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**INVESTIGATING AREAS OF INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATIC BREAKDOWNS  
IN EFL LEARNERS' ONLINE DYADIC COMMUNICATION  
THE CASE OF SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF  
ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF ABBES LAGHOUR-KHENCHELA**

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

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## Abstract

The current study aspires to promulgate the disciplines of culture and pragmatics as the most critical concerns vis-a-vis EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic competence and to proffer the use of mediated communication in the Algerian syllabi. The fundamental objectives of this dissertation are to investigate areas of intercultural pragmatic breakdowns in EFL learners' online dyadic communication with native speakers, the main causes of these failures, and the course of actions needed to impede that failure. This inquest is triggered by EFL learners' deficiencies concerning understanding a foreign language and its culture. This work employed a mixed methods research wherein a content analysis was used to analyse EFL learners' conversations with native speakers, and an internet questionnaire was administered to 74 second-year English students at the University of Abbes Laghrour, Khenchela to investigate their standpoints regarding those problems. Additionally, an e-interview was conducted with five teachers to gauge their views about those breakdowns and provide suggestions to improve learners' pragmatic competence. The findings obtained from the implementation of the three research instruments reveal a manifold of problems including pragma-linguistic, sociopragmatic, and pragmatylistic issues. This is due to learners' low language proficiency and the lack of exposure to authentic materials. Eventually, the researchers offered some suggestions and pedagogical implications to raise teachers' awareness about considering mediated communication to enhance learners' intercultural pragmatic competence.

*Keywords:* pragmatics, culture, intercultural pragmatic breakdown, online communication

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
CPS	Cage Painting Simulator
E-communication	Electronic Communication
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
E-interview	Email interview
Email	Electronic mail
FC	Foreign Culture
FL	Foreign Language
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
ILR	Interagency Language Roundtable
IM	Instant Messaging
LOL	Laugh Out Loud
MMS	Multimedia Messaging Service
NC	Native Culture
NES	Native English Speaking

NL	Native Language
OK	Olla Kalla = All Correct
PDF	Portable Document Format
SMS	Short Message Service
SMSC	Short Message Service Centre
TC	Target Culture
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TL	Target Language
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USA	United States of America
WPS	Word Processing Software
YO	Years Old

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## General Introduction

### 1. Background for the Study

Foreign language teaching and learning is a complex process, for EFL learners are not only required to master the target language but ought to be abreast of its culture in parallel with understanding this language in the interactional context. This is most problematic when EFL learners are engaged in communication that is devoid of the requisite elements that render the interaction accessible, especially when it comes to online communication. As a matter of course, the cultural and pragmatic dimensions of the foreign language are to be given due significance in this regard.

Many scholars have shifted their attention from studying the structure that the speakers utter to focus on what those structures really transmit. Since many language issues cannot be understood by syntactic and semantic analysis solely, "pragmatics" becomes the new field for language study. Pragmatics, as a new linguistic area, has been the focus of language study during the second half of the twentieth century. According to Levinson (1983, as cited in Atamna, 2008) pragmatics is "the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the context in which they would be appropriate" (p. 86). As a result, context has become the basis of any pragmatic study.

Culture and communication have recently found a common ground within foreign language teaching compared to the times when scholars focused on the linguistic side more than anything. García-Carbonell and Rising (2006) acknowledge that language has always been regarded as one of the challenges to intercultural communication; however, with the rise of

globalisation and the spread of supra-English, the linguistic obstacles have been diminished. Be that as it may, intercultural communication is framed within a cultural scope; communication between individuals from different cultures is governed by social and behavioural parameters pertinent to the culture of both interlocutors. Unquestionably, the cultural facet of communication is by no means deniable, exclusively in case of mediated communication where some pieces of the puzzle are missing. Culture is something that cannot be overstated as far as EFL teaching and learning is concerned.

New communication development has set the stage for individuals' connectedness across cultures. Mediated communication through different social media platforms has become a revolutionary tool in all disciplines. December (1996, as cited in Romiszowski & Mason, 1996) refers to online interactions as "the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems" (p. 398). This process of communication is on no account as simple as it appears; the absence of contextual cues affects how the message is interpreted and can generate miscommunication. This situation is more critical in intercultural communication; this 'cues-filter-out' interaction in such a context is opaque due to the undetectable integral elements for a successful communication. The absence of both vocal and non-verbal cues deprives the communication from its 'skeleton', not to mention the cultural differences that create a gap in the message to be well comprehended. To top it all, EFL learners' interactions in such circumstances are beyond doubt of utmost complexity.

Several studies have been conducted to account for pragmatic issues and the impact of mediated communication on EFL learners' linguistic and communicative competence. In 1983, Jenny Thomas has conducted many studies on pragmatic failure and its implications for English

teaching in China (Lihui & Jianbin, 2010). In “A Study on Cross-cultural Pragmatic Failures and Spoken English Teaching”, Shi Ying investigates students’ pragmatic failure in spoken English in China. He has discovered that students usually encounter pragmatic failures without being aware of them in real intercultural communication (Ying, 2017). Besides, Al- Aghbari (2016) and Fernandez (2008) have given account of the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns and their effect on intercultural communication. However, the problems themselves have neither been tackled nor discussed pragmatically, and the studies related to mediated communication have not been taken into account as the use of these social networks, to these researchers, decreases the role of the teacher in EFL classes.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Acquiring a new language can unlock the door for learners to new vocabulary, grammar, culture, and most importantly it is more of a door into communication. Even so, the linguistic competence solely cannot guarantee an effective communication. The deep structure of language is the building block of the cognisance of what is transmitted. This has paved the way to the rise of “the pragmatic competence” as a better discernment of EFL learners’ deficiencies in their intercultural interactions.

EFL learners, despite being equipped with a pragmatic competence, their interactions with people belonging to different cultures are subject to breakdowns. This issue that has favoured the integration of culture in the teaching-learning process has given birth to the development of the “intercultural competence”. The requisiteness of both pragmatics and culture within the same scope has impelled scholars to investigate what is called the “intercultural-

pragmatic competence”. In this regard, EFL learners, as part of online dyadic interactions with native speakers, find themselves in the middle of an intercultural communicative breakdown and fail to understand the pragmatic meaning of what has been transmitted, which can have its aftermath. Hence, this piece of research aims at encountering the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns faced by learners, their causes, and the possible solutions to address these problems. It is noteworthy that there were only few attempts to study these hindrances, and that the Algerian syllabus does not put much emphasis upon enhancing EFL learners’ pragmatic competence. It does not even unmask how the latter can be related to modern technologies in general and mediated communication in particular.

### **3. Research Questions**

This research addresses one main question and two secondary questions respectively:

1. What are the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that take place in EFL learners’ online dyadic interactions with natives?
2. What are the reasons behind the pragmatic problems that EFL learners encounter during online intercultural communication?
3. What are the possible solutions to overcome these intercultural pragmatic breakdowns?

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

The current research paper aims at discovering how intercultural pragmatic breakdowns are revealed in learners’ online dyadic interactions. Moreover, it aspires to explore the reasons behind these hindrances. It also seeks to determine the possible solutions to overcome the

intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that occur in EFL learners' online dyadic interactions with native speakers. All is done to proclaim the language's cultural and pragmatic dimensions in EFL Algerian classes in parallel with propounding the integration of mediated communication within the syllabi.

## **5. Significance of the Study**

The present study is not only important for foreign language learners in terms of communication but also in the educational arena. This research is an amalgamation of the disciplines of culture, pragmatics, didactics, and computer-mediated studies. This research paper can be a further step towards developing learners' intercultural pragmatic competence as a crucial aspect of the communicative competence, especially with contemporarily new world of technology in both the academic and non-academic areas. Within the rise of a good linguistic description through a pragmatic analysis of these problems, this inquiry raises teachers' awareness about the issue and consequently incites them to find solutions. This can be done through including pragmatic and cultural studies within the syllabi along with the embracement of mediated communication in EFL classes. These dyadic interactions are specifically tackled because they link a pair of individuals who belong to different cultural backgrounds and make their contribution more significant; consequently, more pragmatic breakdowns are to be detected.

## **6. Research Methodology**

### **6.1. Research Design**

The current study is conducted relying on a mixed methods approach. It involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data. This approach is more suitable to serve the main goal of the research since it is based on a systematic, analytical, and descriptive study of the data collected. It also provides a better analysis of the research problem by combining two approaches to gain insights into the same issue and to allow tackling the topic from different angles for more valuable results.

### **6.2. Research Tools**

In order to answer the previously mentioned questions of the present study, three tools have been selected:

- A content analysis of some online dyadic interactions of EFL learners with native speakers from different English-speaking countries is conducted to uncover the presence of any intercultural pragmatic problems. This way, the researchers can detect these breakdowns and their types.
- An online questionnaire is administered to EFL learners. Through this tool, the researchers will determine if the learners are aware of these pragmatic problems as well as the leading factors of those breakdowns.
- An email interview is held with teachers specialised in Cultural and Applied Linguistic disciplines concerning the topic. Its purpose is to be acquainted with their attitudes about

learners' pragmatic problems, the way they intend to overcome them, and the use of mediated communication in EFL contexts.

### **6.3. Population of the Study**

This study is conducted at Abbas Laghrour University, Khenchela. The research population is second-year English students from the faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages. Through their learning-teaching process, at this stage, learners are more involved in contextual and cultural environments, yet they are not apt to deal with more complex language issues and may encounter variant pragmatic problems while communicating. A sample of 74 units is selected as the whole population of the study. These sample units are the ones being asked to interact online with native speakers, and they form 52% of the whole population. Five teachers specialised in Applied Linguistics and Cultural studies are, as well, part of the population as they are in a constant interaction with learners, and thus, are aware of the problems that the learners encounter and how to address them.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

This research is divided into three chapters, and each chapter includes two sections. The first chapter tackles intercultural pragmatic communication. Its first section deals with the field of pragmatics including the speech acts, the cooperative principle, implicatures, and the politeness theory. Additionally, the field of intercultural communication, its models, and strategies as far as intercultural communicative competence is concerned are all explored within the second section.

The second chapter addresses in its first section dyadic communication in general, its principles, and levels along with its advantages and disadvantages. Within the second section, the researchers tackle online interactions, their characteristics, and types as well as the development, maintenance, and termination of these conversations.

As for the third chapter, it is dedicated to the practical part. The first section is concerned with the methodology to be used in order to conduct the research. It provides a detailed description of the methodology implemented to arrive at plausible results regarding the problem under investigation. The chapter gives a thorough account of the research approaches and instruments implemented for data collection with justifying each choice. It sheds light as well on the procedures to be pursued for data collection. The second section shows how the data obtained are analysed, discussed, and interpreted to meet the chief objectives of the present study.

