Crystal, 2001, as cited in Halim & Maros, 2014), alongside with its unique features such as feed, online games and chat, many wondered how Facebook can enhance EFL students' English ability (Chang, 2014). In this regard, Hasan and Muhi (2012) interviewed 50 Saudi EFL learners who used Facebook to confirm whether they improve their English through it; as a result, the findings showed that they have positive attitudes towards it (as cited in Chang, 2014). Similarly, Roblyer et al., (2010) stated that university students are more aware of the positive use of Facebook to enhance their learning (as cited in Kabilan et al., 2010).

Consequently, Facebook has gained many characteristics which make it a suitable social platform for language learning. These unique features are summarized as follows:

- Facebook motivates students for learning and fostering their interaction with other peers.
- It allows students to exchange knowledge with peers or people from different backgrounds.
- Facebook allows students to develop a positive attitude towards learning.
- It allows them to develop interpersonal intelligence and critical thought.
- Facebook also allows for students-teacher relationships outside the classroom (Petriovic et al., 2012, p. 357).

On this account, Facebook is considered as an effective tool or an important social network site for any language learner. Besides, FB provides opportunities for learners to

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

engage in spaces for collaborative learning (Mazman & Ushel, 2010). Therefore, it allows for intercultural communication and exchange of ideas with other learners from different countries.

As a matter of fact, these unique features give Facebook a significant stance in education especially in the field of language teaching and learning. Thus, it is paramount that this particular social network is beneficial for both learners and teachers. On the one hand, FB allows learners for interaction, collaboration, and active participation. As a result, it fosters their positive relationships with their colleagues and teachers, encourages knowledge transfer through various learning tasks, and also helps them to develop positive attitudes towards learning. On the other hand, FB provides teachers with opportunities to construct and practice pedagogy that is based on learners' interests, helps to evaluate their learners formally, and to establish effective educational relationships that help in developing new skills and knowledge (Bennacer, 2018, p. 108).

Despite the aforementioned positive features, Facebook has negative impacts when it is used inappropriately. This may include wasting students' time, encouraging negative attitudes such as lying (Kabilan et al., 2010), and increasing learners' addiction for its excessive use.

Section Two: Developing Intercultural Awareness

1.2.1. Definition of Culture

The serious attempts to define the notion of ‘culture’ have resulted in a myriad of conceptualizations over time. The significance of culture remains a hotly debated subject among researchers, scholars, and academics despite the wide range of definitions devoted to illustrate its nature. Shaules (2007) stated “Among academics, the understanding of the nature of culture has changed over time and details of its definition constitute an unresolved debate” (p. 25). This disagreement on the level of defining the nature of culture boils down to the fact that culture is a slippery, puzzling, and dynamic concept to be defined. “Culture is a highly complex, elusive, multilayered notion that encompasses many different and overlapping areas” (Furstenberg, as cited in Moeller & Nugent, 2014, p. 2). To this end, it is worth mentioning that culture is multidimensional; that is, each research discipline has perceived it from a divergent angle.

In this respect, Tylor, who is an anthropologist in his book *Primitive Culture*, suggested the following classical definition: “Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1871, p. 1). In the same vein, Shaules (2007) noted that culture in common usage is usually used to refer to the visible products of a group of people such as art, literature, food, monuments, and so on (p. 24).

Additionally, culture from a sociological stand point refers to the attributes and features shared by a particular social group that characterize the unity of its members and bound them together as one entity. “...‘culture’ has been understood in terms of belonging and otherness as if people felt part of one group and so separate from another” (Roberts,

2009, p. 15). Similarly, Hofstede (1994) defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (as cited in Lázár, 2007, p. 7).

As far as the cognitive stand point is concerned, Alptekin (1993) claimed that the role that culture plays, as an acquired knowledge, in cognition is central and significant. He said “Put differently, schemas, which are cognitive structures through which we interpret information, evolve largely as part of a society’s imposition of its own differential view of reality on its individual members” (p. 136). To put it more simply, culture refers to the way people perceive and organize knowledge or information in their minds and how they interpret this knowledge into behaviors.

Scholars and researchers went forward in their explanation throwing more light on the term ‘culture’. Consequently, they divided culture into two types basically Big “C” culture and little “c” culture. In this regard, Peterson (2004), on the one hand, defined Big “C” culture as the culture that includes grand themes “such as geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, society’s norms, legal foundation, core values, history, and cognitive processes” (as cited in Alimorad, 2016, p. 1). On the other hand, little “c” culture according to him is the culture that focuses on common or minor themes; it “includes themes such as opinions, viewpoints, preferences or tastes, gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing styles, food, hobbies, popular music, and popular issues, and certain knowledge like, trivia, facts, etc” (as cited in Choudhury, 2013, p. 21).

In a nutshell, it is worth mentioning that culture remains a complex and a debatable topic. This is, centrally, because culture is dynamic and changing constantly over time. According to Shaules (2007), culture is not a static object but something that is modified and re-created in a continuous manner (p. 26).

1.2.2. The Relationship between Language and Culture

A wide range of research has been dedicated to shed light on the critical relationship between language and culture and how they influence one another. Researchers such as Kramersch, Sapir and Whorf and others have worked extensively on understanding cultures on the basis of analyzing language in use. “Language is the principle means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in context of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways” (Kramersch, 1998, p. 3).

Language and culture are like one organism, that is, they cannot stand separately. Brown (1994) emphasized “... a language is a part of culture and culture is a part of a language. The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (as cited in Purba, 2011, p. 47). Similarly, Chen (2017) pointed out that language and culture are one body and each depends on the other (p. 161). Additionally, Byram (1991) asserted that “language... shapes and is in turn shaped by sociocultural actions, beliefs, and values” (p. 18). Therefore, when language and culture are both present, people can communicate successfully. This means one cannot speak a language fluently and use it appropriately without having knowledge of the culture that shapes this language. In this respect, Kramersch (1998) stated that language expresses cultural reality (with words people express facts and ideas but also reflect their attitudes), language embodies cultural reality (people give meaning to their experience through the means of communication) and language symbolizes cultural reality (people view their language as symbol of their social identity) (p. 3).

Probably, the most popular hypothesis that highlights the mutual influence between language and culture is Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Sapir and Whorf emphasized that “our perception of the world is determined in language part by the language we speak and the

socialization of our cultural environment” (as cited in Shaules, 2007, p. 26). Therefore, there are two main versions of this hypothesis basically strong version (linguistic determinism) and weak version (linguistic relativity). The strong version of the hypothesis, on the one hand, suggests that language determines its speakers’ thought; however, it was criticized for leading to prejudice and racism. On the other hand, the weak version is supported and accepted for the fact that it posits that language users tend to sort out and distinguish experiences differently according to the semantic categories provided by their respective codes (Kramsch, 1998, pp. 13-14). Hence, language influences its speakers way of thinking but does not determine it.

From the abovementioned ideas and views, it could be properly said that language and culture are interwoven concepts that cannot exist separately. To this end, it is becoming crystal clear that FL learners should acquire the cultural knowledge about the language being learned for the purpose of communicating successfully with the other. “Culture is invariably attached and intertwined with the way a language is used and students must be made aware of the cultural norms and non-verbal language that accompany spoken and written language” (David, 1999, p. 6).

1.2.3. Intercultural Communication

In this rapidly diversifying world, it becomes undeniable that we are living in times of great change due to the rapid advancements of new technologies on a daily basis. In such globalized society, technology plays a central role in heightening communication and interaction among people from different affiliations and cultures. With this in mind, intercultural communication (IC) has become a must. “In the accelerating pace of face-to-face and technologically facilitated interaction, it becomes ever more desirable to achieve intercultural communication competency as quickly as possible” (Novinger, 2001, p. 8).

First and for most, it is worthwhile to illustrate the concept of ‘interculturality’. Souryana (2006) noted that interculturality is “an active process of interchange, interaction and cooperation between cultures emphasising the similarities and considering the cultural diversity as an enriching element” (p. 53).

In fact, the attempts to define the term ‘intercultural communication’ raised a new problematic issue since, in the first place, there is no stable definition for the concept of culture. “The subject of intercultural communication is beset by a major problem, since there is really very little agreement on what people mean by the idea of culture in the first place” (Scollon & Scollon, 2001, p. 138). Nonetheless, the field of intercultural communication has developed into a discipline with specific original theories related to it (Takai, 2003, p. 240). According to Gibson (2000), intercultural communication happens when both the receiver and the sender do not belong to the same culture. Furthermore, if these two cultures vary a lot, communication will be very difficult (p. 9). For simplicity sake, intercultural communication is “an international, transactional, symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning between different cultures” (Gudykunst & Kim, as cited in Novinger, 2001, p. 9).

1.2.4. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Recently, within intercultural contact situations, people may encounter other cultures that are foreign to their own, that is, they come into contact with the unfamiliar. “Within intercultural encounters individuals find that their familiar patterns of behaviour, value systems, beliefs, certain practices, symbols and other artifacts no longer function” (Weber, 2003, p. 199). Therefore, individuals who frequently come across these intercultural communication situations need to be interculturally competent. To this end, it is crystal clear that gaining insights into the unfamiliar resulted from the encounter of the other and being aware of the concept of ICC appear to be a must.

1.2.4.1. From Communicative Competence to Intercultural Communicative Competence

With the emergence of the concept of CC, the objective of FLT has become no longer defined in terms of the knowledge of linguistic features (acquisition of linguistic competence). The concept of CC, according to Byram (1997), was developed by Hymes criticizing Chomsky's linguistic competence. "Hymes argued that linguists... need to pay attention to the way in which not only grammatical competence but also the ability to use language appropriately is required" (Byram, 1997, p. 7).

Recently, Hymes' CC has been proved to be inadequate when it comes to intercultural communication. That is, learners nowadays are confronted with intercultural situations more than ever before; therefore, in order for them to operate effectively in such situations they need to acquire the intercultural communicative competence. ICC is "oriented towards fostering interaction, dialogue, mutual recognition and enrichment of any individual, in respect of the different identities of the other" (Cuccurullo, 2019, p. 153).

Perhaps, one of the most significant critiques to Hymes' CC is the idea of imitating native speakers i.e. CC considers native speakers as an ideal model that should be followed. In Byram's (1997) perspective, CC implicitly requires learners to model themselves on first language speakers, ignoring the importance of social identities and cultural competence in any intercultural interaction (p. 8). Therefore, FL learners are expected to be intercultural speakers rather than imitators of native speakers. "The 'intercultural dimension' in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid stereotyping" (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 9).

In a nutshell and to give an illustration, the notion of ICC did not emerge to replace CC but it is an expansion of it. According to Baker (2016) and Gu (2015), “ICC was introduced to complement the concept of communicative language teaching (CLT) in which communicative competence (CC) is framed beyond native speakerism” (as cited in Kurumaningputri & Widodo, 2018, p. 50).

1.2.4.2. Definition of Intercultural Communicative Competence

The most popular definition devoted for signifying the notion of ICC is “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, as cited in Artamonova et al., 2014, p. 46). In a similar vein, ICC refers to the “ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality” (Council of Europe, 2002, p. 10). Additionally, Chun (2011) put forward the view that ICC does not, merely, focus on the understanding of the target language and culture, but also on the readiness and willingness to reflect on the native culture and to be curious enough to question the values and presuppositions in one’s own cultural practices (p. 393).

To give an illustration of the definitions noted earlier, ICC appears to be of paramount importance for people to function effectively when they are encountered with and come into contact with the other. On this account, Byram (1997, p. 49) demonstrated an emphasis on knowledge, skills, and attitudes aside from those that are primarily linguistic. Thus, ICC entails being able to reflect and to interact effectively and appropriately based on three grounds namely: *knowledge, attitudes, and skills*.

1.2.4.3. Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Teaching

As shown previously, one of the most significant current trends in the field of FLT over the past few decades has been the immersion of the intercultural dimension, as a key component, in language education. This increasing recognition for the need for an intercultural orientation was an impetus for many scholars and researchers to go further in their research and build grounded theories in FLT that would support teachers in their job with hope of helping learners to communicate and interact with others. “FLT has a central aim of enabling learners to use that language to interact with people for whom it is their preferred and ‘natural’ medium of experience, those we call ‘native speakers’” (Byram, 1997, p. 3). Kramersch and McConnel-Ginet (1992) argued that the primary focus of intercultural based teaching is not merely the target culture, but it also includes comparisons between learners’ country and the target country. Hence, enabling them to reflect on the culture and civilization of their own countries (as cited in Atay et al., 2009. p. 124).

The intercultural dimension requires teachers to help in developing learners’ ICC so that they would carry out and handle intercultural communication. Castro (1999) said that “teachers are now expected not only to teach the foreign linguistic code but also...to promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence” (as cited in Atay et al., 2009, p. 123). As far as FL learners are concerned, Avgousti (2018) noted that the aim of FL learners is to become intercultural speakers who are conscious of their own and the other cultures (p. 2). To this end, the intercultural dimension requires learners to acquire and to develop their ICC for the purpose of functioning adequately in intercultural contexts.

1.2.4.4. Components of Intercultural Communicative Competence

On the light of what has been mentioned, it can be viewed that there is a felt urgency for teaching and learning ICC. Thus, the acquisition of ICC in the view of Byram (1997) entails the achievement of four central components namely: *attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating*, armed with critical *cultural awareness/ political education*. Most ICC researchers have acknowledged these four components to be critical and necessary for the acquisition and the development of learners' ICC. Byram (1997) provided definitions for each; stating that *attitudes* involve a state of “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own” (p. 50). He defined *knowledge* as the knowledge “of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction” (p. 51). He referred to *skills of interpreting and relating* as the “ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own” (p. 52). Lastly, *critical cultural awareness/ political education* is “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries” (p. 53).

As an attempt to clarify the concept of intercultural competence to teachers and educators, these components that comprise ICC have been organized in a conceptual framework which embodies five *savoirs* (Byram, as cited in Sercu, 2005, p. 3). In this respect, Kramsch (2013) noted that these five *savoirs* or capacities identified by Byram and Zarate (1997) are as follows:

Savoirs (knowledge of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal); *savoir apprendre/faire* (skills to discover and/or interact); *savoir comprendre* (skills to interpret and relate); *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness, political education);

savoir être (attitudes: relativising self, valuing others) (Byram & Zarate, as cited in Kramersch, 2013, p. 69).

1.2.5. Intercultural Awareness

As stated previously, globalization and the advancements of new technologies have contributed in breaking down barriers and boundaries among individuals and cultures. People now are increasingly encouraged to communicate and interact with each other more than ever before. In order for individuals to appropriately operate in intercultural communication and to effectively build productive relationships in a globalized society, an intercultural awareness (ICA) or (IA) is of critical importance.

1.2.5.1. Definition of Intercultural Awareness

Recently, it can be noticed that many scholars in the field of FLT have turned their attention towards intercultural awareness (ICA). With this in mind, more research work has been dedicated to spot more light on the nature of this notion. Consequently, it could be rightly said that a variety of definitions has been devoted as an attempt to conceptualize and illustrate ICA. Yet, the literature indicates no consensus among researchers on a particular definition. Maele and Yu (2018) argued, “these varying definitions of ICA in the literature enhance the challenges faced by practitioners to identify matching theoretical models and teaching tools that can support them in their classroom” (p. 360).

On top of everything, it is worth mentioning that there is a range of different related terms for referring to the intercultural ability. “Among these are Intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997), Intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986), Intercultural awareness (Baker, 2009), Global competence (Hunter, white and Godbey, 2006) or Symbolic competence (Kramersch, 2006)” (Phongsirikul & Thongrin, 2019, p. 81).

To start with, Souryana (2006) claimed that ICA can be perceived as the process of developing awareness and understanding of one's own culture and the cultures of the others all over the world. He added, ICA aims at increasing intercultural and cross-cultural understanding. In a similar vein, Korzilius et al. (2007) adopted the following definition:

Intercultural awareness is the ability to emphasize and decentre. More specifically, in a communication situation, it is the ability to take on the perspective (s) of (a) conversational pattern (s) from another culture or with another nationality, and of their cultural background (s), and thus, to be able understand and take into consideration interlocutors' different perspective (s) simultaneously (as cited in Özkan & Yılmaz, 2016, p. 1933).

ICA is considered by Chen and Starosta (1998) as “the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication competence that refers to the understanding of cultural conventions that effect how we think and behave” (p. 28). In this respect, they distinguished ICA from *intercultural sensitivity* (the affective aspect) and from *intercultural adroitness* (the behavioral aspect).

Basically, the most relevant definition in the literature of ICA and the one that this research work is based on is that of Baker (2009). He argued the following:

Intercultural awareness is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication. (p. 88).

Donald (2019) argued that this definition presented by Baker contributes to the clarification of the difference between ICC and ICA. With this in mind, this definition revolves around the idea that one's cultural practices and frames of understanding can affect

the intercultural communication. In addition, ICA refers to one's capacity to perform them in dynamic and emergent contexts in real time communication.

1.2.5.2. Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Awareness

With the integration of the cultural dimension into FLT during the last few decades, CA has been proved to be a significant component in FL classes. CA, basically, refers to the conscious understanding of the role and place of culture in language learning and communication; in addition, it stresses the need for an awareness of the culturally based norms, beliefs, behaviors of learners' own culture and the cultures of the others (Baker, 2011a, p. 1). Byram (1997) described cultural awareness, which he referred to as critical cultural awareness, as the ability to evaluate perspectives, practices and products in one's own and others cultures and countries.

As a matter of fact, the literature has shown that researchers have conceived the relation between CA and ICA differently; some have considered them as one drawing no distinction, while others did not. "The term intercultural awareness and cultural awareness has been used interchangeably by a lot of researchers. There are some researchers who provided certain characterizations of the concept of intercultural awareness" (Özkan & Yılmaz, 2016, pp. 1933-1934). Baker (2009) put forward an iconic argument claiming that ICA "is best conceived not as in opposition to CA but rather as an extension of the concept that is more applicable to needs of intercultural communication in expanding circle ELF contexts" (p. 87).

Despite the paramount role that CA plays in FLT, it has been suggested that the awareness of C1 and C2 or C2s is not sufficient. "Perhaps the most significant limitation to CA... is that it has commonly been conceived in relation to intercultural communication between defined cultural groupings, typically at the national level" (Baker, 2011, p. 4). In other words, the culture that learners are exposed to in intercultural communication is already

known and defined. However, this would not be adequate when learners are faced with contexts in which English is conceived as a lingua franca (ELF) since English today is no longer linked to a specific community; furthermore, learners could not have knowledge of all the existing cultural contexts of communication that they may encounter in IC situations.

In his perception, Baker (2009) held the view that what learners really need for successful intercultural communication through English in expanding lingua franca contexts is not merely CA but rather ICA. In this respect, the contexts where intercultural communication takes place are likely to be heterogeneous, varied, dynamic, and emergent. Simply, ICA is all about the understanding of cultures as fluid, hybrid and emergent in intercultural communication contexts.

1.2.5.3. Intercultural Awareness in Foreign Language Teaching

Incorporating ICA in foreign language teaching has been perceived by recent pedagogy of great importance for better and successful achievements in the process of learning a foreign language. Kourova and Modianos (2013) argued that learners' awareness of their own identity and their personal growth can and should be developed once we integrate intercultural awareness in FL classes (p. 62). Byram et al. (1997) noted that ICA is a key phase in the development of ICC, "we believe it is an essential 'prerequisite' stage for developing intercultural communicative competence and it is a vital concept in an intercultural approach to foreign language teaching" (as cited in Barany, 2011, p. 169). In Chen and Starosta (1998) perception, the importance leveled in the notion of intercultural awareness can be clearly observed in the increasing demands for intercultural training programs all over the world (p. 29). As a last note, Ferguson-Patrick and Jolliffe (2018) stressed the need for intercultural education in the modern world and claimed that its

importance stems in preparing students for a culturally diverse world (as cited in Demiröz et al., 2019, p. 1436).

1.2.5.3.1. Components of Intercultural Awareness

In fact, there is more for intercultural awareness than just having knowledge about cultures that should be acquired by foreign language learners. According to Phongsirikul and Thongrin (2019), “understanding of culture alone is not sufficient for global communication where a large variety of people are involved in intercultural encounters. Appropriate attitudes and intercultural skills constituting intercultural awareness are required by a user of English” (p, 80).

Considered as a competence in itself, intercultural awareness comprises a range of attitudes and skills (Souryana, 2006, p. 54). Rose (2004) listed the following skills and attitudes that are important to heighten intercultural awareness: (1) observing, identifying and recording, (2) comparing and contrasting, (3) negotiating meaning, (4) dealing with or tolerating ambiguity, (5) effectively interpreting messages, (6) limiting the possibility of misinterpretation, (7) defending one’s own point of view while acknowledging the legitimacy of others, (8) accepting difference (as cited in Souryana, 2006, p. 54).

On his part, Baker (2009) offered a detailed account of ICA that comprises twelve components on which this paper is build upon. “these twelve components attempt to build on the common features of CA, especially those identified by Byram (1997), and extend this to the more fluid conceptions of intercultural communication through English” (Baker, 2009, p. 88). He went further in his explanation noting that these features of ICA attempt to “conceptualise both the skills and knowledge that a user of a language as a lingua franca, such as English, needs to be equipped with in order to successfully participate in intercultural communication” (p. 89). To put it another way, the twelve components are further listed and

divided into three important levels (as shown in the following figure); moving from basic cultural awareness, advanced cultural awareness, and eventually, reaching intercultural awareness. One other key note to be stated is that “these elements of ICA delineate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a user of English as a global lingua franca needs” (Baker, 2011, p. 6). Though, it is worth mentioning that Baker has acknowledged that learners of English may not develop the previous mentioned elements in the same presented order. This could be due to several reasons such as the amount of exposure to other cultures like the case of learners who have grown up in multilingual environments. (Baker, 2011b, p. 6).

Level 1: basic cultural awareness

An awareness of:

- 1 culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;
- 2 the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
- 3 our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
- 4 others' culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs.

Level 2: advanced cultural awareness

An awareness of:

- 5 the relative nature of cultural norms;
- 6 cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision;
- 7 multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;
- 8 individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
- 9 common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures.

Level 3: intercultural awareness

An awareness of:

- 10 culturally based frames of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
- 11 initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these through:
- 12 a capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent socioculturally grounded communication modes and frames of reference based on the above understanding of culture in intercultural communication.

Figure1. Twelve Components of ICA (Baker, 2011a, p. 5)

1.2.5.3.2. A Model for Intercultural Awareness

For further illustration and to give more precise explanation to the notion of ICA, Baker (2009) developed an explanatory model (figure 2). In this model distinctions are drawn between “different types of knowledge and skills, different levels of cultural awareness and intercultural awareness, and the manner in which they interact” (Baker, 2009, p. 196). Another key thing to mention is his further distinction between *conceptual ICA* (types of attitudes towards cultures and knowledge of cultures needed for intercultural communication) and *practical oriented ICA* (the application of this knowledge in real-time instances of intercultural communication). On the light of what has been discussed, ICA model summarizes all the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that learners need to be made aware of in order to function as successful intercultural communicators in global lingua franca settings.

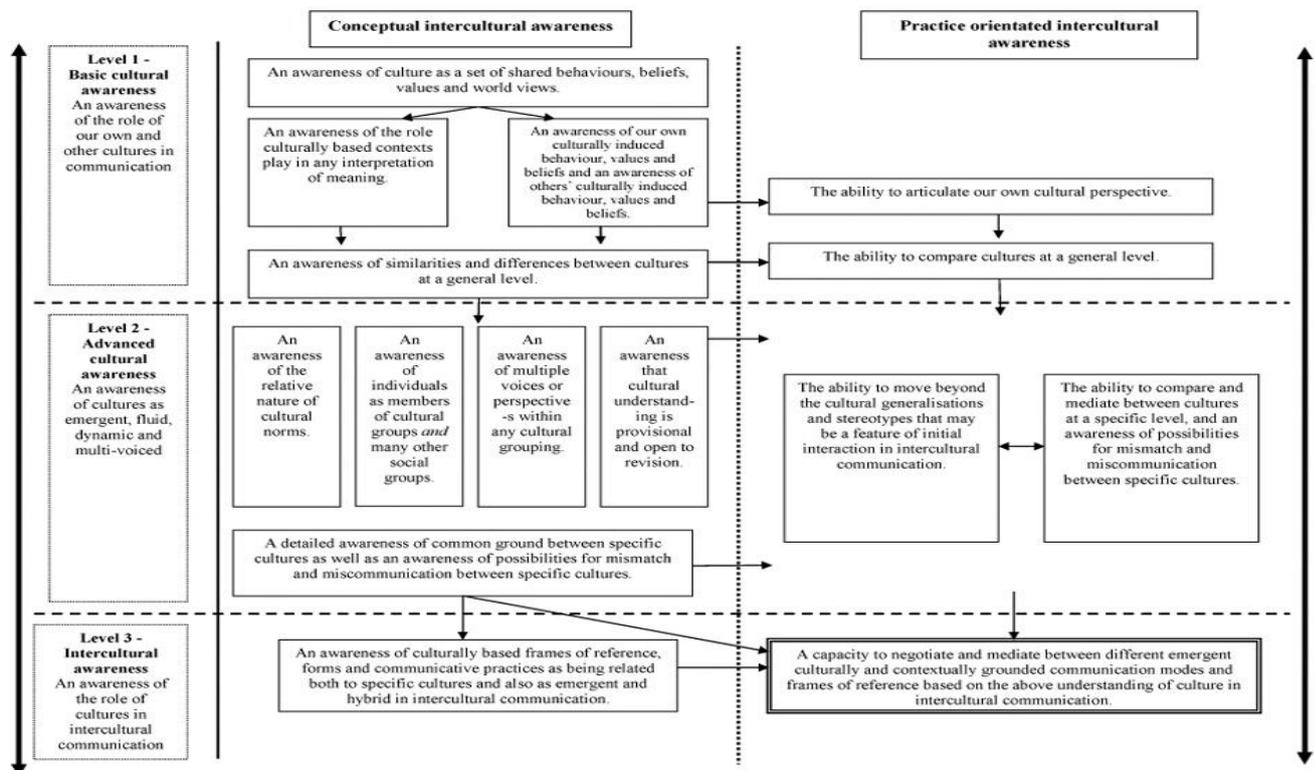


Figure2. A Model of Intercultural Awareness (Baker, 2009, p. 197)

1.2.5.3.3. Applying Intercultural Awareness in the Classroom

There is no doubt that incorporating the intercultural dimension within FL classes is vital. “It is the hope that language learners who thus become ‘intercultural speakers’ will be successful not only in communicating information but also in developing a human relationship with people of other languages and cultures” (Byram et al., 2002, as cited in Barany, 2011, p. 167). In view of this, appropriate activities need to be selected to fit specific contexts or settings. In fact, there is a wide range of areas which can be adopted for the development of ICA within the FL classrooms depending on the context. Baker proposed six stands for applying ICA in the classroom, yet, not all of them could be relevant but rather they highly depend on the setting and context being used in. They are listed as follows:

- *Exploring local cultures*: This is through exploring the diversity and complexity of different cultural groupings. It should highlight the way in which local communities may connect with global communities whether religious or ethnic groups (for instance music or sports fans).
- *Exploring language-learning materials*: By critically exploring and evaluating images and cultural representations in language learning materials, such as images of cultures in locally produced textbooks and images of other cultures in local and imported ELT textbooks.
- *Exploring the traditional media and arts through English*: to critically evaluate the images of local and other cultures. This can include film, television, radio, newspapers, novels, and magazines.
- *Exploring IT (Information Technology)/ electronic media through English*: To investigate cultural representations. The main resources that can be used include: the internet, email, chat rooms, instant messaging, and tandem learning. In addition, these resources can be used to engage in actual instances of intercultural communication, enabling students to develop ICA

through asynchronous email exchanges and synchronous chat room-type communication with language students and teachers in other countries.