## **Chapter One**

### **Intercultural Pragmatic Communication**

#### **Introduction**

Pragmatics has recently become an important recourse for scholars when it comes to language analysis. Many theories and approaches have been developed in regard to this matter, especially in relation to intercultural communication. In point of fact, researchers have considered the pragmatic competence a critical element for a successful interaction between natives and non-natives. A more comprehensive view demands a thorough review of pragmatics and its implications. Henceforth, this chapter is dedicated to intercultural pragmatic communication. It explores pragmatics as a new field in linguistics. It begins with how pragmatics has evolved throughout the history of language study and the way different scholars have viewed it. This chapter deals with how pragmatic studies are implemented in societal, historical, and even experimental frameworks. It also tackles the significant shift of linguists' attention to studying language according to human relations and actions. This chapter approaches as well pragmatics as being theorised by the speech act theory and being complemented by the politeness theory, and conversational implicatures. The second section presents briefly the concept of culture, drawing its path towards defining intercultural communication and identifying its models and strategies. It also gives an account of the concept of intercultural communicative competence.

## **1.1. Pragmatics**

### **1.1.1. Background to Pragmatics**

Pragmatics is recognised as one of the core branches of linguistics. As an area of language study, pragmatics had a long history before establishing itself within the academic sphere. It originally derives from a branch of language philosophy concerned with the nature, origin, and usage of language. The pragmatic school of linguistic thought has started mainly in the fifties of the twentieth century. The tradition of language philosophy includes two very famous schools of thought. The ideal school of philosophy is dedicated to investigate the study of the logical system of artificial intelligence. This school is known now as the development of formal semantics, which was developed by Richard Montague, David Donaldson, and David Lewis. The other school of thought is known as the ordinary school of philosophy that has flourished at Oxford University in the 1950s, and it was developed by John Langshaw Austin. The school focuses on the nature of language instead of its abstract symbolic form. Thereafter, Austin and Herbert Paul Grice have developed the theory of speech acts and the theory of conversational implicature following this tradition (Arif, 2013).

In respect to the previously mentioned investigations in language study, many scholars have shifted their attention from studying the structures of language into focusing on what those utterances really transmit. According to Mey (2001, as cited in Atamna, 2008), pragmatics has emerged as a branch of linguistics in the late sixties and early seventies. It has marked the downfall of Chomsky's "syntax-only" approach to the study of language. This linguistic turn represents a shift from the paradigm of theoretical grammar to the paradigm of language user.

Pragmatics is a field of study that explores how people deal with language when communicating at a personal level. “Pragmatics is the study of language use in interpersonal communication, it investigates the choices of the speaker/writer, interpretations of the hearer/reader and constraints which apply in social interaction” (Hickey, n.d, p. 1). Henceforth, pragmatics analyses the impact of language use on participants in communication. As pragmatics expands to a number of other fields within linguistics, it is closely related to semantics (the study of meaning) and sociolinguistics (the study of language in relation to social factors). Considering the area of emphasis in the field of pragmatics, three subgroups can be identified:

- Pragmalinguistics is more concerned with the linguistic side of pragmatics. It deals with aspects of context as part of language structure.
- Sociopragmatics holds the idea that social factors in communication determine usage.
- Applied pragmatics refers to practical breakdowns of interaction (Hickey, n.d).

Pragmatics is concerned with communication between people; it includes intentions and interpretations. According to Crystal (1987, as cited in Silalahi, 2016), “Pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others” (p. 83). Simply put, pragmatics examines the utterance, what this latter implies as it is related to the speakers’ intentions, and the effect of the words’ choice on the hearer. Campsall (1998, as cited in Abel, 2014) notes: “Pragmatics is a way of investigating how sense can be made of certain texts even when, from a semantic viewpoint, the text seems to be either incomplete or to have a different meaning to what is really intended” (p. 24). Pragmatics deals with the deep intended meaning without focusing on the semantic meaning which, in some cases, misleads the reader/listener to understand what is really meant.

Based on the previously mentioned definitions, pragmatics can be defined as the implied (deep) meaning that listeners/readers can understand when words are put into the appropriate contextual, societal, and cultural framework. Therefore, it states the relationship between the language and the way speakers/writers perform actions through appropriate language use. On account of the different applications of pragmatics and its relation to other fields, a number of types can be distinguished.

### **1.1.2. Types of Pragmatics**

#### **1.1.2.1. Historical Pragmatics**

Historical pragmatics is not a new area of study; various works have been made within this field during the last twenty-five years. This discipline is an amalgamation of the fields of pragmatics and historical linguistics through the application of the methods and interests of pragmatics to diachronic linguistic data. Nevertheless, the collision between the methodologies and the focus of the two domains display that their association is problematic, especially because the involvement of the two areas on an equal league is a rare opportunity. Accordingly, either pragmatics assists historical linguistics to expound issues of historical change, or historical data are analysed pragmatically to enlighten their cultural and social background (Jucker, 2008).

#### **1.1.2.2. Experimental Pragmatics**

The recent decades have witnessed a shift within the domain of pragmatics, as the use of experimental tools and methods from the field of psycholinguistics (the study of cognitive aspects of language and speech) has started to enlarge the empirical scope of the area. The field

of experimental pragmatics has fully taken place within the arena of language study since the early 2000s. It has become a major interdisciplinary area covering linguistic, psychological, and computational approaches. This type of pragmatic study investigates various ‘ingredients’ of meaning to establish experimental methodologies and help categorise the different aspects of meaning (Schwarz, 2017). The central topics that are targeted within this field of study are: metaphor, quantifier interpretation, scalar inference, disambiguation, reference, promise understanding, and many others (Sperber & Noveck, 2004).

### **1.1.2.3. Sociopragmatics**

Sociopragmatics, a term coined by Geoffrey Leech (1983), refers to the fashion in which pragmatic meaning mirrors particular local conditions on language use. It identifies “how the communication of pragmatic meaning involves speakers’ presentation of their identities” (Grundy, 2014, p. 159). This culture-specific science examines the various perspicacity of the other culture to reduce intercultural considerations inhibiting the learners’ language proficiency. As a sub-branch of pragmatics, it uncovers culture-specific settings of language learning taking into account social dimensions and cultural elements. These elements are classified into two parts. The linguistic constituents covering grammar such as lexical and syntactic components and the non-grammatical elements like kinesics and proxemics (the non-verbal elements). Indeed, the aim of sociopragmatics is to perceive cross-cultural divergence in terms of verbal and non-verbal items (Gündüz, 2016).

The previously mentioned elements represent various areas of pragmatics that cover language in some measure relying on different disciplines. Nevertheless, it is the speech act theory that examines language meticulously. It accounts for the context surrounding language.

### **1.1.3. Speech Act Theory**

The emergence of the communicative competence by Dell Hymes (1966) during the seventies has opened the door to the idea that both linguistic and social structures are significant in communication. Many linguists have come to the idea that a linguistic structure can be used in several contexts to fulfil various communicative functions. Consequently, the second half of the twentieth century has seen a thriving concern in the study of language in a societal framework (Atamna, 2008). It is worthwhile to mention that communication is a social activity, and as a function of language, it is performed by means of speech. On the other hand, speech which is considered the medium of communication is determined by the choices of the speakers, their linguistic knowledge, and competence (Baktir, 2013).

All the previously mentioned ideas are echoed in the notion of “speech act theory” whose development is credited to John Langshaw Austin. During the 1950s, he has given a series of lectures depicting his ideas regarding the speech act theory. These lectures were published later in a book labelled *How to Do Things with Words*. Austin asserts that the uttering of a word is the leading factor in the performance of any act. To him, communication is a series of communicative acts, and language is not just an instrument to describe facts but also a tool for performing acts such as apologising or inviting. Accordingly, a speech act is “the minimal functional unit in communication such as making statements, giving commands, asking

questions or making promises” (Atamna, 2008, p. 92). It is an action performed through the use of language and defined according to the speaker/writer’s intention at the moment of uttering the speech and the words’ effect on the hearer/reader (Atamna, 2008). Austin distinguishes three types of speech acts that are all performed at the same time despite belonging to one single speech act:

- The locutionary act: It refers to the structure of the utterance through which an act is performed. Simply put, it is the actual sense of what has been said. Austin (as cited in Atamna, 2008) has defined it as the “performance of an act of saying something” (p. 92). Within the locutionary act, Austin proposes three supplementary acts. The first is labelled the phonetic act which is the act of appropriately pronouncing a string of words. The phatic act, the second subcategory, covers grammar and vocabulary. It is the uttering of words in accordance with phonological and syntactic rules. The rhetic act, as a third subtype, is concerned with the act of using words with a specific sense and reference, taking into consideration that a single word can fit into so many contexts. The latter subtype was rejected by John Searle arguing that it is only a description of the illocutionary act (Abdulla, 2011).
- The illocutionary act: It is the focus of linguists and Austin’s attention. It is the essence of any pragmatic study as it is a conventional linguistic act restrained by the speaker/writer’s intention that alludes to the intended communicative meaning of the utterance (Abdulla, 2011).

- The perlocutionary act: It is associated with the emotional effect that the utterance of the speaker/writer has upon the thoughts, feelings, or behaviours of the listener/reader (Abdulla, 2011). This act is more concerned with the result of the utterance rather than the utterance itself.

A further classification of the speech acts has been proposed by John Searle (1969). It is mainly concerned with the illocutionary act, and it comprises five main types:

- Representatives: They refer to the act of introducing a reality like “the earth is round” or “the building fell yesterday”.
- Directives: The speaker/writer directs the interlocutor to act in a specific manner like ordering, inviting, or requesting.
- Commisives: They are related to the future wherein the addresser is committed to act in a certain way as to threat or make a promise.
- Expressives: They are about expressing feelings and emotions (psychological state). Examples include greeting, congratulating, or welcoming someone.
- Declarations: It is the act of moving the utterance from the word level to the world level so that the act changes the current affairs. Vows of ceremony marriages are a common example (Atamna, 2008).

Language, as qualified by Austin, is a tool through which people perform acts by means of speech. Moreover, for a successful communication by means of language use, there must be

cooperation between speakers, which is governed by a set of principles, namely, the cooperative principle.

#### **1.1.4. Cooperative Principle**

The cooperative principle is based on the idea that in any conversation there exists an implied meaning to be communicated, the reason why readers/hearers need to look at what the literal meaning implies to understand what is being transmitted. It was developed by H. Paul Grice in 1975. He affirms that any utterance possesses at least one implicit meaning that can be understood depending on the context of the situation. In order to comprehend the implied meaning, one has to display a pragmatic competence. Grice asserts that knowledge about the context of the conversation is necessary for decoding what is implied. Conversations, according to Grice, are cooperative; they adhere to a set of principles of cooperation between different participants so that communication is appropriate and successful (Grice, 1975).

Any language use has to be enough, true, clear, and relevant. Grice explains the notion of the cooperative principle as follows “Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (p. 45). Accordingly, four principles, that Grice called ‘maxims’, are to be highlighted within this regard:

- **Maxim of quantity:** Give as much information as required but not more than what is prerequisite.

- **Maxim of quality:** Make your contribution true, do not say what you do not believe is true and avoid what you do not have enough evidence for.
- **Maxim of relation:** Be relevant to the context.
- **Maxim of manner:** Be clear, brief, and orderly. Avoid vagueness and ambiguity (Grice, 1975).

Nevertheless, participants in a conversation do not always follow these maxims and sometimes violate one or more in various ways. Therefore, it is necessary to count the differences between the violation, opting out, clash, and the flout of these maxims. These are explained as follow:

- **Violating a maxim:** It is a situation in which one of the maxims is flouted (or not presented) during communication. The following example is the violation of the maxim of relevance.

Mother: why didn't you go to school today?

Son: May I go to my room? I am tired.

- **Opting out:** indicates that the speaker is reluctant to communicate. For instance: I do not know how to explain this in a simpler way.
- **Clash:** In some situations, the speaker is confused between conforming to two maxims in a state of clash and is obliged to flout one to fulfil the other.

A: where does the new student come from?

B: Somewhere in the African continent.

In the above example, speaker A is obviously asking about the new comer's country, however, speaker B does not exactly know where he comes from. In this case, there is a clash between the maxim of quantity and quality; speaker B has flouted the maxim of quantity (providing less information) to fulfil the maxim of quality (being truthful).

- Flouting: It is a form of maxim break. Here, the speaker is acquainted with the maxims and can realise one maxim without breaking another or opting, yet he/she flouts the maxim. In the following example, the boss flouts the maxim of quality to be sarcastic:

The boss: Oh welcome Amanda! You are very early today.

Amanda: I apologise, the bus was late again (Sobhani & Saghebi, 2014).

The above-mentioned issues lead the parties of the conversation to move from the word level to the world level, which stands for the fact of uttering something that means something else. Alternatively, when one of the maxims is flouted, it leads to the generation of what Austin named a conversational implicature, a theory that can be universal and relevant to all languages (Alduais, 2012).

### **1.1.5. Conversational Implicature**

The term "Implicature" stands for the act of saying something to mean something else, and it is settled by the sentence meaning or the context in which it appears. The notion of implicature was suggested by Grice (1975) in a series of lectures at Harvard University. Grice

asserts that when one or more maxims are flouted, an implicature is created, and it is the reader/listener's duty to choose the relevant maxim (Segueni, 2016). An implicature in pragmatics is defined as something that is meant, implied, or hinted in a way that is different from what is said (Davis, 2019). As a matter of fact, the conversational implicature is based on entailments and depends on the conversational context. Levinson (2000, as cited in Segueni, 2016) defines it as "more than what is literally expressed by the conversational sense of the linguistic expression uttered" (p. 116). Strictly speaking, this concept represents the core element of the pragmatic study as it is concerned with the embedded meaning. Grice (1975, as cited in Segueni, 2016) acknowledges that in any interaction, the interlocutors should be acquainted with three necessary things:

- The interlocutors should understand and share a common context.
- The participants should comprehend the general linguistic meaning of the utterance.
- They should adhere to the cooperative principle.

Therefore, Grice's implicature involves mainly the illocutionary act wherein an indirect speech act is performed by means of a direct one, as in an invitation conveyed through a statement. The following is an example of a conversation between two friends:

A: I think I should travel next week.

B: My son's wedding is next Thursday (Segueni, 2016).

In other situations, people say something to mean the total opposite. One can say: "look! Your best friend is coming" just to mean "the person you hate most is over there". Alternatively,

people rarely express what they really mean and are more implicit when communicating. Henceforth, the concept of implicature is a basic notion in intercultural pragmatic communication. Grice also ascertains that the conversational implicature comprises the performance of non-central speech acts. Expressions like after all, anyway, at any rate, besides, be that as it may, by the way, and various other modifiers reveal more about the utterance in which they appear, its force, or its role in the interaction (Segueni, 2016). It is worth mentioning that in addition to Grice's maxims, another concept "the politeness theory" has to be considered to guarantee the communication's success.

#### **1.1.6. Politeness Theory**

Grice's maxims were criticised for being purely rules of clarity that do not ensure an effective and appropriate communication as they do not take politeness into account. Thus, Lakoff (1973, as cited in Fraser, 1990) defines the Politeness theory as "a device used in order to reduce friction in personal interaction" (p. 223). Being polite in using language is crucial when communicating. The role of language is to convey a specific message and unless it is transmitted in an appropriate manner, it will lead to miscommunication between people belonging to the same culture, let alone when it is an intercultural communication (Margetan, Ratih & Ratri, 2014).

In a conversation, the speaker/writer is not only responsible for the idea to be transmitted, but also for the impact of the words upon the reader/listener, which is called "pragmatic competence". The latter is "the ability to use language appropriately considering to whom we are talking (Tenor), what we are talking about (Field), and how we are talking (Mode)" (Margetan,

Ratih & Ratri, 2014, p. 1). The Politeness theory covers certain regulations that scholars have put in order to achieve a successful interaction. Simply put, Lakoff (1973, as cited in Margetan, Ratih & Ratri, 2014) has proposed the rules of politeness to enable people to apprehend each other when they communicate, which is realisable when people are immersed in a cooperative transaction. Unlike the cooperative principle, politeness principles are connected; the appropriate principle should be applied at the relevant time otherwise the communication fails.

Politeness principles come along with Goffman's (1967, as cited in Redmond, 2015) self-face value as a public image, through which he represents face as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself” (p. 6). Later on, his theory was advanced by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (1987) to include the positive and the negative face that a person builds as a public image. The former is being endorsed in a given social group and the latter is being about claiming acknowledgment of personal space and maintaining social distance between people. Lakoff (1973, as cited in Margetan, Ratih & Ratri, 2014) has proposed three main rules of politeness. The first one denotes “distance”; one needs to maintain distance with the interlocutor. By distance, it is meant how close the speaker is to the person he/she is talking to, taking into account age, family relation, occupation, and other social aspects. This rule is associated with the principle of negative face in Brown and Levinson’s theory (1978) and is generally adopted when there is a social distance between both participants of the conversation.

In addition to the fact that, neither the speaker nor the listener should talk about personal matters, they have to use formal structures to convey their ideas without the implication of emotions. The other rule holds “Deference”; the interlocutors need to be given the choice of whether to accept or decline something, and the speaker has to be hesitant when it comes to

“directives”. This rule is fulfilled by the use of structures that imply a very different meaning from its syntactic form. For example, the use of declarative sentences which conveys a command like “I wonder if you could clarify the last point because I did not really understand it”. In this case, the interlocutor has the freedom of approval or refusal. It is noteworthy to state that the deference rule is also related to the Brown and Levinson’s negative face principle. (Margetan, Ratih & Ratri, 2014). The last rule presumes to “Camaraderie”. It refers to making one’s interlocutor feel good. It considers kindness as a sign of courtesy and the use of informal expression as in indication of comradeship. Contrary to the other two principles, this one is equivalent to the positive face theory (Margetan, Ratih & Ratri, 2014).

The above-mentioned rules are set to govern the interactions that take place between people. It is worthy to claim that these communications may gather persons from different cultures, and each one of them tends to transmit a particular idea about his/her own culture, language, identity, and ideology. This process of building relationships with foreign people is called “intercultural communication”.

## **1.2. Intercultural Communication**

### **1.2.1. Introduction to Culture**

Culture is viewed as a complex and dynamic process; thus, it is subject to different definitions. In 1952, however, Piller (2011, as cited in Dang, 2016) has clearly stated that the two American anthropologists Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kay Maben Kluckhohn (1963) have exposed humans to 156 variant definitions of the word “culture”. This variation in the definitions reflects the way anthropologists see and interpret culture. According to Matsumoto (2008, as

cited in Dang, 2016) culture is defined as “a meaning and information system that is transmitted across generation” (p. 6). This definition crystallises the idea of culture being a chainlike continuous process that draws its own path from one generation to another. The other definition to take into account is that of Barnett and Lee (2002, as cited in Leinonen, 2015) who have postulated that culture is “a group’s shared collective meaning system through which the group’s collective values, attitudes, beliefs, customs, and thoughts are understood” (p. 5). Alternatively, culture is a group of people who share similar cultural elements. Hofstede (2005, as cited in Dang, 2016) has seen culture as “the collective programming of the mind [...]” (p. 6). This entire programming helps distinguish one cultural group from another based on the previously mentioned elements.

On behalf of these definitions, culture can be defined as a collective body that englobes all the cultural aspects such as values, attitudes, beliefs, language, and religion which help distinguish one group from another. Therefore, scholars have shifted their attention from solely relying on grammatical and linguistic concerns to clearly focusing on culture which is closely related to learners’ communicative abilities. After only the integration of the "communicative approach" in lesson planning, learning the target culture has become a crucial part to understand the foreign language. In this regard, teachers tend to highlight cultural values, norms, and features to raise the learners’ awareness about the target culture as well as the target language, whether it is verbal or non-verbal (Dang, 2016).

Within the rise of globalisation, understanding a culture has become a basis for any intercultural relationship. The process of exchanging information cannot take place without a successful communication. This latter can be understood accurately when the parties from

different cultural backgrounds can properly perceive or interpret the message. From this perspective, people who belong to different cultures get more attached to one another; either for personal or for business concerns. This course of building international relations is known as “intercultural communication” (Dang, 2016).

### **1.2.2. Definition of Intercultural Communication**

As is the case with culture, intercultural communication has been defined differently. Barnett and Lee (2002, as cited in Rimmington, Gibson & Alagic, 2006) have defined this concept as the “exchange of information about culture between two groups of people with significantly different cultures” (p. 4). This definition highlights the fact that, in intercultural communication, the parties of the conversation belong to variant cultures, and each one of them tends to transmit a particular idea about a specific culture. Rimmington et al. (2004) have proposed a simulation game called the Cage Painting Simulator (CPS) to give a close image to understanding the concept of intercultural communication. This game is a metaphor that consists of three elements; the Cage refers to the combination of background, current context, and life experiences’ effects on people’s perspectives and behaviours. The Painting stands for the process of constructing cultural perspectives through dialog and reflection. The Simulator conveys the ones who contribute in chat sessions. These scenarios involve an interaction between the learner and another person of a synthetic background. Therefore, learners are able to paint their cages when they get closer to studying, knowing, and understanding the simulated persons’ culture.

Alternatively, intercultural communication is a concept that emerges from people having different perspectives to create a small window with a great reflection of the distinct linguistic

and cultural backgrounds. Equally important, Porter and Samovar (1988, as cited in Kangu, 2012) argue that intercultural communication occurs whenever the two parties come to a communication act and then have a different form of pragmatic backgrounds that replicate a long-standing form of group experience, understanding, and principles.

Intercultural communication takes place when the members of the conversation belong to variant cultures and share different views of the cultural, societal, political, and economic standards. Porter and Samovar (1988, as cited in Kangu, 2012) have explained that “Intercultural communication occurs whenever a message producer is a member of one culture and a message receiver is a member of another” (p. 24). This communication is intercultural since it gathers different interlocutors with variant cultural backgrounds. Porter and Samovar (1988, as cited in Kangu, 2012) have further defined the notion of communication as “a dynamic transactional behaviour-affecting process in which sources and receivers intentionally code their behaviour to produce messages that they transmit through a channel in order to induce or elicit particular attitudes or behaviours” (p. 24). Simply put, whenever a conversation arises between persons from different cultures, the message holds variant transmitted linguistic and cultural features.