- *Cultural informants*: Using intercultural informants including non-local English-speaking teachers and local English teachers with experience of intercultural communication and other cultures as an attempt to provide information about these experiences and cultures. Teachers can present their experiences of other cultures as content for classroom through, for example, reading texts or discussion topics.
- *Face-to-face intercultural communication (often with non local English teachers)*: in situations where there are non-local English teachers or students, opportunities for intercultural communication clearly exist (Baker, 2011; 2013).

On these regards, the six stands aim at taking advantage of all the resources available in the language classroom. These resources may include the textbook, the teacher, and those resources that may be available outside the classroom (internet but need to be reflected on in the classroom).

Conclusion

The present chapter was devoted to the theoretical framework. As noted earlier, this chapter is broken down into two sections as an attempt to cover two basic areas of research. Both were concerned with reviewing previous literature and the conceptualization of related terminology. To put it another way, the first section, FB and online exchanges, dealt with definitions for CALL, CMC, and FB emphasizing the role of each in FLT. The second section, developing ICA, has tackled some basic concepts relevant to ICA such as culture, IC, CA, and ICC in addition to the importance of ICA in FLT, ICA components coupled with a model, and lastly some recommendations for heightening learners' ICA within the classroom.

Chapter Two: Field of Investigation

Introduction

Section One: Research Design and Methodology

2.1.1. General Design and Population

2.1.2. Questionnaire for Students

2.1.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire

2.1.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

2.1.3. The Test

2.1.3.1. Description of the Test

2.1.3.2. Administration of the Test

2.1.3.3. Research Extraneous Variables

Section Two: Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

2.2.1. Data Analysis

2.2.1.1. Analysis of Students Questionnaire

2.2.1.2. Analysis of the Test

2.2.3. Discussion of the Results

Limitations of the Study

Recommendations for further Research Conclusion

Conclusion

General Conclusion

References

Appendix

Chapter Two

Field of Investigation

Introduction

As has been previously noted, the first chapter has been devoted to the review of previous literature relevant to the development of intercultural awareness using the online exchange through Facebook. However, the chapter at hand spots light on the practical part of the research. To simplify it more, it is divided into two sections: the first represents the methodology where a description of the main research tools, their administration and the population is provided. The second section sheds light on the analysis and the discussion of the results obtained from both the students' questionnaire and the test.

Section One: Research Design and Methodology

2.1.1. General Design and Population

For the purpose of conducting the current research and collecting necessary information, two main research tools were adopted: a questionnaire coupled with a test. These two research tools are administered to Master Two students of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel as an attempt to answer the previously set research questions.

For simplicity sake, it is vital to note that the questions of both the questionnaire and the test are built upon Baker's Model (2009) for Intercultural Awareness. This model, as previously elaborated, comprises three basic levels with twelve components.

The population selected in the current study is Master Two students of English at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel (around 126 students). Hence, among the

reasons behind selecting Master Two students is the fact that they have spent many years studying English more than the other levels; thus, having satisfactory exposure to the English language and its culture. In addition, as they have spent many years studying English, it is more likely that they have already experienced intercultural communication or exchange with native speakers or people from other cultures and affiliations.

2.1.2. Questionnaire for Students

2.1.2.1. Description of the Questionnaire

It is safe to note that questionnaires are one of the most popular and simplistic quantitative research tools used for the purpose of collecting data and finding out what people think of a particular issue. The latter can be defined as “written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react, either by writing their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (Brown, 2001, as cited in Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 126). Furthermore, the questionnaire is an adequate tool for a large population; hence, the process of gathering and analyzing data would be quite simple.

The current questionnaire consists of (32) questions split out into three principle sections: “The Use of Facebook”, “Developing Intercultural Awareness”, and “Online Exchanges through Facebook and Intercultural Awareness”. More precisely, the first section embraces (9) questions and deals with collecting data about learners’ use of Facebook. The second section encompasses (12) questions and it seeks to gather information about learners’ perspectives regarding culture/cultural awareness, intercultural communication, and how they can develop their intercultural awareness level. The last section comprises (11) questions and it looks at learners’ stances concerning the role Facebook plays to develop their intercultural awareness and the extent to which online exchanges affect their intercultural performance.

The questions included in the present questionnaire are of two types: close-ended (both Likert scale and the semantic differential scale are adopted) and open-ended questions. In close-ended questions, the participants are required to select from or evaluate the options provided by the researcher that correspond with their views. In the open-ended questions; however, the respondents are able to decide what to say and how to say it by giving their justifications and opinions (Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

2.1.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire was created with Google Forms (a web-based survey administration app) and distributed online on July 2nd to Master Two EFL students at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben-Yahia-Jijel. In other words, this questionnaire was distributed on a Facebook group labelled “*Master 2 Students of English (Tassoust University)*” where almost all Master Two students are members in. Additionally, it is vital to note that (53) students participated in completing this questionnaire from among nearly 126 students.

2.1.3. The Test

2.1.3.1. Description of the Test

A test is the second research instrument used to conduct the current study and to answer the previously raised research questions. A test is a quantitative research tool used in collecting data about individual’s views or experiences about a specific subject or domain. Hence, it is defined as “a method of measuring a person’s ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain” (Brown, 2003, p. 3).

The present test is particularly intended to support the results obtained from the questionnaire and to test the accuracy and validity of the participants’ responses on the

questionnaire. Equally important, this test as well seeks to examine the extent to which they are interculturally aware. With this purpose in mind, it precisely endeavors to see whether they are ready to mediate, negotiate meaning, and to operate in intercultural communication situations; to know whether they are tolerant and accept the different other in conjunction with articulating their awareness of the idea of diversity and the likelihood of mismatch and misinterpretation; and it checks whether they are conscious of the effects stereotyping and over-generalizing have on increasing the possibility of misunderstanding and conflicts.

The test is made of one main question which summarizes all. Therefore, the question is about how they would react to a situation where a foreign friend shared a post claiming that Algeria is not worth visiting because it is not safe and its people are terrorists, retards, barbarians, and uncivilized.

2.1.3.2. Administration of the Test

The test was administered on June 16th to Master Two students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben-Yahia University-Jijel. In other words, the question was posted on the previously mentioned Facebook group “*Master 2 Students of English (Tassoust University)*” where they make chat, share posts, and exchange information. In addition to this, (39) students participated in the present test.

2.1.4. Research Extraneous Variables

It is paramount to mention that there are some extraneous variables to this piece of research that could have an effect on the obtained results and then, the validity of the research. To this end, two extraneous variables can be listed in this context. The first is *lecturing* i.e. the participants were exposed to certain extent of knowledge about culture, interculturality, and intercultural communicative competence as part of the curriculum. Interestingly, the second

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

extraneous variable is *Erasmus+ program* as Master students, this year, were given the chance to participate and take part in such international online program for virtual exchange in which enhancing and ameliorating one's interculturality level is a key looked for objective.

Section Two: Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

2.2.1. Data Analysis

2.2.1.1. Analysis of Student Questionnaire

Section One: The Use of Facebook

Q1. Are you active on social media?

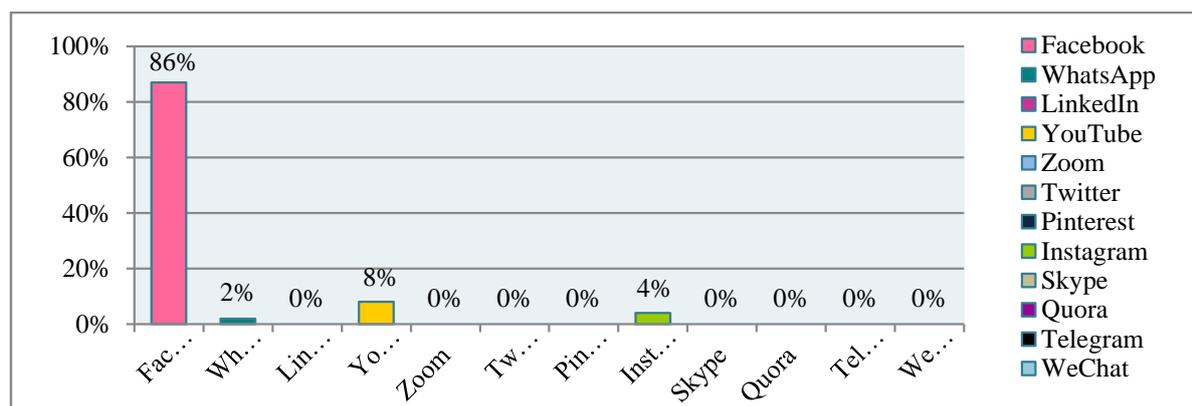
Table1. *The Use of Social Media*

| Option | Participants | Percentage |
|----------|--------------|------------|
| Yes | 32 | 60% |
| Somewhat | 21 | 40% |
| No | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The very first question was addressed with the aim of seeing whether the respondents under study are updated with the world of communication technologies and familiar with the most popular SNSs. The results displayed in table 1 reveal that (60%) of the informants chose “yes” whereas the rest (40%) selected the second option “somewhat” and expectedly, no selection fell upon the third option “no”. To this end, it is safe to declare that the informants are familiar with the field of communication technologies and SNSs since no one of them selected the last option.

Q2. Which of the following social networking sites/ platforms do you use the most for the purpose of interaction and communication?

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK



Graph1. *The Most Common SNS Used for Communication and Interaction*

The second question primarily seeks to discover whether FB is the most popular and commonly used SNS amongst the participants for the purpose of communication. Graph 1 indicates that the vast majority 46 out of 53 students with (86%) use FB the most, other 4 students (8%) use YouTube, additionally 2 students (4%) use Instagram, yet only one student (2%) uses WhatsApp. Conversely, no one of the part opted for the remaining options chiefly: LinkedIn, Zoom, Twitter, Pinterest, Skype, Quora, Telegram, and WeChat. Therefore, by asking this question we came to the conclusion that the most popular and commonly used SNS is FB.

Q3. For how long have you been a Facebook (FB) user?

Table2. *The Period of Being FB Users*

| Options | participants | percentage |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 3 years | 05 | 09% |
| 3-5 years | 15 | 28% |
| 6 years | 15 | 28% |
| More than 6 years | 18 | 34% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

As far as the third question is concerned, the aim was to spot the number of years for which the informants have been FB users and then, detecting whether they are accustomed and familiar with the diverse characteristics and features of FB. As the previous table demonstrates, their answers were distributed in different proportions among the options. In other words, (9%) of them have been FB users for “3years”, (28%) of them have been using FB from “3-5 years”, in like manner, the same percentage was recorded in the third option “6 years”, and last but not least (34%) of them have been using FB for more than “6 years”. Hence, by knowing that the largest number of the respondents answered “more than 6 years”, it can be estimated that they are accustomed enough with the various features that FB has.

Q4. How often do you log into FB?

Table3. *The Extent to which FB is Used*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Monthly | 00 | 00% |
| Weekly | 05 | 09% |
| Daily | 19 | 36% |
| Several times a day | 29 | 55% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

This question was intended to discover how often they log into FB. The results displayed in table 3 show that no one of the informants (0%) selected “monthly”, (9%) went for “weekly”, (36%) selected “daily”, while more than half of them (55%) log into FB “several times a day”. Concisely, it can be noted that more than half of the informants log into FB several times a day which insinuates that FB is constantly used by them.

Q5. Approximately, how many hours do you spend on FB on a daily basis?Table4. *The Time Spent on FB on a Daily Basis*

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Less than an hour | 11 | 21% |
| 1-4 hours | 23 | 43% |
| More than 4 hours | 19 | 36% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

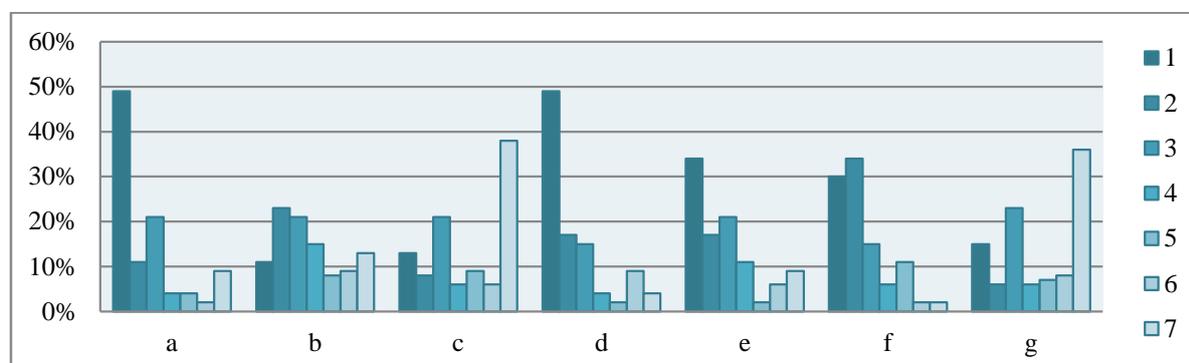
The present question was meant to figure out whether the participants are active users of FB. On the ground of this, only (21%) selected “less than an hour”, (36%) of the participants stated that they use FB from “1-4 hours”, whereas (43%) chose “more than 4 hours”. Thus, it can be estimated that the informants under investigation are active users of this communication platform.

Q6. What do you use FB for? Please, rate the following activities according to the frequency of usage with 1 being the most frequent and 7 being the least.

- a. Keeping in touch with family and online friends and seeing what they are up to.
- b. Reacting and commenting on their posts and stories.
- c. Arranging events, trips and meet-ups.
- d. Knowing more about the world and how do people live, developing cultural knowledge, and keeping updated with what is happening in other countries.
- e. Updating status, sharing files, videos, photos, and links.

f. For educational purposes.

g. For work and business (buying and selling).