In communication across cultures, the interlocutors have to decode the intended message in split seconds based on personal experiences and the grids they have learnt in their home cultures. The term "grid" refers to the framework of understanding the verbal and non-verbal cues related to a particular culture (Arent, 2009). Since the concept of intercultural communication is complex and dynamic, specialists have designed variant models that help understand the concept as it develops through time.

### **1.2.3. Models of Intercultural Communication**

Intercultural communication has been and is still a subject of interest. Many scholars have developed distinct models for the sake of outlining, understanding, and developing the concept of intercultural communication as a process that progresses through the years.

- **The Seelye Model**

This model of outlining/developing intercultural communication was coined by H. Ned Seelye in 1984. It is based on Goal-Oriented End-of-Course Performance Objectives. It is related to the students' needs, interests, their reactions towards the target culture (TC), their understanding of the cultural perspectives, and the situational variables that help shape the human behaviour. Through this model, students have the ability to reach a remarkable level of awareness about the target culture. They also can evaluate it in terms of generalisation with evidence. After being exposed to the different courses that revolve around "developing intercultural communication", tasks will be held to testify whether the final goal has been reached (Lesenciuc, Draghici & Nagy, 2011).

- **The Damen Model**

Louise Damen has published an important paper in 1987, named *Culture Learning: the Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom*, acknowledging culture in foreign language learning. The focus of this paper is the learners' awareness, acceptance, tolerance, understanding, empathy, and the lack of ethnocentrism towards the foreign culture (FC). This model is perceived at the synthetic level and appeals to the dynamic approach to developing the

communicative competence. Alternatively, when students are exposed to interesting courses about intercultural communication, they will shift from having intrapersonal private perspectives to having interpersonal public attitudes about the target culture. Damen's model highlights the fact that learners, who could raise their self-consciousness about their own cultural behaviour, would automatically end perceiving the behaviour of the otherness (Lesenciuc et al., 2011).

- **The Robinson Model**

This model was adopted by Ken Robinson in 1988 to focus on the acquisition of the new/target culture as an extension to one's own culture. It is based on the homogenous synthesis of one's own cultural elements and the others' cultural elements. Simply put, this model crystallises the positive intercultural interactions through which the learners are able to highlight the similarities between the two cultures instead of spotlighting the differences. Robinson, however, has suggested three strategies to overcome any possible drawback:

- Actively looking for similarities as an initial point of departure.
- Searching for empathy/similarity through analogy (a search for the similarity beneath the difference).
- Using ethnography.

Alternatively, these three steps are done for the purpose of preventing learners from falling in the fallacy of negative assumptions. Henceforth, learners have to extract differences only in order to identify the similarities between the native culture (NC) and the other one (Lesenciuc et al., 2011).

- **The Bennet Model**

In 1993, Milton Bennet has proposed a model to help students move from a set of personal standards to contextual standards. According to Bennet (2011), this process goes through two main stages: ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. Ethnocentrism, in turn, goes through many phases. Negation is where the students raise a conscious opinion of rejection. They experience a hostile behaviour towards the other culture. Learners, then, tend to make an over-evaluation of the native culture through comparing it to the target culture. This phase has been labelled as the “defence stage”. In the learning process of how to treat cultures based on contextual standards, teachers aim at making their students minimise and reduce the cultural differences so that they only highlight the similarities between both cultures. By doing so, learners come to accept and respect the cultural differences.

On the other hand, ethnorelativism generally follows two phases. The adaptation stage is the phase where students adapt to other referential cultural media rather than their own. The second stage is known as the integration phase. It is where the learners aim at including some foreign values into the native axiological system. Eventually, they implicitly acquire an intercultural or multicultural identity in addition to the national/ethnic background (Lesenciuc et al., 2011).

- **The Kramsch Model**

Claire Kramsch has proposed this model in 1993. It is oriented towards the others’ understanding and the communicational practices. This approach to foreign languages learning enables the learners to raise their self-understanding to comprehend the other part of the

conversation. This is known as “double-voiced discourse” which stands for both self-orientation and the orientation towards others. Based on this model, there are four major directions to follow in regard to language/culture learning:

- Establishing a sphere of interculturality.
- Teaching culture as an interpersonal process.
- Teaching culture as a difference.
- Crossing disciplinary boundaries (Lesenciuc et al., 2011).

Briefly, this vast process can be summarised in few steps. First, learners have to construct a common background between their own culture and the new one. Besides, they should reconstruct the context of production and reception of the text within the foreign culture. Then, they ought to examine the way both cultures view each other. Eventually, they engage in role-plays that could call for a change in order to practise what they have learnt (Lesenciuc et al., 2011).

- **The Pennycook Model**

Thanks to this model, the view towards school has shifted from being a place where the information is transferred to pupils/students to a cultural and political arena. Teachers are seen as transformative intellectuals who have to engage culturally and politically in order to participate in the forming of intercultural communication. Alastair Pennycook (1992) has not proposed phases to reach the final goal, yet he has claimed that students and teachers must follow a “critical pedagogy” to understand English as cultural politics (Lesenciuc et al., 2011).

One other important model is that of Michael Byram (1997; 2008) which has highly insisted on learning the four savoirs: knowledge, attitudes, education, and skills to understand and learn the target culture (TC). It is necessary to focus not only on preparing students to communicate without committing mistakes but also to communicate openly and forge relationships that allow them to thrive in the foreign cultural context (López-Rocha, 2016). These models have generated variant techniques and strategies to facilitate the teaching-learning process.

#### **1.2.4. Strategies for Improving Intercultural Communication**

The models mentioned above have been taken as references to open the door towards many strategies and methods for achieving a successful intercultural communication. It is worth noting that the curriculum design should take into consideration that the ultimate goal is developing the learners' awareness, openness to, and acceptance about/of the new/target culture.

Since the matter of interest is teaching culture as a component embedded within teaching language, the syllabi should follow a learner-centred approach. The latter enables the students to be surrounded by all possible inquiries and explorations about the target culture. In this case, the learners are active participants, and the teachers are just monitors who provide suitable materials and sources. It is worth mentioning that before selecting any strategy, teachers have to take into account that their students must first understand the issue and then explain it (López-Rocha, 2016). Besides, the process of teaching culture should go hand in hand with the progress of intercultural communication with a good preparation of the most suitable strategies. Eventually, scholars have proposed variant techniques for intercultural communication, most of which are

explained below.

- **Cultural Islands**

A cultural island refers to posters, pictures, maps, signs, and realia that help students shape an abstract image of the target culture. Teachers have to create short presentations on the topic of interest using the previously mentioned elements in order to strengthen the students' motivation. They can also use some borrowed terminology in their native language (NL). This way, learners can notice that some of the words are already known and notice as well the way other cultures influence the native one in terms of food, dressing, and all the other necessary lifestyle aspects (Elmore, 1997).

- **Culture Capsules**

The concept was developed by Darrel Taylor and John Sorensen in 1961 to provide an explanation of each minimal difference between the native culture and the foreign one. To do so, teachers can use illustrative photos and relevant realia. The cultural insights from the culture capsule can be further practised by role playing. For instance, Ursula Hendron (1984) has suggested teaching dating customs in Spanish-speaking countries by creating an illusion of a plaza mayor in the classroom with posters, props, music, or slides (Elmore, 1997).

Culture capsules are generally done orally with the teachers giving a brief lecture on the chosen cultural aspect and then leading a discussion about the differences between cultures. For example, teachers present the grading system at the United States (US) universities and try to explain how and when the US students get the marks graded from A to F. Teachers can either

provide all of the data at once or could pause after each piece of information. Then, they ask the class about the contrasts that they have noticed between the grading system of their native home universities and that of the United States universities (Elmore, 1997).

- **Culture Clusters**

This concept was adopted by Betsy Meade and Genelle Morain in 1973 to stand for a group of three or more illustrated culture capsules on related topics about the target culture's lifestyle. In this case, teachers work as narrators to guide their students. For example, if a culture cluster is about grades and their significance to university, students could uncover the capsule "how a grade point average is figured" plus another about what kind of decisions such as receiving scholarships and getting a better job are affected by a person's grade point average (Elmore, 1997).

- **Culture Assimilators**

This strategy consists of short (usually written) descriptions of a particular situation where an interaction takes place between at least one person from a target culture and one from a native culture. The description is followed by some provided choices related to behaviours, actions, and words. Later on, students select the choices they believe to be true. Then, the teacher checks the answers and leads a discussion, investigating the reasons why they have chosen certain options. Culture assimilators represent a good method to help students understand the cultural information (Elmore, 1997).

- **Mini-Dramas**

This method of teaching culture consists of three to five episodes in which misunderstanding and miscommunication are portrayed. Each episode is followed by an open-ended question discussion led by the teacher. These mini-dramas are generally written to foster the students' sympathy towards the non-natives when misunderstanding takes place. At the end of the course, things become clearer, and students realise what is really happening. Hence, learners can comprehend that natives do not do wrongs, and that they just behave the way their culture dictates. Students can take part in the course by acting the scripts handed to them. Then, the teacher asks the rest about the meaning of the characters' actions and words. After uncovering those issues, the students have to re-interpret what they have seen (Elmore, 1997).

- **Audio-Motor Units**

According to this strategy, the classroom should be set to suit the props and aims of the course. Students are orally exposed to certain instructions that require a physical response (shaking hands, listening actively, or looking in the eye). After the behaviours are performed, changes may take place to help students distinguish the minor issues about the same action. For example, is it proper, while talking, to look in the eye of a Native American and a non-native person in the same way? Audio-motor units provide solely a better knowledge and practice with correct behaviour but provide neither understanding nor empathy (Elmore, 1997).

It is worth noting that the models and strategies mentioned above are ways of how culture should be exposed to non-native learners to reach the desirable level of interculturality. Once everything is there between the hands of learners and once their awareness, acceptance, and

tolerance about the target culture become visible, it must be claimed that they have constructed an "intercultural communicative competence" (Elmore, 1997).

### **1.2.5. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)**

Intercultural communicative competence is the ability to grasp everything related to the target language and culture, with returning to one's own culture whenever it is required. Dell Hymes has proposed the concept of communicative competence in the 1970s as a correction to Chomsky's linguistic competence (Coperías-Aguilar, 2002). The latter is the idealised model of the languages' abstractions and details that set the speaker-hearer knowledge of language (Nouar, 2013). Considering the way using language appropriately is acquired, Hymes places emphasis on the sociolinguistic competence, a fundamental concept in the development of communicative language teaching (CLT), when being applied to the field of foreign language teaching and learning (Byram, 1997). The communicative competence, thus, is a wide term that incorporates not only the linguistic knowledge but also knowledge of a set of sociolinguistic codes and rules (Nouar, 2013). The limitation of Hymes' work includes the fact that he does not take the foreign language teaching and learning as a subject of concern (Byram, 1997). The work also fails to account for the whole socio-cultural dimension (Nouar, 2013). The time learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) start to balance between both cultures and interpret the world from variant angles, teachers have to develop the students' ability to learn the target culture, understand the foreign cultural elements, and enhance their intercultural communicative competence (Coperías-Aguilar, 2002).

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) requires not only what learners know

about the target language/culture but also about their own culture and its effects on behaviours, thoughts, and perceptions. It moves from the cultural competence that involves the knowledge of a culture's "factual knowledge history, mores, folkways, and values of a society" to intercultural competence. This latter consists of the same variables with the additional requirement that an individual has to be able to use this knowledge in combination with linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies (Lim & Griffith, 2016). In this regard, teachers who possess intercultural awareness and intercultural competence will eventually be more able to integrate cultural practices in their teaching process (Cetinavci, 2012).

Many specialists and scholars have devoted their time experimenting whether EFL learners are capable of reaching a remarkable desire for learning and accepting the cultural diversity. Sebnem Penbek, Dicle Yurdakul, and Guldem Cerit (2009) have tried to interpret whether students from different university departments have developed a required level of intercultural sensitivity. They have found that departments giving education supported by international materials such as exchanging programs and language courses would help graduates become equipped with sufficient intercultural sensitivity and tolerance towards people from other cultures. Esther Uso-Juan and Alicia Martinez-Flor (2008) have provided a variety of activities about the four language skills to equip learners with an intercultural communicative competence. Video-taped cultural dialogues, audio or video-taped intercultural misunderstandings, and recorded interviews with native speakers are tools used to reach the ultimate goal (Cetinavci, 2012). Scholars, however, have devised a standard rating scale to measure the learners' intercultural communicative level. It is known as "The Interagency Language Roundtable".

The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) is the standard grading scale that is developed to measure the student's ability to communicate in the target language (TL). It provides a series of guidelines to measure the students' intercultural communicative competence in a scale of zero to five; where zero stands for no competence and five for superior professional competence.

Table 1

*ILR Skill Levels Summary of Intercultural Communicative Competence*

Levels of Competence	Intercultural Communication
ILR Level 0 (No Competence)	Little knowledge or awareness of cultural differences. Learners are unable to adjust when faced with differences.
ILR Level 0+ (Memorised Competence)	Learners can engage in rehearsed behaviour and memorised patterns; have a vague awareness of the differences between own and target language/culture; can avoid some cultural taboos; can handle routine introductions, greetings, statements of appreciation, and apology.
ILR Level 1 (Elementary Competence)	Students are able to participate in everyday interactions but do not always use acceptable behaviour; recognise the differences between cultures but do not comprehend their significance; aware of basic courtesies and paralanguage.
ILR Level 2 (Limited Working Competence)	They are able to handle most routine situations; demonstrate cognisance of differences between cultures; avoid most cultural taboos and conform to general standards of etiquette; have some ability to reference issues and topics related to history, culture, and current events.
ILR Level 3 (Professional Competence)	Ability to participate in most interactions and transfer between formal and informal situations; they rarely misread cultural cues, can understand, and make a variety of cultural references; demonstrate significant knowledge and understandings of cultural expectations.
ILR Level 4 (Advanced Professional Competence)	Ability to control the full range of formal and informal language and behaviour; correctly interpret cues, cultural allusions, nuances, tones, and underlying cultural values; possess in-depth knowledge of traditions, beliefs, history, national issues, and policies.
ILR Level 5 (Superior Professional Competence)	They have the cultural proficiency of a native; able to recognise and understand colloquialisms, regionalisms, slang, and cultural references; understand and analyse various aspects of culture and its underpinnings.

*Note.* This table is adapted from Lim & Griffith (2016).

On account of measuring the intercultural communicative competence (ICC), other scholars have suggested another crucial criterion to enhance the learners' ICC. Critical thinking is a key element to achieve intercultural communicative competence as it allows participants to analyse, evaluate, and act upon communication cues including words, gestures, and other paralinguistic features. Critical thinking can help individuals understand each person's role in a conversation and adjust to its situational demands. Through adopting critical thinking, students will be able to understand the relevant and irrelevant cultural aspects in order to communicate appropriately and effectively within the conventional, social, and cultural boundaries (Lim & Griffith, 2016).

Students may experience certain negative feelings about the target culture; they may not understand the real aim behind being exposed to a new culture. Some learners experience fear of losing their identity and still prefer being tied to it. Some others may accept the progress but do not really know how to prevent themselves from falling in the fallacy of assumptions. Sometimes, the intended message cannot be decoded because the students do not reach a remarkable level of understanding the different linguistic and cultural systems. If this issue cannot be controlled by the students themselves or by their educators, learners will find themselves in a middle of intercultural pragmatic breakdowns (Lewthwaite, 1996). In 1983, however, these breakdowns have been mainly discussed by Jenny Thomas in her book *Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure*, as she has clearly used the two concepts interchangeably.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, it has been demonstrated that pragmatics, despite being a new field of study, has gained a remarkable place within intercultural communication studies. The fact that people should adhere to certain conditions to ensure a more effective communication is not enough, for it is necessary for them to take the notion of “politeness” into consideration. The chapter also denotes that understanding the violation of the four maxims engenders a conversational implicature that plays a crucial role in any successful communication. It is worthwhile to claim that pragmatics has captured the attention of linguists, starting from theoretically explaining the main concepts integrated within the field to practically embedding it within the syllabi in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). Therefore, teachers tend to expose their learners to communicative models and strategies to enhance these latter communicative skills inside (learner-learner/ learner-teacher communication) and outside (online, face-to-face interaction) classroom. Within this regard, the coming chapter will account for online dyadic communication being more problematic to EFL learners.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Online Dyadic Communication**

#### **Introduction**

Dyadic Communication belongs to the broader field of interpersonal communication. This form of interaction nowadays has many theories that go beyond the narrow scope of creating social relations to enclose the rules of pragmatics and assure the effective conduct of these exchanges. Most importantly, modern technologies have invaded the domain of dyadic communication giving birth to what is known as online dyadic communication. The present chapter deals with dyadic communication in general and online communication in particular. In its first section, it addresses how dyadic interaction is defined and the way it is investigated in the scope of pragmatic studies. This chapter crystallises as well the cultural, sociological, and psychological levels of interaction that people tend to frame while conducting dyadic communication besides the principles that govern these interactions. The costs and benefits of such interchanges are also spotlighted throughout this chapter. The second section ultimately focuses on online dyadic relations as being different from the usual communication and brings to light the various characteristics and types of those relations. The way interlocutors move from the first contact until the conversation descends is also tackled. Henceforth, the chapter culminates in highlighting the development, maintenance, and termination of such relations.

## **2.1. Dyadic Communication**

### **2.1.1. Definition of Dyadic Communication**

Researches in social psychology have set the ground for the way in which dyadic relationships are tackled in pragmatics. Dyadic interactions have been the subject of several studies, since much communication takes place between individuals within this sphere. Indeed, the dyad is the basic unit of interpersonal communication and the building block of relations (Kenny et al., 2006, as cited in Liden, Anand & Vidyarthi, 2016).

Dyadic communication in general refers to any exchange of meaning between two persons. It can be any type of conversation and may even take the form of a social media interaction. There exist two forms of dyadic communication: the formal one includes interviews, confessions, or counselling, and the informal form involves chatting (Husain, 2012). Scholars in different fields of studies categorise the occurrence of dyadic interactions on multitude levels. These classifications are made in ways that serve their views.

### **2.1.2. Levels of Interaction in Dyadic Communication**

Communication is a medium through which the interlocutors transmit certain information about their national, social, and cultural heritage. Henceforth, dyadic exchanging gives a chance for people to shape cultural, sociological, and psychological levels of dyadic communication.

- **The Cultural Level**

Human cultures are intimately connected to language, and language, of course, is one of the primary means through which people communicate. It is often the defining feature of a specific cultural population. A common language is not merely a badge of social identity; it is also often a signal of a shared history, shared customs, and shared beliefs and values (Conway III & Schaller, 2007). This language is purely transmitted depending on people's cultural belongingness. Undoubtedly, people's language varies due to the existence of many identities and ideologies within one culture. Simply put, people of one culture tend to use the language aspects differently and transmit what each ideology requires them to do. According to Kashima and Kashima (1998, as cited in Conway III & Schaller, 2007): "Although all human languages have pronoun words "I, you", these pronouns are more likely to be dropped- implied rather than actually spoken- in the languages spoken by people in collectivistic cultures" (p. 108).

The language, that transmits a particular message between two or more persons having different cultural aspects, crystallises the idea of the cultural progress from one generation to another. Alternatively, Latané (1996, as cited in Conway III & Schaller, 2007) has argued that communication is not only a main feature of culture, but it is also sufficient to account for the emergence of culture. Linguists have shifted their attention towards studying the deep meaning and various other aspects related to pragmatics. They have even traced the variant effects of different underlying meta-functions of the linguistic items (García-Carbonell & Rising, 2006). It is necessary for non-natives to understand what English speakers clearly mean when uttering statements like "with the greatest respect" (an icy put-down) and "I will bear it in mind" (meaning I plan to do nothing about it). Those meanings have been definitely identified by

culture (García-Carbonell & Rising, 2006). The individuals' cultural, socio-cultural, and psycho-cultural knowledge that arises from being attached to a foreign individual or group can be an essential competence in developing the process of dyadic communication (García-Carbonell & Rising, 2006). Briefly, culture and communication are interrelated, once the interlocutors build their cultural knowledge and move simultaneously with the progress of language, they can undoubtedly achieve an appropriate, effective, and successful level of dyadic communication, and thus, culture can be intelligibly shaped.

- **The Sociological Level**

In dyadic exchanging, the communicators, as being part of a particular society, tend to shape how a certain society operates. From this perspective, it can be claimed that the language, which is used between the parties of the communication, is nothing rather than a society's child. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (as cited in Tkachenko, 2017) have claimed: "What I expect depends on where I come and the meanings I give to what I experience" (p. i).

Mass society is a term used by social scientists and scholars to delineate certain audiences, kinds of society, and different cultural forms that a society possesses. It has emerged within the evolution of industry, urbanism, and complex communications. It is noteworthy that the message being transmitted using certain linguistic items and behavioural aspects is merely a mirror that reflects how a given social group behaves, talks, and thinks. Marshall McLuhan (1964) has summarised all of this using the slogan "Medium is the message". Therefore, people in a particular society are subjected to social conventions that justify their own production and perception of the information in a dyadic interaction (Madhukar et al., 2018).

Dyadic communication also shows how societal changes occur due to historical events, the way people's thoughts adapt to those shifts, and so that their language. Therefore, dyadic communication is, from a sociological perspective, a way through which one can decode the variant social aspects in order to create a close contact with the different mass culture, large-scale, and impersonal and social institutions that a society consists of (Madhukar et al., 2018). Scholars have announced that dyadic communications serve to work as social sciences, and how these are related to certain historical contexts. According to Calhoun (2011), communication is a social science through which a study of many key dimensions of social change has taken place, starting from the several historical contexts like Arab Spring, the global financial crisis, and struggles over intellectual property to the rising influence of the Internet on the way people think and talk.