Graph2. *The Purpose behind Using Facebook*

In light of this question, the participants under discussion were asked to rate some of FB activities according to the frequency of usage with a scale from 1-7. It particularly aims to uncover learners' various purposes behind using FB; more precisely, it attempts to see whether they use it for cultural purposes. The highest percentages were recorded in the following activities: (a) "Keeping in touch with family and online friends and seeing what they are up to" with (49%), similarly with the activity (d) "Knowing more about the world and how do people live, developing cultural knowledge, and keeping updated with what is happening in other countries" (49%), and (e) "Updating status, sharing files, videos, photos, and links" with (34%). In a nutshell, the most frequent activities with 1 as the first degree in this scale are the previously mentioned activities (a, d, and e).

Q7. Are you into making and getting to know new friends and people online more than in person?

Table5. *Learners' Willingness to Know New People Online*

| Options | participants | percentage |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 13 | 25% |
| Somewhat | 14 | 26% |
| No | 26 | 49% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

This question was addressed with the purpose of seeing the extent to which they support the idea of getting to know other people through the online exchange. Hence, (25%) of them selected “yes”, (26%) went for opting “somewhat”, while (49%) selected “no”. On this account, it can be claimed that almost half of the participants do not appreciate creating new relations online.

Q8. Do you prefer the online exchange rather than face-to-face interaction?

Table6. *Learners' Views about Online Interaction in Comparison to F-t-F Interaction*

| Options | participants | percentage |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 08 | 15% |
| Somewhat | 27 | 51% |
| No | 18 | 34% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

Regarding the present question, the aim was to know their stances concerning the online interaction in comparison to face-to-face interaction i.e. which one they do prefer the most. Remarkably, only (15%) said “yes”, (34%) chose “no”, and half of the subjects (51%) opted for “somewhat”. Hence, most of them (who selected somewhat) were sort of neutral. It

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

is worthwhile to state that those who selected “yes or “no” were required to justify their choices; in other terms, (26) students provided their justifications. Those who responded with “yes” defended their point of view stating the following:

- Because I’m curious to know new people from other countries and communicate with them; however, f-t-f interaction is boring (4%).
- It gives the chance to express our ideas without being pressured or under time crunch (8%).
- I feel less anxious and more comfortable when writing online than speaking f-t-f (27%).

On the other hand, those who responded with “no” argued the following:

- F-t-f interaction because body language is crucial (35%).
- Because it is more real (23%).
- Because I’m good at making new friends (4%).

Q9. Roughly, how often do you chat with native speakers or people from distinct cultural backgrounds and affiliations?

Table7. *Chatting with Native Speakers or People from Distinct Cultural Backgrounds*

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Always | 01 | 02% |
| Very often | 07 | 13% |
| Sometimes | 16 | 30% |
| Rarely | 15 | 28% |
| Never | 14 | 26% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

In this last question, the informants were demanded to state the frequency of chatting with native speakers or people from other cultures. The purpose was to know the extent to which they interact and exchange knowledge with NS or those who belong to distinct cultural groupings. Remarkably, only (2%) of them stated that they “always” chat with them, (13%) went for “very often”, (30%) selected “rarely”, and (26%) opted for “never”. Accordingly, the informants in dispute “sometimes” chat with NS or people from other cultural backgrounds.

Section Two: Developing Intercultural Awareness

Q1. Do you believe that both culture and context are crucial for successful interpretation of meaning?

Table8. *Learners’ Perception Concerning the Role of Culture and Context for Successful Interpretation of Meaning*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Yes | 49 | 93% |
| No | 00 | 00% |
| Not sure | 04 | 07% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The very first question in the second section was addressed with hope of figuring out whether the respondents support the view that teaching the culture and the context of a foreign language is equally important as teaching the system of the language (the linguistic features) for successful interpretation of meaning. As illustrated in table 8, the overwhelming majority (93%) answered “yes”, (7%) went for “not sure”, yet no (0%) selection fell upon the second

option “no”. Thus, the majority of them support the view that culture and context are essential for successful interpretation of meaning when learning a FL.

Q2. When learning the culture of a foreign language, do you think that learning about your local culture as well is necessary?

Table9. Learners’ Opinions about the Importance of Learning about the Local Culture when Dealing with the Culture of a Foreign Language

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 51 | 96% |
| No | 01 | 02% |
| Not sure | 01 | 02% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The second question was designed for the purpose of getting answers which could confirm that they are conscious about the importance of being aware of one’s own native culture when learning a FL and its culture (to be able to compare and contrast between the two). The results revealed in the above table indicate that the vast majority (96%) of them answered “yes”, (2%) selected “no”, and the same percentage (2%) was recorded in the last option “not sure”. To this end, it is safe to state that a considerable number of participants are conscious of the place and importance of one’s local culture when learning a FL.

Q3. Do you believe that the role of English as a lingua franca encourages and allows you to communicate with various people all over the world?

Table10. The Role of English as a Lingua Franca in Facilitating Communication with Various People around the world

| Options | Participants | Percentage |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 48 | 91% |
| No | 03 | 06% |
| Not sure | 02 | 03% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The present question was administered to find out the informants' stances concerning the role of English as a lingua franca and whether it helps with their intercultural exchange. The results conveyed in the above table show that a considerable percentage (91%) selected "yes", (6%) said "no", and just (3%) went for the last option "no". Therefore, it is estimated that the place of English as lingua franca helps with their intercultural exchange.

Q4. Tick the appropriate choice that corresponds with your convictions:

- a. Other cultures' values, beliefs, behaviors, etc are superior to the Algerian ones.
- b. The Algerian values, beliefs, behaviors, etc are superior to those of the other cultures.
- c. Both are equal.

Table11. *Learners' Attitudes towards the Algerian Culture and the Cultures of the Others*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| a | 03 | 06% |
| b | 07 | 13% |
| c | 43 | 81% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The informants were inquired to select from among the provided options that mark and appear to be appropriate for them. The aim was to check if they believe that all cultures all over the world are equal whether it is their own or not. By analyzing the data displayed in table 11, it can be clearly observed that the prevailing majority (81%) chose “c”, additionally, (13%) believed that “b” is the appropriate one, as only (6%) selected “a”. On account of this, it can be argued that the informants believe that all the existing cultures are equal and no culture is superior over the other.

Q5. Answer the following questions:

With regard to the fifth question, the informants under consideration were demanded to answer a set of questions for the purpose of testing their cultural awareness level. These questions were split out into two categories (A and B) and each consists of three questions. The first category targets their cultural awareness about their native culture (NC), yet, the second tackles their awareness about the target culture (TC), chiefly, the American and the British culture. Their answers and stances were displayed as the following:

A/a. To what extent do Algerians respect time?

- The Algerian people do not respect time/ devalue punctuality (32 answers with 64%).
- Not all of them it depends on the person himself/ there are exceptions (18 answers with 36%).

The accurate answer in this case is “the Algerians do not respect time”. Hence, the majority (64%) answered correctly.

b. In some special occasions like weddings, why do Algerians tend to invite too many people?

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

- To please other people and to show off/ they care about what others think of them (11 answers with 22%).
- Because Algerians have too many relatives and families are big (10 responses with 20%).
- Because it is a tradition or custom (12 answers with 24%).
- To share happiness (4 answers with 8%).
- To pay back the act and to avoid being blamed (2 answers with 4%).
- Because the Algerian culture is collectivist, they are family oriented and they value social relations (10 answers with 20%).
- To collect money (2 answers with 4%).

With regard to this question, there are two possible right answers: “because the Algerian society is built upon collectivism” in conjunction with “because it is a custom or tradition”. That is to say, 22 (44%) answered correctly.

c. Why do most Algerians continue to live with their parents?

- To take care of them and serve them as being asked in Islam (17 answers with 34%).
- Due to financial problems or because they are poor and have no money to get a new house (19 answers with 38%).
- Because it is a tradition and a part of our culture/ collectivism (13 answers with 26%).
- I do not know (1 answer with 2%).

Concerning this question, “because it is a tradition and a part of our culture/ collectivism” is perceived to be accurate. In a few words, (26%) responded adequately.

B/a. Is it true that the Americans are ignorant about geography and the cultures of the other countries?

- Yes, they are (10 with 19%).
- No, I do not think so (11 with 21%).
- I do not know/ not sure/ maybe (17 with 33%).
- True but there are exceptions (14 with 27%).

The possible right answer for this question appears to be “true but there are exceptions” and (27%) responded this way.

b. If you are at an American or British house and you are invited for something to drink (deep down inside you want to), what would you do?

- I would refuse in a polite way if it is something inappropriate in my culture and religion (6 answers with 12%).
- I would accept for Halal drink (16 answers with 33%).
- I would just refuse and apologize to them (15 answers with 31%).
- I would accept, since I want, because I know they do not ask again in their culture (7 answers with 14%)
- I do not know (5 answers with 10%).

“I would accept, since I want to, because I know they do not ask again in their culture” is the accurate answer for the present question with (14%) answering it in like manner.

c. How do you perceive the British people in terms of behaviors and manners?

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- Positive attitude: polite, respectful, serious, organized, good workers, open-minded, well educated (31 answers with 66%).
- Negative attitude: cold, conservatives, racists, arrogant, cold-hearted, not really friendly, cunning, foxy, selfish, somehow immoral, they do not speak a lot (9 answers with 19%).
- They are better than the Americans (1 answer with 2%).
- They are too different from us in many aspects (2 answers with 4%).
- They are better than us (1 answer with 2%).
- I do not know much about them (3 answers with 6%).

Last but not least, the right answer for this question can be both the positive and negative perspectives towards the British. Hence, 40 (85%) preferred to answer one of the two.

In a nutshell and with regard to this question (the 5th question in this section), it would be paramount to mention that the sum of the correct answers is 128 and thus, the equivalent percentage is (43%). To put it succinctly, it is worthwhile to reveal that less than half of the informants being dealt with (43%) are aware of their NC as well as the TC whilst the remaining ones (57%) are not. To this end, they are not sufficiently aware.

Q6. Are you curious, willing, and keen to learn about other people and their cultures?

Table12. *Learners' Willingness to Learn about Other Cultures*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|----------|--------------|-------------|
| Yes | 36 | 69% |
| Somewhat | 14 | 27% |
| Not sure | 00 | 00% |

| | | |
|--------------|----|------|
| No | 02 | 04% |
| Total | 52 | 100% |

The present question was intended to discover whether they are enthusiastic to have intercultural exchanges with various people. It is essential to state that only 52 out of 53 answered the question. The gathered results reveal that more than half (69%) selected “yes”, (27%) selected “somewhat”, (4%) selected “no”, yet no one (0%) selected “not sure”. Therefore, more than half of them showed to be curious, willing, and keen to learn about other people and their cultures.

Q7. When having an intercultural (cross-cultural) communication, how often do you feel frustrated, stressed, anxious, and uncertain?

Table13. *The Extent to which Learners Feel Uncomfortable when Having Intercultural Exchange*

| Option | Participants | Percentages |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Always | 02 | 04% |
| Very often | 11 | 21% |
| Sometimes | 27 | 52% |
| Rarely | 09 | 17% |
| Never | 03 | 06% |
| Total | 52 | 100% |

The goal behind this question was to detect the extent to which they feel uncomfortable when having an intercultural exchange. According to the table above, (4%)

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

said that they “always” feel uncomfortable, (21%) selected “very often”, (52%) selected “sometimes”, (17%) selected “rarely”, whilst only (6%) selected “never”. The results demonstrate that they sometimes feel uncomfortable when having intercultural exchange.

Q8. Do you believe that intercultural communication permits you to overcome prejudices, stereotypes, develop your empathy and tolerance when dealing with the different other?

Table14. *The Role of Intercultural Communication*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 43 | 83% |
| Somewhat | 08 | 15% |
| Not sure | 01 | 02% |
| No | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 52 | 100% |

This question was particularly designed to figure out whether they are of the view that IC allows them to perform intercultural situations successfully. Interestingly, (83%) responded “yes”, (15%) responded “somewhat”, (2%) responded “not sure”, yet no body selected “no”. Additionally, one student did not answer. Hence, IC allows them to overcome stereotypes and develop their tolerance and empathy towards the different other.

Q9. According to you, what does the term ‘Intercultural Awareness’ stand for?

a. Having an understanding of both your own and other cultures and the ability to compare between them (similarities and differences).

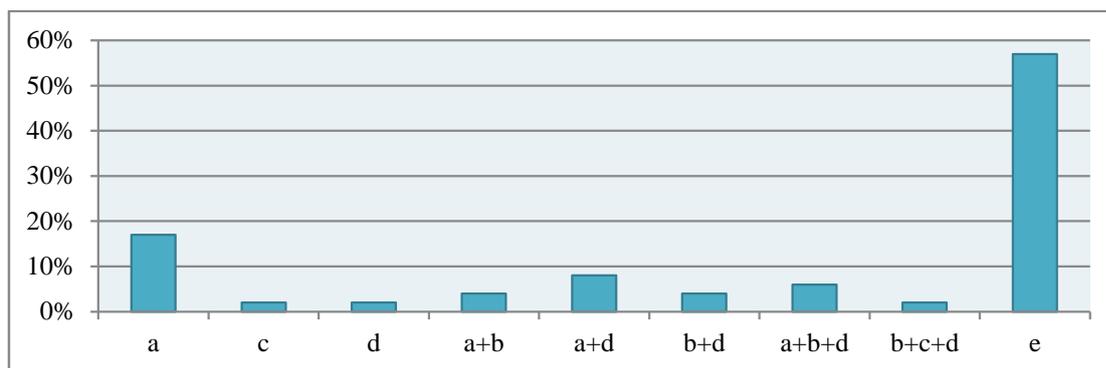
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b. The ability to move beyond the cultural generalizations and stereotypes that may occur in intercultural communication because cultures are hybrid and constantly changing.

c. The awareness of possibilities of mismatch and miscommunication between cultures.

d. The capacity to negotiate and mediate between cultures in intercultural communication.

e. All of them.