- **The Psychological Level**

Thanks to dyadic conversations, people can form certain psychological aspects that differ from one personality to another. Accordingly, the relationship between psychology and dyadic communication can be summarised through highlighting three key types of communication practices (Bailenson & Yee, 2008).

**Face-to-face interpersonal communication** is the everyday communication where the interlocutors physically meet one another and make a direct contact. The contactors tend to exchange different data about how their societies hold variant social, cultural, and cognitive practices (Bailenson & Yee, 2008). Generally speaking, this kind of dyadic communication can be either informal as the friendly exchange of ideas and information or formal as the

professionally relations between educators, administrators, and professors. Kendon (1970, as cited in Bailenson & Yee, 2008) has focused on a concept called “interactional synchrony”; this type of communication explains how verbal and non-verbal cues are related to the psychological state of the person. Simply put, words and gestures are complementary in a way that if words do not transmit the real intention of the speaker, gestures will help grant the meaning and vice versa.

On account of the interactional synchrony, dyadic communication reflects what each personality holds in a form of psychological processes. In this regard, Burgoon (1978) and Patterson (1983, as cited in Bailenson & Yee, 2008) have emphasised that the breakdown that may appear during the dyadic communication is tied to the psychological state of both parties whenever a violation of a social norm takes place. For example, if a person violates a social norm, such as touching a stranger, then the stranger will react to that violation of his/her expectations based on an assessment of the potential subsequent outcomes of his/her reaction to the unexpected touch. According to Patterson (1983, as cited in Bailenson & Yee, 2008) to avoid those violations, one has to understand the psychological state of his/her interlocutor, and the historical circumstances that have preceded and accompanied the meeting.

**Mass Communication** is the process of sharing pieces of information from a small number of mass communities to a large population. From a psychological perspective, it is the interaction that has typically been understood as organisations such as newspapers, movie production companies, or television studios, using some media technology to distribute information to large audiences (Bailenson & Yee, 2008).

Several studies have later been conducted to testify whether the news, data, and pieces of information transferred via media technologies affect the way people speak and behave when it comes to the external direct physical interactions. In the 1970s and 1980s, George Gerbner has provided compelling evidence that this type holds features of both face-to-face and mediated dyadic communication. The basic argument is that, after much exposure to various forms of mass media, people will change their patterns of interpersonal behaviour because they have acquired an altered mental representation or worldview. For example, people who dedicate their time watching television that often features violence are more likely to begin avoiding going out late at night. Gerbner's work has emphasised the fact that communication consists of the combinatorial aspect of the psychological processes. In order to create a model of how a worldview is cultivated, it is necessary to understand how people perceive and attend to stimuli, how they interact with mediated versions of people, and how, as a consequence, their interpersonal interaction with actual people changes (Bailenson & Yee, 2008).

**Mediated interpersonal communication** is the interaction where social media platforms are committed to facilitate the exchange of information between the parties of the conversation. This real time exchange takes place through using different types of media like telephones, computers, and video conferencing (Bailenson & Yee, 2008). Many scholars have studied what may happen when persons are interacting via online typed messages, and how the lack of visual cues affects the message being transmitted. Sproull and Kiesler (1986, as cited in Bailenson & Yee, 2008) have claimed that this type of communication leads to less personal forms of interaction than in face-to-face contexts.

Many experiments have taken place to investigate the way people tend to treat mediated sources. Reeves and Nass (1996, as cited in Bailenson & Yee, 2008) have showed, through a series of experiments, that people have a tendency to treat media interfaces as if they are social actors. For example, people become polite to computers under certain conditions in order to conform to a social norm. In one study, participants have performed a learning task on a computer. Then, they have evaluated the event, either on the same computer or on a different one. Participants give more positive ratings when they conduct the evaluation on the same computer that has administered the learning task than when they are assigned to a different computer. Basically, when people use media to conduct interpersonal interactions, they are combining processes that occur within face-to-face interpersonal interactions with new processes that are unique to utilising various kinds of technology.

Briefly, the previously highlighted types of communication show how psychology affects communication, and how this latter, in turn, shapes those variant psychological states of the communicators. For the communication to be effective and successful, interlocutors ought to adhere to certain conversational basics.

### **2.1.3. Principles of Successful Dyadic Communication**

Communication is a paramount skill needed in all human activities. Efficient communication is not only important in business or work settings, but it is a life skill. When communicating, people need to understand others and be understood. For this reason, effective communication is determined by how well the message is transmitted, and how well it is apprehended. The world is being transformed, humans are evolving and communication has to

conform to these changes, and despite the presence of the most elaborated technologies, a successful communication is not always endorsed. Henceforth, a set of particular elements are required to ensure an infallible communication (Akilandeswari et al., 2015).

- **Simplicity and clarity of thought and expression:** The elements of simplicity and clarity are interrelated yet are not interchangeable; in order to convey a message in an unambiguous way, one has to opt for simplicity. The communicators have to set a clear objective in their mind; they must know what they want to say, how, and why. The better speakers/writers clearly know what they want to say, the simpler they express themselves, and the optimum communication will be (Akilandeswari et al., 2015). The use of complicated language will definitely kill communication; for the latter to take place in a comprehensible way, the interlocutors have to use simple language taking into consideration the other party's level and background (Mishra, 2017). A very common mistake is to think that communication comes spontaneously; it has to be contemplated, clearly set in mind, and expressed in a simple way.
- **Being open to feedback:** The interlocutors should always pursue feedback and show to the receptors of the message that they are open to discussion. It helps to know whether the message has been received and understood in the expected way. Opening the loop of feedback to the receiver enables the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication. Such responses during the process of communication need to be evaluated as well to demonstrate that the other's feedback is important and has been considered (Mishra, 2017).

- **Considering the environment:** Another essential element to conduct a good communication is to be mindful of the interaction's environment; the right place and time have to be taken into consideration. A critical aspect of the environment for a successful communication is trust between both parties of the interaction. The American Management Association (1961, as cited in Mishra, 2017) highlights the element of environment as follows: "Meaning and intent are conveyed by more than words alone. Many other factors influence the overall impact of a communication and you must be sensitive to the total setting in which you communicate" (para. 3). One cannot expect the other person to be open to communication if confidence is not settled between them; in this case, communication is ineffective.
- **Correctness:** In addition to being clear, the message has to be correct in grammar, syntax, content, spelling, and punctuation. The interlocutors have also to consider style which covers word choice and degrees of formality (Mishra, 2017). If one of the above stated elements is missing, communication will undoubtedly fail.
- **Reading between the lines:** The interlocutors have to be conscious of what is communicated whether it is explicit or implicit. Paying attention to body language, pitch, tone, and behaviour can be more revealing than words themselves (Geurin, 2017). Communication is a complex process where the communicators must not only understand what is clearly displayed, but they also ought to go deeper in their interaction to catch what is hidden between the lines to achieve the best communication.
- **Respecting turn taking:** Turn taking defines the efficiency of a certain conversation when the interlocutors' speaking turns are respected. It is a mesmerising human property

that governs their interaction and stands for the mechanism of exchange (Sacks et al., 1974, as cited in Holler et al., 2016). Turn taking allows the communication to be organised and well conducted. If one of the interlocutors interrupts the one speaking, not only the idea will not be transmitted appropriately, but also the disturbed interlocutor will lose interest in the conversation, consequently; communication collapses.

An effective dyadic communication is a way to bring people closer and has considerable advantages. However, it is a double edged sword; as much as it is an open door to the discovery of the world, it is a labyrinth where sometimes it is difficult to find the way out. Therefore, one has to put himself/herself in a situation where he/she can gain benefits from engaging in dyadic communication, with a condition of preventing the possible hindrances that it generates.

#### **2.1.4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Dyadic Communication**

The desire for communicating and building new relationships is universal. Communication is essential to learning, growth, and development. Henceforth, dyadic interactions hold a set of merits despite the fact that they have many demerits to consider which may lead to undesirable outcomes.

The conversational partners can get benefits from communicating with one another and constructing purposeful relations with foreigners. Dyadic communication helps lessen feelings of loneliness. Everyone needs to feel that s/he is surrounded by those who love, like, or show interest for him/her. Therefore, relationships assure the contactors protection and ensure that someone will be there when needed. Besides, in any communication, the interlocutors work as stimulotropics. Simply put, through exchanging ideas, the interlocutors tend to derive an

intellectual, physical, and emotional stimulation. It is noteworthy that whenever the conversational partners communicate with others, they build certain knowledge about themselves and start to see themselves in variant perspectives as they relate to others. From a healthy viewpoint, dyadic communication helps enhance the interlocutors' physical and emotional health. It decreases feelings of depression and its consequent physical illness. Briefly, the conversationalists will share their joy, good fortune as well as their pain and sorrow (Obe & Ayedun, 2008).

On the other hand, communication holds negative consequences. The interlocutors put pressure on one another to reveal themselves and to expose their vulnerability. The tendency to communicate may backfire when the interaction deteriorates, and these are weaknesses that can be used against them. As communicators get involved in close interactions, emotional obligations are the most difficult demands because it is not easy to be emotionally responsive and sensitive. It is worth mentioning that whenever persons build new communicative relationships, feelings of insulation will increase. Alternatively, new contacts may result in abandoning other relations. It is also believed that the interlocutors may face difficulties in solving possible misunderstanding and misinterpretations, especially when conversations take place through online sources (Obe & Ayedun, 2008).

## **2.2. Online Dyadic Interaction**

### **2.2.1. Definition of Online Dyadic Interaction**

Social media are becoming the most pervasive tool of communication nowadays. Their impact on the way people interact, exchange information, give their impressions, or share their

experiences is phenomenal. People do not write long detailed letters anymore; their interaction is limited to short online conversations or comments containing little information. These conversations lack the necessary information for natural language processing. Online dyadic conversations are sometimes called asynchronous as users can write and reply at different times. Such communication happens in real-time; the texts are unstructured, have many formats, and convey the use of non-linguistic elements making them complicated to be scrutinised (Benamara, Inkpen & Taboada, 2018).

Online dyadic communication, as related to the field of pragmatics, can be defined as the use of sociolinguistic rules within a specific online communicative context. It emphasises language use and functions that language shapes including requesting, asking, congratulating, and many others (Ciccia, 2011). Otherwise stated, the elements pertinent to language and those related to mediated communication are to be combined within the same framework. As a matter of fact, Leech (1983, as cited in Wahyuni Kusumawardhani, 2011) has assumed that pragmatics deals with triadic relations; it is not only related to the speaker/writer and hearer/reader but also to a specific situation or context unlike semantics. Celce-Murcia (2000, as cited in Ciccia, 2011), a professor of applied linguistics, acknowledges that online dyadic communication can be considered as the relationship occurring between linguistic devices and the human beings' exchange of those devices in a social media communicative setting. These exchanges are conducted through multiple modes each of which displays distinct features.