Graph3. *The Meaning of Intercultural Awareness*

As far as this question is concerned, the respondents were inquired to show their stances about how ICA is defined. As shown in the above graph, 9 students (17%) selected the option “a”, 1 student (2%) selected “c”, another 1 student (2%) selected “d”, 2 students (4%) went for both “a+b”, 4 students (8%) selected “a+d”, in addition, 8 other students (4%) selected “b+d”, 3 students (6%) selected “a+b+d”, only one student (2%) selected “b+c+d”, whilst 30 student who represent more than the half (57%) chose the option “e”. Therefore, a considerable number of the participants are conscious that all the presented statements are possible definitions for ICA.

Q10. How do you evaluate your intercultural awareness level?

Table15. *Learners’ Intercultural Awareness Level*

| Options | participants | percentages |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Excellent | 02 | 04% |
| Very good | 17 | 33% |
| Average | 31 | 60% |
| Poor | 02 | 04% |
| Total | 52 | 100% |

This question aims at discovering how the informants see and evaluate their ICA level. The results obtained from this question are summarized as the following: (4%) of the informants answered “excellent”, (33%) answered “very good”, (60%) which represents the highest percentage answered “average”, while but (4%) of them answered “poor”. On the ground of this, more than the half of them believe that their ICA level is average.

Q11. According to you, which of the following is the best way for developing intercultural awareness?

- a. Reading literary works, magazines, articles, newspapers.
- b. Communicating with foreigners who belong to distinct cultural backgrounds through social media or any other communication platform.
- c. Watching films.

Table16. *Learners’ Best Tool for Developing Intercultural Awareness*

| Option | Participants | Percentage |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| a | 08 | 15% |
| b | 39 | 75% |

| | | |
|--------------|----|------|
| c | 05 | 10% |
| Total | 52 | 100% |

The question at hand seeks to explore the tool that the participants under consideration deploy and appreciate the most for heightening their ICA. Thus, the obtained data suggests the following: (15%) opted for the first option “a”, (75%) opted for “b”, and (10%) opted for the last option “c”. Furthermore, one student did not answer the question. Based on the displayed data, it is shown that communicating with foreigners who belong to distinct cultural backgrounds through social media or any other communication platform is the most deployed means. It is paramount to mention that they were further inquired to give other suggestions if they have any. Their suggestions are summarized as the following:

-Watching vlogs of Youtubers.

- Interacting with people with different cultures and having social experiences.

- Watching series (not films) which have somewhat of real-life setup.

Q12. Do you believe that intercultural awareness should be incorporated in the language classroom?

Table17. *Learners’ Views about the Incorporation of Intercultural Awareness in the Language Classroom*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 41 | 80% |
| No | 02 | 04% |
| Not sure | 08 | 16% |

| | | |
|--------------|----|------|
| Total | 51 | 100% |
|--------------|----|------|

Concerning the last question in this section, the subjects were demanded to state whether they support the idea of incorporating ICA within the language classroom. The highest proportion (80%) confirmed this view “yes”, only (4%) answered “no”, and (16%) answered “not sure”. It is worth mentioning that 2 students did not answer. Thus, the prevailing majority think that ICA should be incorporated within the language classroom.

Section Three: Online Exchanges through FB and Intercultural Awareness

Q1. Do you enjoy having intercultural exchanges/ communication?

Table18. *Learners' Attitudes towards Having Intercultural Exchange*

| Options | participants | percentages |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 42 | 79% |
| Somewhat | 09 | 17% |
| No | 02 | 04% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The first question in section three was designed with hope of confirming whether the subjects under consideration appreciate and enjoy IC. As demonstrated in table 18, (79%) of the students said “yes”, (17%) went for “somewhat”, as only (4%) went for “no”. Hence, it is safe to note that they enjoy having intercultural exchanges/communication.

Q2. As a FB user and an EFL learner, have you ever interacted (via texting, replying or commenting on posts, etc) with anyone who is from another country or another cultural grouping?

Table19. *Learners' Interaction Experience with People from Different Cultural Groupings*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 39 | 75% |
| No | 12 | 23% |
| Not sure | 01 | 02% |
| Total | 52 | 100% |

Depending on the results gathered from this question which attempts to confirm whether they have experienced IC deploying the various features available within FB, (75%) responded “yes”, (23%) responded “no”, though just (2%) responded “not sure”. In addition one student did not answer. Based on the data obtained, most of the respondents have experienced intercultural communication before.

Q3. How often do you experience misunderstandings, struggles, and conflicts while having an intercultural exchange?

Table20. *The Extent to which Some difficulties in Intercultural Exchange are Experienced*

| Options | participants | Percentages |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

| | | |
|------------------|----|------|
| Always | 00 | 00% |
| Sometimes | 22 | 42% |
| Rarely | 20 | 38% |
| Never | 11 | 20% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The question at hand is with the aim of detecting the extent to which they encounter difficulties while having intercultural exchange. Interestingly, no selection (0%) fell upon the first option “always”, meanwhile, (42%) selected “sometimes”, (38%) selected “rarely”, and (20%) selected “never”. In other words, the informants ‘sometimes’ experience difficulties while having intercultural exchanges.

Q4. Do you belong to any group or following any page on FB that are specialized in posting cultural things like countries, travelling, arts, lifestyles, photography, etc?

Table21. *Following FB Pages and Groups to Know More about Other Cultures*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 35 | 66% |
| No | 18 | 34% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The forth question attempts to gain profounder insights and to learn whether they are interested to know about other cultures and willing to develop their cultural knowledge with the use of FB. Hence as the above table shows, (66%) of the part responded with “yes” and

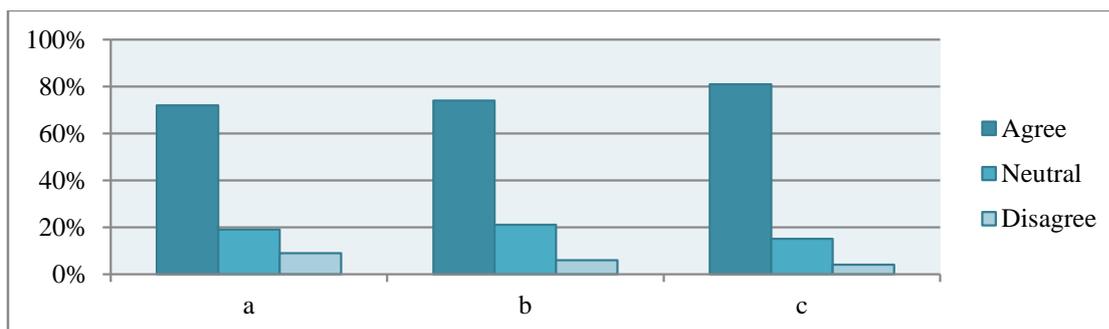
(34%) responded with “no”. For simplicity sake, the informants under question show their willingness to discover other cultures and to develop their cultural knowledge using FB.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following (agree, neutral, disagree)?

a. FB contributes in raising my awareness of my local culture and that of the others as well as having an idea about some common misconceptions.

b. It enables me to understand the idea of diversity and that distinct perspectives may occur within any cultural grouping.

c. It provides me with opportunities to experience intercultural communication.



Graph4. Learners' Stances about the Role of Facebook in Developing their Cultural and Intercultural Knowledge

The present question was addressed to spot and check their opinions concerning the role FB plays as a tool for communication in developing their cultural and intercultural knowledge/awareness as well as its efficiency for IC. As shown in graph 4, the highest percentage recorded in the three statements (a, b, and c) went for the option “agree”. That is to say, in the first statement, 38 students (72%) chose “agree”, 10 other students (19%) chose “neutral”, and only 5 students (9%) chose “disagree”. Concerning the second statement, 39 of them (74%) chose “agree”, 11 students (21%) chose “neutral”, yet only 3 students (6%) chose

“disagree”. As far as the third statement is concerned, 43 of them (81%) chose “agree”, 8 other ones (15%) selected “neutral”, but only 2 students (4%) chose “disagree”. According to the participants’ claims, FB has a positive effect and plays an effective role in developing their cultural and intercultural knowledge, and therefore, having successful intercultural exchange.

Q6. Do online exchanges through FB allow you to know more about the other, to exchange knowledge and eventually avoid breakdowns, stereotypes and prejudices in intercultural communication situations?

Table22. *Learners’ Opinions about the Role that Online Exchanges through Facebook Play for Successful Intercultural Exchange*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 35 | 66% |
| Somewhat | 12 | 23% |
| Not sure | 05 | 09% |
| No | 01 | 02% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

Here, the respondents were inquired to confess whether they believe that using FB would eventually help to save a great deal of trouble and to avoid the problems that often occur in IC. Thus, (66%) confirmed with “yes”, (23%) said “no”, (9%) said “not sure”, and only (2%) said “no”. On the ground of this, it would be safe to claim that FB allows them to know more about the other, to exchange knowledge and eventually avoid breakdowns, stereotypes and prejudices in intercultural communication situations.

Q7. Do you think that the online exchange on FB (DM, commenting and replying on comments, audio/video chat, etc) contributes to the promotion of your intercultural awareness?

Table23. Learners' Views about the Role of Facebook in the Development of Intercultural Awareness

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 32 | 60% |
| Somehow | 16 | 30% |
| Not sure | 05 | 09% |
| No | 01 | 02% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

It is hoped from this question to know whether the respondents believe that FB is an adequate tool for developing their ICA level. Therefore, the recorded proportion of the “yes” option was (60%), that of “somewhat” option was (30%), the “not sure” option was (9%), and the last one “no” was (2%). In other words, the participants perceive FB as an adequate tool for developing ICA.

Q8. To what extent has lecturing (studying about culture/ interculturality) affected your intercultural awareness level?

Table24. The Extent to which Lecturing has Affected Learners' Intercultural Awareness Level

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Greatly | 20 | 39% |
| A little bit | 31 | 61% |
| No effect | 00 | 00% |
| Total | 51 | 100% |

This question was meant to see if there are other extraneous variables other than FB. More precisely, to spot the extent to which do lecturing and studying about culture/interculturality could affect and boost their ICA level. Thus, (39%) answered “greatly”, (61%) answered with “a little bit”, whereas no selection (0%) fell upon the last option “no effect”. Additionally, two students did not answer. As a consequence, lecturing did not affect their ICA level that much but rather just a little.

Q9. Are you taking part in any international online exchange program such as Erasmus+ for virtual exchange?

Table25. *Learners’ Participation in International Online Exchange Programs (Erasmus+)*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 03 | 06% |
| No | 50 | 94% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

This question holds the same objective as the previous one (in this case taking part in any international online exchange program such as Erasmus+). It is apparent from the results displayed in table 25 that only (6%) of them stated that they do, conversely, nearly all the

participants (94%) claimed that they do not belong to such program. Thus, Erasmus+ program as well did not affect their ICA.

Q10. According to you, which one has affected and helped you to develop your intercultural awareness the most?

Table26. *The tool that has affected Learners' Intercultural Awareness Level the Most*

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Lecturing | 15 | 28% |
| Erasmus+ program | 00 | 00% |
| Interacting through FB | 38 | 72% |
| Total | 53 | 100% |

The last question was with the objective of confirming which one of the three means could contribute in heightening their ICA level the most. To put it more simply, (28%) responded with “lecturing”, no one of them (0%) selected “Erasmus+ program”, yet, all the remaining participants (72%) responded with “interacting through FB”. To this end, it is vital to point out that FB contributes the most in developing their ICA rather than lecturing or Erasmus+ program.

Q11. Further comments

As far as this question is concerned, (10) participants shared additional comments:

- It goes without saying that Facebook or any other online platform can raise intercultural awareness when used properly. I have interacted with many people from different countries via texting, and it has taught me a lot about their culture and the way they perceive the world.

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

- It is very beneficial for EFL learners to tackle the issue of ICC in their linguistic studies.
- Concerning question (10) I would choose another option: interacting not with FB but through other applications like Pinterest, Quora, Twitter, Reddit, I don't use FB a lot.
- Reading also is a great factor in intercultural awareness.
- Watching series and reading novels.

2.2.1.2. Analysis of the Test

The administered test takes the form of a question (situation/scenario) where the respondents are inquired to select from among the options provided and to elaborate more by providing justifications to their choices. This situation is as follows:

Let's suppose that you were checking your news feed on Facebook, then you came across a post shared by a foreign friend of yours in which he insulted Algeria and the Algerian people claiming that this country is not worth visiting because it is not safe and its people are terrorists, retards, barbarians, and uncivilized. In that case, how would you react? Please justify your answer.

1. Get upset and start a fight because his claims were hard to swallow.
2. Try to convince him that this is not even close to the truth and try to clarify the image for him perhaps he was told lies or read fake news or something.
3. Unfriend him or block him immediately.
4. Do nothing, show no reaction, and ignore what you have read.

Table 27. Students' Responses to the Test

| Options | Participants | Percentages |
|----------|--------------|-------------|
| Option 1 | 01 | 03% |
| Option 2 | 21 | 54% |
| Option 3 | 05 | 13% |
| Option 4 | 12 | 30% |
| Total | 39 | 100% |

The situation posted on Master Two students' FB group, has yielded 39 answers (comments). In other words, as table 27 shows, the answers obtained from the respondents' comments demonstrate that the highest percentages were recorded in both the options number **2** (try to convince him that this is not even close to the truth and try to clarify the image for him perhaps he was told lies or read fake news or something) and the option number **4** (do nothing, show no reaction, and ignore what you have read), whereas the remaining responses are distributed, with variant proportions, among the options number **1** (get upset and start a fight because his claims were hard to swallow) and the option number **3** (unfriend him or block him immediately). To illustrate more, only one (1) student opted for the first option (3%), 21 students (54%) who represent the highest percentage in comparison to the three remaining options opted for the second one, 5 students (13%) chose the third option, whereas 12 other students (30%) went for the last option. It is paramount to take into consideration that the option number **2** marks the appropriate choice in such context (intercultural communication situation) with a percentage of (54%). In distinction, the remaining ones, chiefly, the first, the third, and the forth options are perceived as inadequate and inaccurate for intercultural communication situations with (46%).