## **2.2.2. Types of Online Dyadic Interaction**

The way people communicate with one another is in a constant evolution. There are plenty of ways in which individuals make connections with one another. The most prevalent types of internet dyadic communication include:

### **2.2.2.1. Instant Messaging (IM)**

One of the most significant forms of interaction via web is the Instant Messaging (IM). Beal (2005) defines it as “a text-based computer conference between two or more people” (para. 4). She further explains that it allows individuals to communicate in real-time in what is referred to as a private “chat room”. The IM system notifies the users whenever one of their contacts is online to start a chat session with them. One of the advantages of IM is that the response is generally instant unlike email where the users have to wait for a response. It has become a fast growing phenomenon in every field where it is a time saver for everyone. This form of dyadic interaction is especially beneficial for quick conversations (Beal, 2005).

### **2.2.2.2. Electronic-mail**

This type of online communication consists of exchanging any kind of information from one electronic device to another. Beal (2005) describes electronic mailing as “the transmission of messages over communications networks” (para. 1). She further asserts that any person can send an email message over the world as long as they have the interlocutor’s email address, especially because the message takes few seconds to reach its destination. Documents, letters, and pictures can be sent with the message as well. When responding to the message, the original one is sent

with the response in order to keep a history of the interaction for later access. In this type of online dyadic communication, the individuals have to be careful when it comes to what they say because of the lack of nonverbal signs which can lead to misunderstanding in some cases (*“Email and Online Communication”*, 2010).

### **2.2.2.3. SMS and Wireless Communications**

Short Message Service (SMS) allows sending alphanumeric messages between mobile subscribers. This kind of communication is limited to a number of 160 alpha-numeric characters (a combination of alphabetical and numerical characters) yet does not enable the users to attach images or graphs to the message. The messages being sent are received by a Short Message Service Centre (SMSC) whose role is to transmit it to the appropriate device system. Even so, the evolution of wireless services has made it possible to send a combination of texts, images, sounds, and videos through Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) (Beal, 2005).

The previously mentioned types of online dyadic communication are the most well-known and used ones. They differ from one another depending on their use, and how they are designed. Yet, these forms of interaction share a set of characteristics that are pertinent to all of them.

### **2.2.3. Characteristics of Online Dyadic Interaction**

- **Online dyadic interaction is a dynamic process:** It means that communication between individuals is continuous and occurs in an uninterrupted flow of ideas. The communicators influence one another; what one individual says is affected by and affects

what the other says. Every online dyadic interaction is “a point of arrival from a former encounter and a point of departure for a future encounter” (Gamble & Gamble, 2013, p. 19).

- **Online dyadic communication is contextual:** Online dyadic conversations do not take place in isolation. They are always surrounded by variant circumstances and situations that form their setting. Therefore, King (2000, as cited in Obe & Ayedun, 2008) has explained five contexts as follow:
  - **The psychological context:** refers to the conversational partners and what they can bring to the interaction. They tend to shape their needs, desires, values, and personality.
  - **The relational context:** stands for the interlocutors’ reactions and relational feelings towards one another.
  - **The situational context:** refers to the reasons, conditions, or circumstances that influence how the talk proceeds.
  - **The environmental context:** deals with the physical place where they are communicating. Furniture, location, noise level, temperature, season, and time of day are all examples of factors in the environmental context.
  - **The cultural context:** includes all the learned behaviours and rules that affect the interaction. If one comes from a culture (foreign or within one’s own country) where it is considered rude to make long and direct eye contact, it is considered polite to avoid eye contact.

- **Online dyadic interaction is unrepeatable:** The interplay is exclusive; neither the conversations, emotions, thoughts, nor the relationships can be re-experienced or will ever recur in the same way again. Individuals change with every contact they make (Gamble & Gamble, 2013).
- **Online dyadic interaction is irreversible:** This type of communication is irrevocable. Gamble and Gamble (2013) claim that the impact of what has been said cannot be obliterated. The conversation can neither be started, erased, nor be substituted by a more convenient one. Once a stimulus is set, it becomes a part of a behavioural sequence. This principle of irreversibility stands for the reality that the messages being sent are not to be taken back. Once the message is out, it is out and there is no chance to fix or take the words back. Therefore, King (2000, as cited in Obe & Ayedun, 2008) has emphasised the fact that the interlocutors must think twice before delivering any message.
- **In online dyadic interaction it is not possible to revoke online messages:** Online messages are virtually impossible to erase, they remain on servers forever even after deleting them. This includes emails and social media entries including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and LinkedIn. The effect of the message can be diminished but their existence is permanent. Indeed, the online service Social Intelligence stores a dossier on every prejudice, stereotype, insult, or derogation advanced (Gamble & Gamble, 2013).
- **Online dyadic communication is complicated:** Communication in general is a complex process since language embodies verbal and non-verbal cues that vary from one culture to another, let alone when this interaction is online. This kind is more complicated as both parties rely solely on verbal cues, and they cannot detect what the other party really

means (King, 2000, as cited in Obe & Ayedun, 2008). Theorists note that whenever communication occurs, there are at least six "people" involved: (1) who they think they are. (2) Who they think the other person is. (3) Who they think the other person thinks they are. (4) Who the other person thinks s/he is. (5) Who the other person thinks they are. (6) And finally, who the other person thinks they think s/he is.

- **Online dyadic interaction is learned overtime:** Time is a crucial factor in online dyadic interactions. Gamble and Gamble (2013) explain that as time passes by, the interlocutors discern what is appropriate in an interpersonal communication, and what is not. One of the attributes of this latter is that the persons who take part in this interaction become familiar with the fashion words affect their interlocutors, and how they are afflicted by the former's words. Henceforth, individuals adopt the necessary adjustments.
- **Online dyadic communication is inescapable:** Online dyadic communication is not optional. Many scholars have claimed that people cannot do but communicate, and even their attempts to not share something is a communication in itself. This attribute highlights the fact that the conventionalists tend to judge one another by means of behaviours and not by means of their intents (Obe & Ayedun, 2008). Alternatively, people are not mind readers, and even if they pretend so, they may never reveal what minds are more likely to think about.
- **Online dyadic interaction is characterised by wholeness and nonsummativity:** The wholeness of an online interaction denotes that it functions as an integrated entity. Not only are the participants given due consideration, but also the anomalous ways in which they influence one another. In addition to being characterised by wholeness, online

dyadic relations are featured by nonsummativity. The nature of the whole relationship must be investigated; it cannot be understood by exploring only the sum of its parts. Otherwise stated, the operation as a whole is distinctive from the sum of its separate parts (Gamble & Gamble, 2013).

The above mentioned elements are not the only particularities that characterise online dyadic relations; however, they are the most common features that best describe these interactions. Such interactions are not conducted randomly but follow specific phases which help to better understand their nature.

#### **2.2.4. Process of Online Dyadic Interaction**

The process of online dyadic communication, from the beginning until the end of the conversation, goes through multiple stages. Scholars have variant divisions concerning the phases that the communicators undergo during an interaction. One famous model that focuses on three general phases (development, maintenance, and termination) is Mark Knapp's (1978) dual staircase model. It elaborates how relationships escalate, stabilise, and descend over time through mediated communicative processes (Fox, Warber & Makstaller, 2013).

##### **2.2.4.1. Development of Online Dyadic Interaction**

As any process, the development of an online dyadic communication goes through many phases, starting from the first encounter until the interlocutors announce certain decisions about the future of their interaction. Knapp (as cited in Fox et al., 2013) has classified this stage of communication into five distinct phases:

- **Initiating:** It is the first encounter between the communicators, and thus, it crystallises the first impression. The initiating stage is often dictated by social norms and standards for greeting another person; introductions and superficial topics dominate initial conversations.
- **Experimenting:** It is the phase where the two parties are going to search about a common ground through posing direct or indirect questions.
- **Intensifying:** At this level, the communication becomes less scripted and the partner's self-disclosure decreases. The communicators experience feelings of excitement and satisfaction.
- **Integrating:** This stage focuses on the idea that interconnectors rely on social norms to dictate their relationship and focus on connectedness within the dyad. They start referring to themselves as 'we' and 'us'.
- **Bonding:** It is the public ritual to legitimise a relationship. For example, couples publicly announce their intentions to get married.

#### 2.2.4.2. Maintenance of Online Dyadic Interaction

The maintenance stage constitutes of five main phases. Differences may become clearer and silence may win this time. Knapp (1978, as cited in Welch & Rubin, 2002) has claimed that communication during deescalating or "coming apart" follows a similar pattern to escalating but in reverse.

- **Differentiating:** In this stage, the communicators tend to replace 'we' and 'us' by 'I' and 'my'. Disagreements and self-disclosure increase during this phase.

- **Circumscribing:** Here, tension prohibits asking/doing favours, and communication is awkward and strained.
- **Stagnating:** It emphasises silence and inactivity. It focuses on the idea that saying less is better because if a discussion is maintained, it will not be particularly pleasant; this level often occurs between people who cannot let the other party dominate the conversation.
- **Avoiding:** It is the physical or emotional separation marked by spending time apart or ignoring the other.
- **Terminating:** It is the realisation of what life is like without the existence of the other. Hence, conversations focus on farewell speeches.

#### **2.2.4.3. Termination of Online Dyadic Interaction**

This stage is similar to the final phase of Knapp's staircase model in de-escalation. It marks that the relationship is over. The communicators announce the separation and the summary of what has occurred so that future interaction may be determined (Welch & Rubin, 2002). It is worth noting that not all persons go through the pre-highlighted stages; they may either go through all of them, or they can experience one stage and not progress to the next one but go back due to the different perceptions that people have (Welch & Rubin, 2002).

The termination of online dyadic relations may undergo some misinterpretations that lead to the failure of interpersonal communication, especially when the interlocutors belong to different cultural and social norms. This occurs frequently between EFL learners and native speakers when the speaker and the receiver of the information are communicating through mediated sources like Messenger, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

## **Conclusion**

The current chapter has examined the way people tend to communicate and more particularly, how the interaction in mediated contexts is different. The chapter shows that various characteristics and types of online communication play a significant role in identifying how a mediated interpersonal communication between EFL learners and native speakers influences, and simultaneously is influenced by certain levels of interaction. It also foregrounds that an effective interaction is not as simple as it appears but demands a set of principles to be adopted, opening the door for identifying the cons and pros of such dyadic relations. This chapter has explicitly traced the various phases that the communicators tend to go through while communicating. The fact that social media have invaded the world of communication nowadays, people tend to communicate virtually, especially EFL learners as it is an effective way to enhance their communicative skills by interacting with native speakers. In such conditions, the implementation of pragmatics in the study of those social and cultural relations has become imperative, for EFL learners tend to display pragmatic breakdowns. The coming chapter attempts to reveal these pragmatic problems and their causes along with pursuing some solutions to overcome these problems.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology and Data Discussion**

#### **Introduction**

The current chapter is dedicated to the research methodology that specifies the hierarchy of the research paper and the different tools of collection and the analysis of data gathered by means of those instruments. They both aspire to reconnoitre the learners' intercultural pragmatic breakdowns, their antecedents, and solutions when online dyadic communication takes place with native speakers. The chapter, in its first section, opens with a revisitation of the research questions and shifts to identify the research design that the researchers opt for in accordance with the study's requirements. This description has led the path towards identifying the research instruments adopted to achieve the research's main goal and the procedures implemented to put each instrument into practice for data collection and analysis. This is done through specifying the samples being targeted, the sample material, and the setting where the investigation is run. The second section presents the analysis and discusses the data obtained from each tool via a thorough interpretation of the findings.