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

It is worth remembering that the informants were further inquired to justify their stances and the purposes that let them select a particular option rather than the remaining ones. Starting with the option number **1**, the only student who opted for it justified her stand point claiming that people saying such things about her country drive her mad. As far as the second option is concerned, which portrays the accurate answer, 21 students picked for this option and their justifications revolve around the following concepts: 9 of them (43%) said “I would try to convince him because what he said is wrong/a stereotype”; additionally, 4 participants (19%) claimed “I can’t keep silent as if nothing happened or nothing concerns me”; furthermore, 2 other students (9%) stated “I must be patriotic and it is my duty to clarify things to foreigners and give the right version of things and events in my country”; in addition, 3 participants (14%) claimed “because it is essential to provide him with arguments that could change his mind”; furthermore, one student (5%) said “because I like to handle things maturely”; another student (5%) claimed “I’ll try to convince him because we are friends and I’m sure we will understand each other”; similarly, one other participant (5%) argued “because explaining and discussing misconceptions and wrong ideas would help to discover more and to develop relationships”. As far as the third option is concerned, only (5) responses were obtained and their justifications were as follows: 4 students (80%) said “I’m not going to make effort for them because it’s a waste of time”; furthermore, only one participant (20%) claimed “because foolish people must be ignored”. Last but not least and regarding the fourth option, 12 answers were gathered and the students’ justifications revolved around the following concepts: 6 participants (50%) argued “because I don’t care about what others say, think, or believe”, 3 participants (25%) stated “because he is right about what he said”, whereas only one participant (8%) stated “because I’m lazy to reply on such people”, in a similar vein, one other student (8%) justified his stand point saying that “It is a way to avoid conflicts with that person”, yet one other student (8%) did not justify his answer.

All things considered and depending on the responses obtained from the participants' comments on the post (test), it seems proper to state that (46%) of the participants under consideration selected the inadequate options (1+3+4) with variant proportion for each, whereas more than half (21) of them opted for the option number 2 which designate the appropriate answer with (54%). To this end, it can be estimated that those who selected the second option are interculturally aware and the online exchange via FB helps in providing them with intercultural communication opportunities and so developing their intercultural awareness level.

2.2.3. Discussion of the Results

As previously stated, this study was conducted with hope of answering the afore-stated research questions and to test the hypothesis on which this research is constructed. On that account, a questionnaire and a test were designed. As a note, it is paramount to mention that these two research instruments are built upon Baker's Model for intercultural awareness.

As far as the analysis of the questionnaire is concerned, distinct results were obtained. The first section was devoted for the sake of collecting data about learners' use of FB. The results indicate that the informants under study are frequent users of SNSs (Q1) with FB being the most popular and commonly used SNS (Q2). The upcoming three questions (Q3, Q4, and Q5) clearly indicate that the respondents are accustomed with the various features and characteristics of FB since they are constantly using it (active users). In addition, the results in (Q6) insinuate that they mostly use FB for: interacting online, sharing knowledge/information, as well as for cultural purposes. With regard to questions (Q7 and Q8), it can be noticed that the participants, to certain extent, seem to prefer making new friends in person more than online as they seem to be neutral concerning their preferences towards the online or f-t-f interaction as some of them claimed that f-t-f interaction is more real since it is based on

verbal and non verbal cues (body language), whilst others perceive online interaction as an opportunity to express their thoughts more freely without being pressured in contrast to f-t-f interaction which is boring. The results obtained from (Q9) demonstrate that they occasionally interact with NS and people from other cultural backgrounds. As far as the second section is concerned, it primarily seeks to gather information about learners' perspectives regarding culture/cultural awareness, intercultural communication, and how they can develop their ICA level. The results in (Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4) show that a considerable number of the participants are of the view that: culture and context are essential for the interpretation of meaning (Q1), being aware of one's native/local culture is a necessity when learning a FL (Q2), that the place of English as a lingua franca helps with their intercultural exchange (Q3), and that all the existing cultures are equal and no culture is superior over the other (Q4). Based on students' answers to the set of questions displayed in (Q5), it can be estimated that they are not sufficiently culturally aware perhaps they were not well exposed to the cultural component during their study years of English or perhaps their teachers did not equally focus on teaching culture as teaching the linguistic features. The following question (Q6) reveals that more than half of them showed to be curious, willing, and keen to learn about other people and their cultures; yet, they sometimes feel uncomfortable when having intercultural exchanges (Q7) probably this is due to the cultural differences. Furthermore, (Q8) conveys that the informants hold positive attitudes towards IC because they believe that it allows them to overcome stereotypes and to boost their tolerance and empathy towards the different other. When they were asked in (Q9) to give their stances concerning ICA definition, a considerable number showed to be conscious that all the presented statements are possible definitions for ICA. It is observed from (Q10) that more than half of the respondents believe that their ICA level is average. The results gathered from (Q11) reveal that, according to them, communicating with foreigners who belong to distinct cultural backgrounds is the most

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

appropriate means for ameliorating ICA. Lastly and concerning (Q12), it is undoubtedly shown that the prevailing majority support the idea of incorporating ICA within the language classroom. With regard to the third section which is concerned with the role Facebook plays to develop ICA, questions (Q1 and Q2) demonstrate that the participants enjoy having intercultural exchanges and most of them have experienced IC before; yet, they sometimes encounter difficulties (misunderstandings and conflicts) while having IC (Q3). Furthermore, they showed their willingness to discover other cultures and to develop their cultural knowledge using FB as most of them belong to groups and following pages on FB that are made for posting cultural things (Q4). For that reason, they came to see that FB has a positive effect and plays an essential role in developing their cultural/intercultural knowledge and so, operating successfully in IC situations (Q5 and Q6). The results obtained from (Q7) declare that the participants view FB as an adequate tool for developing ICA. The next following questions (Q8 and Q9) demonstrate clearly that lecturing and Erasmus+ program (perceived as extraneous variables) did not affect their ICA level that much, conversely, their answers to (Q10) reveal that they believe that FB contributes the most in developing their ICA level rather than lecturing or Erasmus+ program.

With regard to the findings obtained from the test, many interpretations can be deduced. As a reminder and to begin with, the test at hand chiefly aims to support the results obtained from the questionnaire, it takes the form of an intercultural communication situation where FB is used as a means for communication and for interacting with foreigners; furthermore, the informants were asked to select one from among the four provided options that figures their immediate reaction and the one that they perceive as suitable for them in conjunction with providing their justifications. Owing the fact that the option number two signals the appropriate and accurate choice in this intercultural scenario and that all the remaining options are perceived as inappropriate, then, it would be unquestionable to state that more than half of

the participants selected the appropriate choice; yet, a less proportion (46%) opted for the inappropriate ones. To this end and with their justifications in mind, it can be stated that more than half of the students have shown the capacity to deal with and to survive such intercultural situations by being tolerant and having empathy coupled with a deep understanding of the negative effects of stereotypes and prejudices on IC. Notwithstanding, those who went for the options number 1, 3, and 4 have proved not to be ready to mediate, negotiate, and operate in intercultural communication situations because, basically, they are not sufficiently tolerant, not all of them are capable to swallow others' perspectives easily, and they are not conscious enough that stereotyping and over-generalizing could cause misunderstandings, mismatches, breakdowns, and conflicts.

All things considered and depending on the results detected from the participants' answers to both the questionnaire and the test, different conclusions can be deduced. To simplify it more, EFL learners at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel are interculturally aware i.e. they have the sufficient intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes that could push them to operate effectively and successfully in IC and when dealing with people who belong to distinct ethnicities and cultural backgrounds (the different other). On the grounds of this, it is intrinsic to articulate that they share the view that FB has a positive role for developing ICA and to state that they benefit from the online exchange through FB when used properly. Thus, it can be estimated that this communication platform contributes to the development of EFL learners' ICA level. To put it in a nutshell, it is worthwhile to declare that the hypothesis set at the very first pages of this paper is confirmed as the results obtained from both research instruments do not contradict but rather they go hand in hand.

Limitations of the Study

Owing the fact that any study has limitations and constraints, the present research on its part is not an exception. It would be safe to state that the most significant obstacle to this piece of work is the abnormal worldwide outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which has slowed down the process of conducting any research. In view of this, most of the following listed limitations are due to this last mentioned obstacle:

- To minimize the risk of infection, the government has issued a set of rules among which is social distancing and quarantine policies; hence, all students and teachers were stuck at home.
- The lockdown of universities and public utilities such as transportation stations, public libraries etc; thus, all educational and academic activities have been paused and paralyzed.
- The impossibility of meeting and gathering neither with the supervisor nor with the participants.
- The lack of recourses due to the fact that university libraries are closed.
- The necessity and obligation to work remotely from home; consequently, research instruments (the questionnaire and the test) were done and delivered over the Internet without any face-to-face interchange or interconnection with the participants.
- The limited number of participants in comparison to the whole targeted population (53 for the questionnaire and 39 for the test) was due to the fact that most students have poor Internet connection and because they were less motivated to respond (working on their own theses).
- Last but not least, waiting for the participants to fill in the questionnaire distributed via *Google Forms* was time consuming (it took over than four weeks).

Recommendations for Further Research

On the basis of the findings obtained from this study, offering new suggestions and insights for further research appear to be paramount. These suggestions and insights are reviewed in what follows:

- As stated in the limitations, the sample (number of participants) was small due to certain conditions; therefore, for more reliable and valid results it is recommended to expand the population to include other levels (Master One for example).
- It is recommended as well to implement other research instruments such as interviews or even experiments. In the latter, the researcher can, for instance, expose his population to online intercultural communication or even going further and manage to address a population who are taking part in some cultural/intercultural exchange programs (these programs offer opportunities for learners to experience more and real intercultural communication).
- Equally important, it is suggested to deploy different social networking sites other than Facebook such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Zoom, etc.

Conclusion

This final chapter figures the practical part of the current research. For simplicity sake, it was divided into two sections. The first tackled the research methodology including picturing the general design and population of the study, describing the research instruments and their administration, in conjunction with articulating the extraneous variables to the study. The second, on the side, addressed the analysis and discussion of the results gathered by means of a questionnaire and a test administered to Master Two students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-jijel University. It is dare saying that the analysis and

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH FACEBOOK

discussion of the collected data helped in drawing final conclusions and in confirming or affirming the previously stated hypothesis.

General Conclusion

It is becoming crystal clear that the developments taking place in the recent time including communication technologies such as social networking sites have nourished intercultural communication. At its core, the study at hand chiefly aims at investigating the effect that online exchanges through Facebook have on fostering learners' intercultural awareness.

For conducting this study, two research instruments were adopted a questionnaire coupled with a test to test the validity of the hypothesis. The latter suggests that if EFL learners at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel use Facebook appropriately as a means for online intercultural exchange, then they will develop their intercultural awareness. To come to the point, it is apparent from the analysis and the interpretation of the results obtained from the two research instruments that EFL learners at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel to certain extent are interculturally aware, that the online exchange via FB contributes in enhancing their ICA as they benefit from it to survive and handle intercultural communication situations. More specifically, they hold the view (positive view) that Facebook is an adequate SNS for boosting and fostering their intercultural awareness and so avoiding cultural conflicts that occur, in most cases, due to stereotyping, over-generalizing and the lack of the intercultural awareness.

To put it succinctly, it is safe to estimate that the research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, interacting online with people from different cultural groupings through social media, precisely Facebook, has a positive role in developing EFL learners' intercultural awareness and in producing successful intercultural exchange.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire for Students

Dear students,

The major concern of the questionnaire at hands is to gather information for the purpose of investigating the role of online exchanges through Facebook in the development of intercultural awareness. Therefore, your participation in completing this questionnaire is vital to accomplish our Master dissertation. We will be grateful if you willingly give us some of your time to fill it in. Bear in mind that your responses will be treated anonymously. Please, select the option that corresponds with your convictions and fill in information on the line provided. Thank you in advance!

Section One: The Use of Facebook

1. Are you active on social media?

a. Yes b. Somewhat c. No

2. Which of the following social networking sites/ platforms do you use the most *for the purpose of interaction and communication*?

Facebook WhatsApp LinkedIn YouTube Zoom Twitter

Pinterest Instagram Skype Quora Telegram WeChat

3. For how long have you been a Facebook (FB) user?

a. 3 years b. 3-5 years c. 6 years d. More than 6 years

4. How often do you log into FB?

- a. Monthly b. Weekly c. Daily d. Several times a day

5. Approximately, how many hours do you spend on FB on a daily basis?

- a. Less than an hour b. 1-4 hours c. More than 4 hours

6. What do you use FB for? Please rate the following activities according to the frequency of usage with 1 being the most frequent and 7 being the least.

- a. Keeping in touch with family and online friends and seeing what they are up to.
- b. Reacting and commenting on their posts and stories.
- c. Arranging events, trips and meet-ups.
- d. Knowing more about the world and how do people live, developing cultural knowledge, and keeping updated with what is happening in other countries.
- e. Updating status, sharing files, videos, photos, and links.
- f. For educational purposes.
- g. For work and business (buying and selling).

7. Are you into making and getting to know new friends and people online more than in person?

- a. Yes b. Somewhat c. No

8. Do you prefer the online exchange rather than face-to-face interaction?

- a. Yes b. Somewhat c. No

- Please justify if your answer is "Yes" or "No".....

9. Roughly, how often do you chat with native speakers or people from distinct cultural backgrounds and affiliations?

- a. Always b. Very often c. Sometimes d. Rarely e. Never

Section Two: Developing Intercultural Awareness

1. Do you believe that both culture and context are crucial for successful interpretation of meaning?

- a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

2. When learning the culture of a foreign language, do you think that learning about your local culture as well is necessary?

- a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

3. Do you believe that the role of English as a lingua franca encourages and allows you to communicate with various people all over the world?

- a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

4. Tick the appropriate option that corresponds with your convictions:

- a. Other cultures' values, beliefs, behaviors, etc are superior to the Algerian ones.
- b. The Algerian values, beliefs, behaviors, etc are superior to those of the other cultures.
- c. Both are equal.

5. Answer the following questions:

A/

- a. To what extent do Algerians respect time?.....

b. In some special occasions like weddings, why do Algerians tend to invite too many people?

c. Why do most Algerians continue to live with their parents?.....

B/

a. Is it true that the Americans are ignorant about geography and the cultures of other countries?

b. If you are at an American or British house and you are invited for something to drink (deep down inside you want to), what would you do?

c. How do you perceive the British people in terms of behaviors and manners?
.....

6. Are you curious, willing, and keen to learn about other people and their cultures?

a. Yes **b.** Somewhat **c.** Not sure **d.** No

7. When having an intercultural (cross-cultural) communication, how often do you feel frustrated, stressed, anxious, and uncertain?

a. Always **b.** Very often **c.** Sometimes **d.** Rarely **e.** Never

8. Do you believe that intercultural communication permits you to overcome prejudices, stereotypes, develop your empathy and tolerance when dealing with the different other?

a. Yes **b.** Somewhat **c.** Not sure **d.** No

9. According to you, what does the term *Intercultural Awareness* stand for?

a. Having an understanding of both your own and other cultures and the ability to compare between them (similarities and differences).

b. The ability to move beyond the cultural generalizations and stereotypes since cultures are hybrid and constantly changing.

c. The awareness of possibilities of mismatch and miscommunication among cultures.

d. The capacity to negotiate and mediate between cultures in intercultural communication situations.

e. All of them.

10. How do you evaluate your intercultural awareness level?

a. Excellent **b.** Very good **c.** Average **d.** Poor

11. According to you, which of the following is the best way for developing intercultural awareness?

a. Reading literary works, magazines, articles, newspapers.

b. Communicating and interacting with foreigners who belong to different cultural backgrounds through social media or any other communication platform.

c. Watching films

- If you have other suggestions, please specify.....

12. Do you believe that intercultural awareness should be incorporated in the language classroom?

Yes No Not Sure

Section Three: Online Exchanges (Facebook) and Intercultural Awareness

1. Do you enjoy having intercultural exchanges/ communication?

a. Yes b. Somewhat c. No

2. As a FB user and an EFL learner, have you ever interacted (via texting, replying or commenting on posts, etc) with anyone who is from another country or another cultural grouping?

a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

3. How often do you experience misunderstandings, struggles, and conflicts while having an intercultural exchange?

a. Always b. Sometimes c. Rarely d. Never

4. Do you belong to any group or following any page on FB that are specialized in posting cultural things like countries, traveling, arts, lifestyles, photography, etc?

a. Yes b. No

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following (select agree, neutral, disagree):

a. FB contributes in raising my awareness of my local culture and that of the others as well as having an idea about some common misconceptions.

b. It enables me to understand the idea of diversity and that distinct perspectives may occur within any cultural grouping.

c. It provides me with opportunities to experience intercultural communication.

6. Do online exchanges through FB allow you to know more about the other, to exchange knowledge and eventually avoid breakdowns, stereotypes and prejudices in intercultural communication situations?

- a. Yes b. Somewhat c. Not sure d. No

7. Do you think that the online exchange on FB (DM or text messaging, commenting and replying on comments, audio/video chat, etc) contributes to the promotion of your intercultural awareness?

- a. Yes b. Somewhat c. Not sure d. No

8. To what extent has lecturing (studying about culture/interculturality) affected your intercultural awareness level?

- a. Greatly b. A little bit c. No effect

9. Are you taking part in any international online exchange program such as Erasmus+ for virtual exchange?

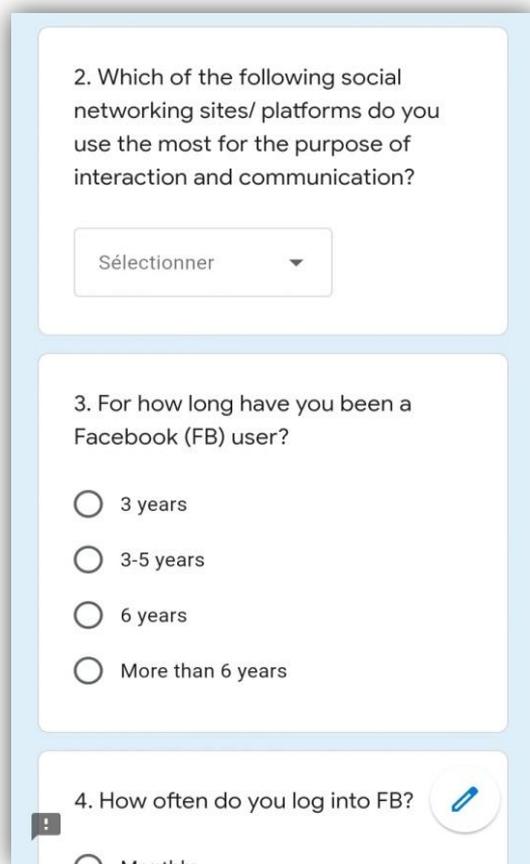
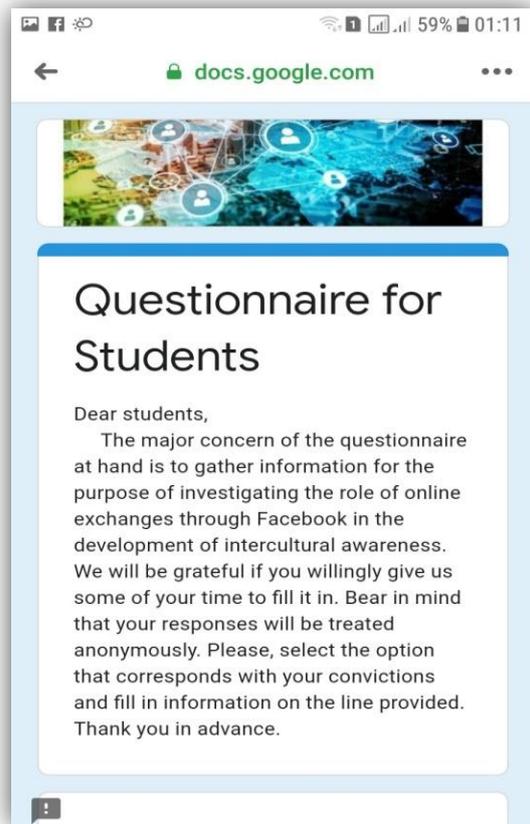
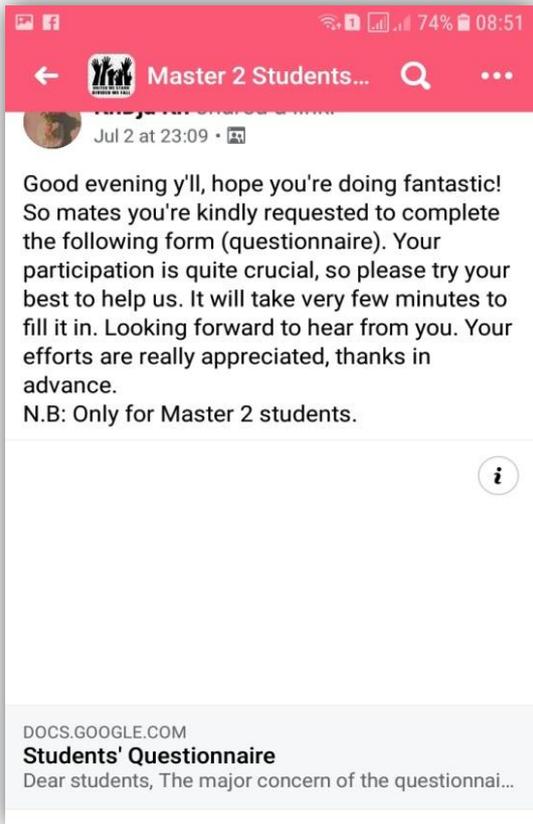
- a. Yes b. No

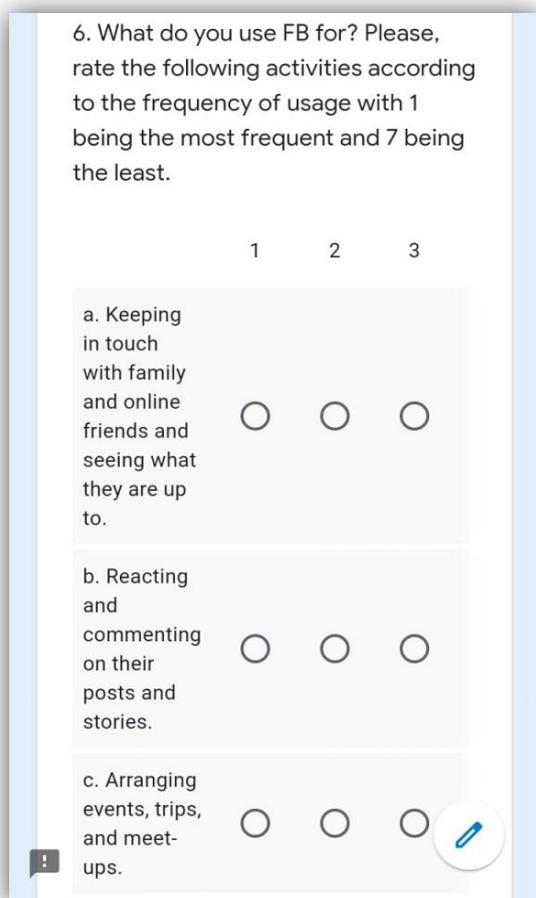
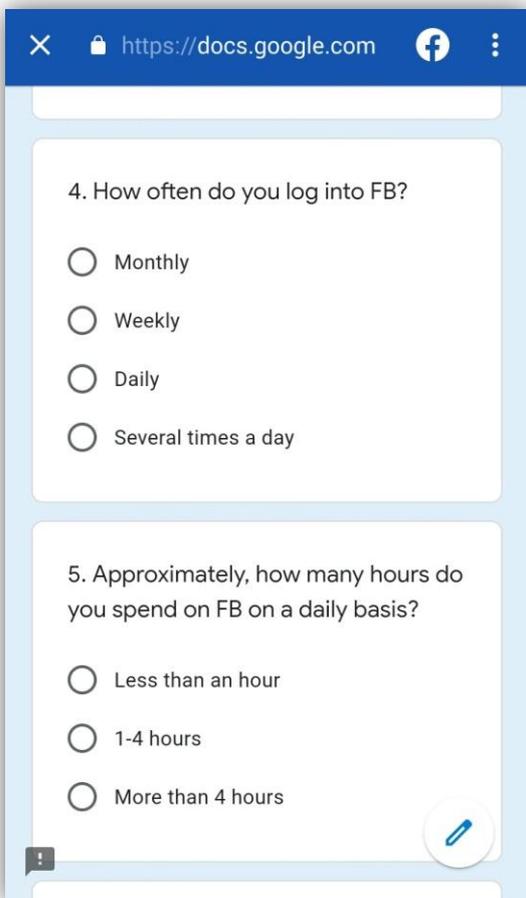
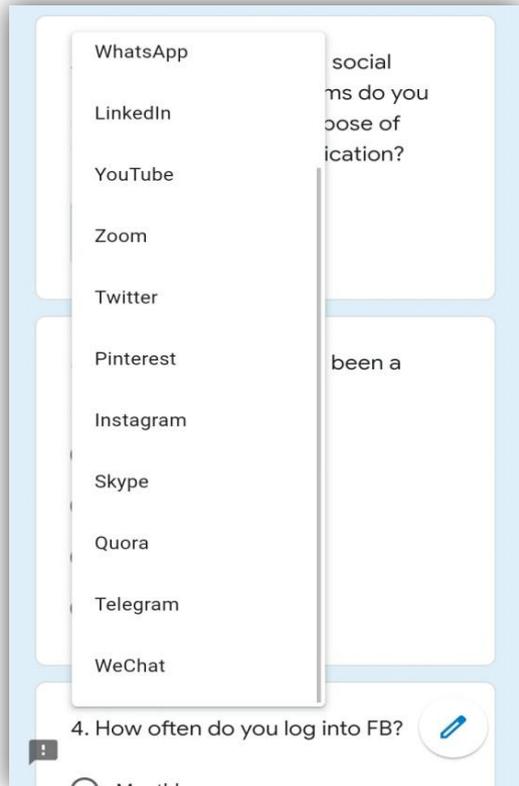
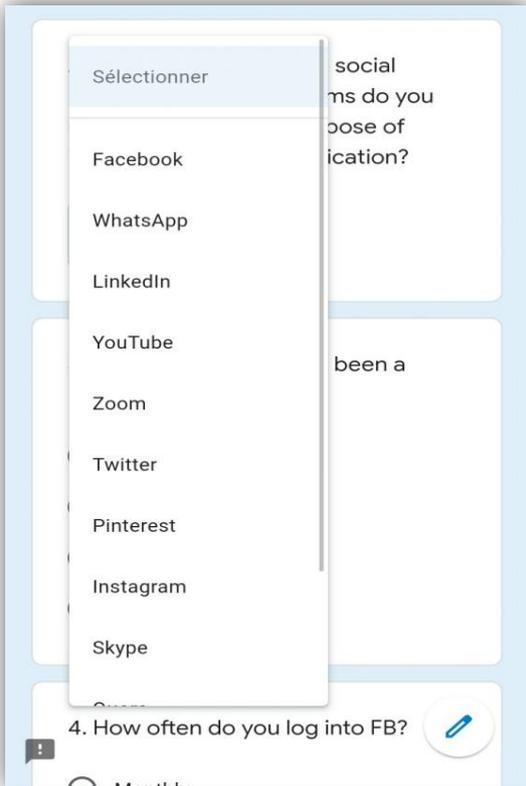
10. According to you, which one has affected and helped you to develop your intercultural awareness the most?

- a. Lecturing b. Erasmus+ program c. Interacting through Facebook

11. Further comments.....

THANK YOU





6. What do you use FB for? Please, rate the following activities according to the frequency of usage with 1 being the most frequent and 7 being the least.

5 6 7

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Keeping in touch with family and online friends and seeing what they are up to. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Reacting and commenting on their posts and stories. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Arranging events, trips, and meet-ups. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| d. Knowing more about the world and how do people live, developing cultural knowledge, and keeping updated with what is happening in other countries. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Updating status, sharing files, videos, photos, and links. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. For educational purposes. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. For work and business (buying and selling). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. Are you into making and getting to know new friends and people online more than in person?

Yes

Somewhat

No

8. Do you prefer the online exchange rather than face-to-face interaction?

Yes

Somewhat

No

- Please justify if your answer is 'Yes' or 'No'

Votre réponse

- Please justify if your answer is 'Yes' or 'No'

Votre réponse

9. Roughly, how often do you chat with native speakers or people from distinct cultural backgrounds and affiliations?

Always

Very often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Page 2 sur 4

[Retour](#) [Suivant](#)

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Questionnaire for Students

Section Two: Developing Intercultural Awareness



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1. Do you believe that both culture and context are crucial for successful interpretation of meaning?

Yes

No

Not sure

2. When learning the culture of a foreign language, do you think that learning about your local culture as well is necessary?

Yes

No

Not sure

3. Do you believe that the role of English as a lingua franca encourages and allows you to communicate with various people all over the world?

Yes

No

Not sure

4. Tick the appropriate option that corresponds with your convictions:

a. Other cultures' values, beliefs, behaviors, etc are superior to the Algerian ones.

b. The Algerian values, beliefs, behaviors, etc are superior to those of the other cultures.

c. Both are equal.

5. Answer the following questions:

Votre réponse _____

A/ a. To what extent do Algerians respect time?

Votre réponse _____

b. In some special occasions like weddings, why do Algerians tend to invite too many people?

Votre réponse _____

c. Why do most Algerians continue to live with their parents?

Votre réponse _____

B/ a. Is it true that all the Americans are ignorant about geography and the cultures of other countries?

Votre réponse _____

b. If you are at an American or British house and you are invited for something to drink (deep down inside you want to), what would you do?

Votre réponse _____

c. How do you perceive the British people in terms of behaviors and manners?

Votre réponse _____



6. Are you curious, willing, and keen to learn about other people and their cultures?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- Not sure
- No

7. When having an intercultural (cross-cultural) communication, how often do you feel frustrated, stressed, anxious, and uncertain?

- Always
- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never



8. Do you believe that intercultural communication permits you to overcome prejudices, stereotypes, develop your empathy and tolerance when dealing with the different other?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- Not sure
- No

9. According to you, what does the term "Intercultural Awareness" stand for?

a. Having an understanding of both



9. According to you, what does the term "Intercultural Awareness" stand for?

- a. Having an understanding of both your own and other cultures and the ability to compare between them (similarities and differences).
- b. The ability to move beyond the cultural generalizations and stereotypes since cultures are hybrid and constantly changing.
- c. The awareness of possibilities of mismatch and miscommunication among cultures.
- d. The capacity to negotiate and mediate between cultures in intercultural communication situations.
- e. All of them



10. How do you evaluate your intercultural awareness level?

Excellent
 Very good
 Average
 Poor

11. According to you, which of the following is the best way for developing intercultural awareness?

Sélectionner

- If you have other suggestions, please specify

Votre réponse

https://docs.google.com

Very good
 Average
 Poor

11. According to you, which of the following is the best way for

Sélectionner

a. Reading literary works, magazines, articles, r
 b. Communicating with foreigners who belong t
 c. Watching films

Votre réponse

Votre réponse

12. Do you believe that intercultural awareness should be incorporated in the language classroom?

Yes
 No
 Not sure

Page 3 sur 4

Retour Suivant

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Questionnaire for Students

Section Three: Online Exchanges Through Facebook and Intercultural Awareness



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1. Do you enjoy having intercultural exchange/ communication?

Yes

Somewhat

No

2. As a FB user and an EFL learner, have you ever interacted (via texting, replying or commenting on posts, etc) with anyone who is from another country or another cultural grouping?

Yes

No

Not sure

3. How often do you experience misunderstandings, struggles, and conflicts while having an intercultural exchange?

Always

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

4. Do you belong to any group or following any page on FB that are specialized in posting cultural things like countries, traveling, arts, lifestyles, photography, etc?

Yes

No

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following (select agree, neutral, disagree)?

Agree Neutral Disag

a. FB contributes in raising my awareness of my local culture and that of the others as well as having an idea about some common misconceptions.

b. It enables me to understand the idea of diversity and that distinct perspectives may occur within any cultural grouping.

Agree Neutral Disag

a. FB contributes in raising my awareness of my local culture and that of the others as well as having an idea about some common misconceptions.

b. It enables me to understand the idea of diversity and that distinct perspectives may occur within any cultural grouping.

c. It provides me with opportunities to experience intercultural communication.

grouping.

c. It provides me with opportunities to experience intercultural communication.

6. Do online exchanges through FB allow you to know more about the other, to exchange knowledge and eventually avoid breakdowns, stereotypes and prejudices in intercultural communication situations?

Yes

Somewhat

Not sure

No

7. Do you think that the online exchange on FB (DM, commenting and replying on comments, audio/video chat, etc) contributes to the promotion of your intercultural awareness?

Yes

Somewhat

Not sure

No

8. To what extent has lecturing (studying about culture/interculturality) affected your intercultural awareness level?

Greatly

A little bit

No effect

9. Are you taking part in any international online exchange program such as Erasmus+ for virtual exchange?

Yes

No

10. According to you, which one has affected and helped you the most to develop your intercultural awareness?

Lecturing

Erasmus+ program

Interacting through FB

10. According to you, which one has affected and helped you the most to develop your intercultural awareness?

Lecturing

Erasmus+ program

Interacting through FB

11. Further comments

Votre réponse

Page 4 sur 4

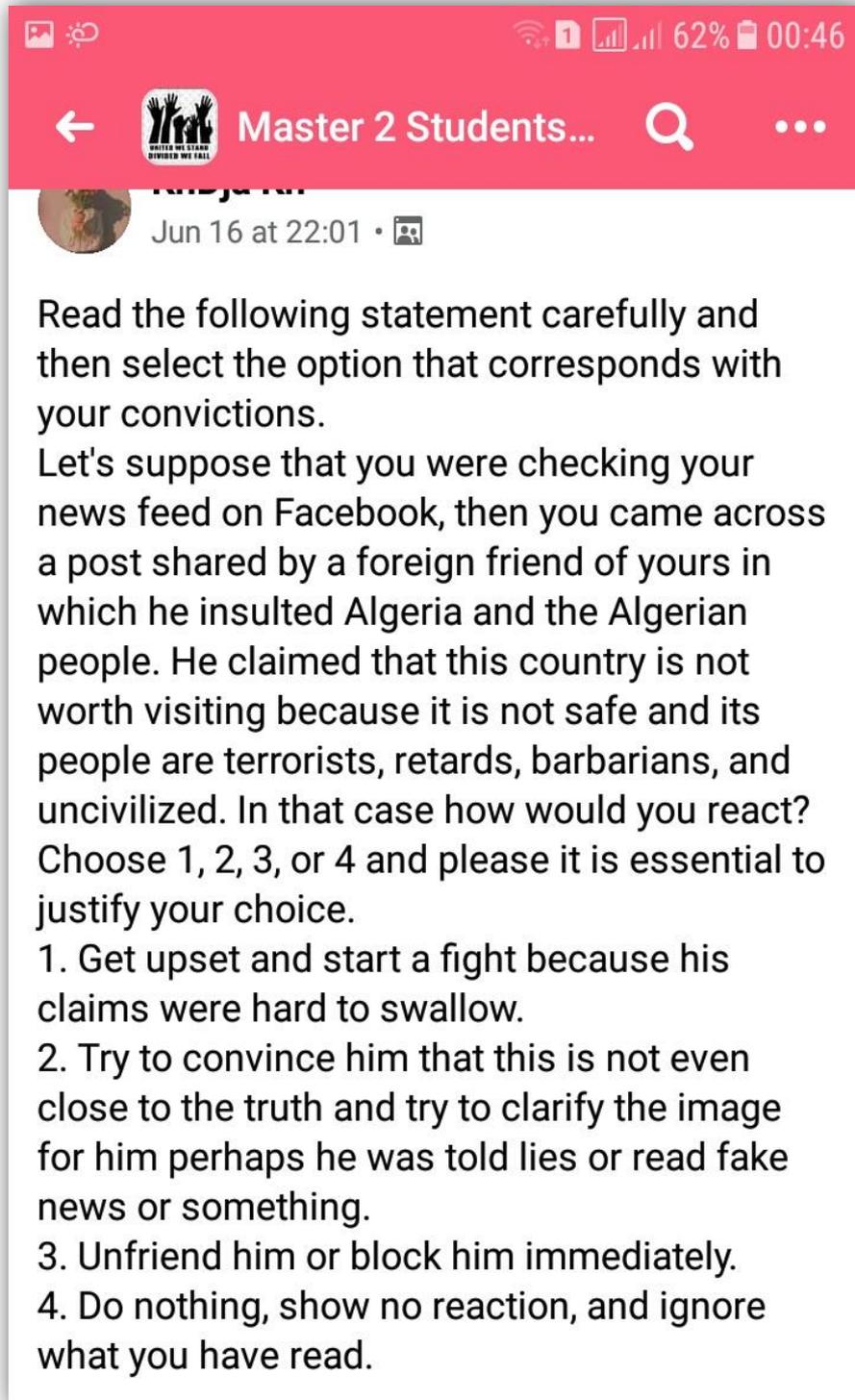
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Appendix 2

The Test



Read the following statement carefully and then select the option that corresponds with your convictions.

Let's suppose that you were checking your news feed on Facebook, then you came across a post shared by a foreign friend of yours in which he insulted Algeria and the Algerian people. He claimed that this country is not worth visiting because it is not safe and its people are terrorists, retards, barbarians, and uncivilized. In that case how would you react? Choose 1, 2, 3, or 4 and please it is essential to justify your choice.

1. Get upset and start a fight because his claims were hard to swallow.
2. Try to convince him that this is not even close to the truth and try to clarify the image for him perhaps he was told lies or read fake news or something.
3. Unfriend him or block him immediately.
4. Do nothing, show no reaction, and ignore what you have read.

Résumé

Ces derniers temps, exactement avec la moderne technologie, il est devenu clair que la communication interculturelle a acquis une place importante dans les sociétés contemporaines. D'après cela, on peut dire que la conscience interculturelle est centrée sur les priorités des apprenants de la langue étrangère comme il est très possible pour eux de faire l'expérience de la communication interculturelle. En basant sur ça, nous avons fait cette étude pour essayer de découvrir l'impact de la communication par internet, en particulier Facebook, sur le développement interculturelle des apprenants de l'anglais comme une langue étrangère. A partir de ça, nous avons développé une hypothèse dans laquelle les étudiants de la langue anglaise à l'université de Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia peuvent développer leur conscience interculturelle à travers l'utilisation rationnelle de Facebook comme un moyen d'échange entre les cultures. Pour confirmer la validité de cette hypothèse, nous avons présenté un questionnaire à environ 126 étudiants de deuxième année master d'anglaise, néanmoins, 53 ont y répondu, en plus de 39 participants ont répondu sur un test. Les résultats obtenus ont montré que les étudiants de deuxième année master d'anglais possèdent les connaissances, les compétences, et les attitudes qui leur permet de bien agir dans des situations de communication interculturelle. Il est remarquable que Facebook a contribué de manière significative dans le développement de leur conscience interculturelle, ainsi de le bien exploiter pour connaître d'autre cultures afin d'éviter les malentendus, les conflits, les préjugés, et les stéréotypes. Bref, on peut dire que cette hypothèse est confirmée.

ملخص

في الآونة الأخيرة و تزامنا مع التطور الملحوظ للتكنولوجيات الحديثة، بات من الواضح أن التواصل بين الثقافات قد اكتسب مكانة هامة لدى المجتمعات المعاصرة. من خلال هذا يمكننا الجزم بان الوعي بين الثقافات أصبح ضمن أولويات متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية و ذلك لاحتمالية الخوض وتجربة هذا النوع من التواصل. بناءا على ذلك، وضعت هذه الدراسة لمحاولة معرفة مدى تأثير التواصل عبر الانترنت وتحديدًا عبر موقع الفيسبوك في تطوير الوعي بين الثقافات لدى متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية. و عليه قمنا بوضع فرضية تنص على أن طلاب اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى- جيجل بإمكانهم تطوير وعيهم الثقافي من خلال الاستعمال العقلاني للفيسبوك كوسيلة للتبادل و التواصل بين مختلف الثقافات. و للتأكد من صحة هذه الفرضية تم طرح استبيان وإنشاء اختبار تم توجيههما لطلاب السنة الثانية ماستر اختصاص لغة انجليزية. أظهرت النتائج المتحصل عليها أن العينة قيد الدراسة يمتلكون قدر معين من المعرفة و المهارات التي تسمح لهم بالتعامل الجيد في حالات التواصل بين الثقافات، كما لوحظ أن موقع الفيسبوك يساهم بشكل ملحوظ في تطوير الوعي بين الثقافات لديهم، بالإضافة إلى استفادتهم منه للتعرف على ثقافات أجنبية عنهم، تجنب الصراعات، سوء الفهم، التحيز، و الأفكار النمطية. باختصار، يمكن القول بان الفرضية مؤكدة .