#### **3.1. Research Methodology**

##### **3.1.1. Research Questions Restatement**

As any investigation, the present study has started with raising certain interrogations which centralise EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic breakdowns. The following represents the main research questions:

1. What are the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that take place in EFL learners' online dyadic interactions with natives?
2. What are the reasons behind the pragmatic problems that EFL learners encounter during online intercultural communication?
3. What are the possible solutions to overcome these intercultural pragmatic breakdowns?

It is worth stating that the above mentioned research questions portray the way the study is structured and planned. This comes under the so-called “research design”.

### **3.1.2. Research Design**

Any research can be announced valid only if the researchers establish their studies on an accurate plan that specifies the structure of the whole paper. The research design is a plan developed before proceeding into data collection and analysis in order to determine the kind of data to be collected and the type of methods to be used for the purpose of approaching the research problem under investigation. Jahoda, Deutch and Cook (as cited in Akhtar, 2016) have defined the research design as “the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure” (p. 68). Alternatively, the research design is the structure that researchers opt for to operate their study, and it must coincide with the research questions and the purpose of the investigation.

Since the research design is the blueprint that guides the different stages that the research paper should consist of, scholars have advised some functional elements of a good research plan. Kothari (2010, as cited in Akhtar, 2016) has simplified the elements as follow:

1. A clear statement of the research problem.
2. Procedures and techniques to be used for gathering data or information.
3. The population to be studied.
4. Methods to be used in processing and analysing data (p. 70).

It is noteworthy that the research design plays a remarkable role in constructing the hierarchy of a certain paper. It is not only a work plan but also ensures that the evidence obtained enables the investigator to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible (Jongbo, 2014). Far from being the first step that the researchers have to decide about, the research design reflects the effectiveness, appropriateness, and accuracy of the data derived to achieve the main goal. Jongbo (2014) has claimed that the probability of success of a research project is greatly enhanced when the “beginning” is correctly defined as a precise statement of goals and justification. Therefore, the sequential steps necessary for writing a research plan and then successfully executing a research project are easier to identify and organise. It is important to allude to the fact that the research design as a structure of investigation has to be distinguished from the method which is a mode of data collection. Another noteworthy fact is that there is no research design that entails a peculiar method for data collection.

Social research aims at understanding social phenomena or behaviours by using generally two main approaches: quantitative and qualitative research. The researchers’ choice rests on the required connectedness between the plan and the purpose of the study. Indeed, depending on the

objectives of the study, the researchers can opt for the former, the latter, or both approaches combined if the research demands so, even if they contradict one another in many angles. In this case, it is called a mixed methods research.

In this study, the researchers adopt a mixed methods approach that englobes both quantitative and qualitative approaches due to the essence of the investigation requiring the application of both researches to cover all the angles of the study. This selection serves the main goal of the research since it provides a descriptive, systematic, and analytical study of the sample's responses. It is motivated as well by the nature of the research questions that requires relying on such a holistic approach. The mixed methods approach helps researchers gain insight into the topic from different functional ways for more consistent and accurate findings. The following sections will account for these approaches more thoroughly by giving credit to the variant characteristics of each of the above-stated approaches.

### **3.1.2.1. The Qualitative Approach**

According to methodologists, types of data obtained can be either descriptive or statistical, the former come under the broader label called “The Qualitative Approach”. This can be defined as an approach that makes use of data gathering methods to explore the participants' views about certain issues, phenomena, or concepts. Patton (2001, as cited in Golafshani, 2003) defines qualitative research as “an approach that uses a naturalistic approach which seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real world settings, where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomena of interest...” (p. 600).

In order to collect and analyse data, the researchers tend to rely on certain tools. Yilmaz (2013, as cited in Moore & Ness, 2016) has stated that qualitative researchers use participants' observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis, and focus groups. It is used when researchers do not know what to expect, how to define the issues, or when they lack an understanding of why and how the affected populations are impacted by an emergency. However, qualitative research explores information from the perspective of both groups and individuals and generates case studies and summaries rather than lists of numeric data (Brief, 2012).

This type of approach is more related to individuals and their background, whether they are participants or researchers. Weinreich (2009, as cited in Mafuwane, 2012) notes that the qualitative research aims at proffering the researchers with insights about people's attitudes through exposure to culture or specific circumstances by means of a direct interaction with the audience. This, points to the fact that the researcher becomes part of the different processes occurring in the study. It leads to reveal a distinct feature of this approach which proposes that the results change based on the person conducting the research.

### **3.1.2.2. The Quantitative Research**

On the other hand, the information collected by the researchers can hold statistical features which are part of the quantitative approach. According to Van der Merwe (1996, as cited in Mafuwane, 2012), the quantitative research "is a research approach aimed at testing theories, determining facts, demonstrating relationships between variables, and predicting outcomes" (p. 73). Alternatively, Brief (2012) has specified quantitative researches as being characterised by

the collection of information which can be analysed numerically, the results of which are typically presented using statistics, tables, and graphs.

This kind of research adopts a number of techniques that encompass unbiased random selection of the sample of participants as part of the whole population and the uniform questionnaire. It also sets the processes that involve statistical data for testing the hypotheses and displaying the relationship between the variables. Researchers in quantitative research are not considered part of the investigation like the case of qualitative study; they are extraneous elements in the research which provides the results of the study the advantageousness of being replicable and more objective.

Table 2

*Comparing Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*

Qualitative Approach	Quantitative Approach
Its purpose is to explore the meaning of people's experiences, the meaning of people's culture, and how people view a particular issue or case.	Its purpose is to examine the relationship between variables, such as the dependent, independent, and extraneous variables.
It is exploratory. Therefore, it typically does not have a hypothesis.	It does have hypotheses or predictions about what will happen in the study.
The data used in the qualitative research are almost always in what people say or in words. These data usually come from interviews, documents like newspaper or journals, observation, and audiovisual materials such as videos or audio.	Researchers collect more than one type of data in order to get a better and more holistic picture about what is going on in the field.
It is inductive in nature, which means that the research questions, the data collection, and the data analysis are not based on a theory or preconceived notions that the researcher has, the researcher lets the information speak for itself, and form itself into themes without the bias of an existing theory.	It is deductive, it is based on existing theories and information that are already out there to help form research questions, how data are collected, and how they are analysed.
Analysis is all about creating themes; researchers read their interviews, look at documents, observations, and audiovisual materials, and then organise all the data of those words into themes which can take a considerable amount of time.	Analysis involves the use of statistics to crunch numbers, and it discovers what those numbers mean in terms of answering research questions.
The final report is usually narrative in nature, the authors sometimes write in the first person, it is more interpretive and contains a lot of writing, and has direct quotes from participants.	The final reports of the quantitative research are more rigid and in the form of a statistical report.

*Note.* This table is adapted from Creswell (2009, as cited in Elkatawneh, 2016).

### 3.1.2.3. Mixed Methods Research

This approach is a mingling of the features of both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches as it stipulates collecting, interpreting, and analysing data using diverse techniques pertinent to each approach. Bazely (2003, as cited in Mafuwane, 2012) defines this approach as “The use of mixed data (numerical and text) and alternative tools (statistics and analysis), but apply the same method” (p. 6). Many scholars have adopted the mixed methods approach as a way to strengthen their research findings and to reach a remarkable level of consistency, accuracy, and reliability (Moore & Ness, 2016). In this study, the researchers have opted for this approach to conform to the study’s requirements, research questions, and objectives.

The association of both approaches provides a more holistic view and enquiry of data to be analysed. Creswell, Fetters and Ivankova (2004, as cited in Mafuwane, 2012) illustrate that researchers have recourse to the mixed methods approach on the grounds that adopting one research or the other is not sufficient to account for all facets of the case. Following the same line of arguments, this approach entails the implementation of induction concerned with the discovery of patterns, deduction which implicates testing theories and hypotheses, and abduction which involves adopting the most plausible explanation that would account for understanding the results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004, as cited in Mafuwane, 2012).

As any other approach, the mixed methods research has gained a noticeable position in the educational sphere due to the distinct amenities it possesses. Malina, Nørreklit and Selto (2011) have elucidated that the major merit of this approach is that researchers can return to the qualitative data to reread quotes in context of the larger document. They can also make

multiple runs of statistical analyses until confirming evidence is found. Alternatively, applying such an approach enables the researchers to recheck the data obtained from the participants' responses. This, in turn, guarantees the information's adequacy.

Other advantages that can be taken into regard involve:

- **Comparing quantitative and qualitative data:** It is especially useful in understanding contradictions between quantitative results and qualitative findings.
- **Reflecting participants' point of view:** It gives a voice to study participants and ensures that the study findings are grounded in the participants' experiences.
- **Fostering scholarly interaction:** Such studies add breadth to multidisciplinary team research by encouraging the interaction of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods scholars.
- **Providing methodological flexibility:** A mixed methods approach has great flexibility and is adaptable to many study designs, such as observational studies and randomised trials. It also helps to elucidate more information. It collects rich and comprehensive data.
- **Reflecting the way individuals naturally collect information by integrating quantitative and qualitative data:** For example, sports stories frequently integrate quantitative data (scores or number of errors) with qualitative data (descriptions and images of highlights) to provide a more complete story than either methods would write alone (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013).

It merits mentioning that many researchers have followed a "Triangulation Approach" as an amalgamation of many approaches to investigate one concept, phenomenon, or issue. Bryman (as cited in Heale & Forbes, 2013) has stated that the objective behind utilising such a research is

to increase confidence in the findings through the confirmation of a proposition using two or more independent measures. Undoubtedly, these findings can be reliable and accurate due to their complementary nature.

The present study marks its validity with the implementation of the triangulation approach that specifies the use of three data gathering tools. Thanks to such an approach, the researchers can culminate with consistent, accurate, and generalised outcomes. The choice is also related to the type of questions being highlighted at the very beginning of this chapter as well as the objectives being designated. Since any investigation requires a certain set of tools for collection and analysis, it is necessary to shed light on the variant instruments, the sample, and the analysis procedures pertinent to each data gathering tool.

### **3.1.3. Research Instruments**

In any investigation, the researchers have to give considerate attention to the choice of the tools to be used for data collection and analysis due to the important role that they play in the process. Research instruments are one of the pillars of the study; all the results to be obtained are going to be based upon the data collected. They are selected according to the research questions, objectives, and the adopted data collection approaches. In the domain of foreign language teaching, the research tools are the bridge that links the researchers, the teachers, and the learners. The current study has resorted to three research tools that are complementary to provide a rationale for the research questions advanced at the beginning of the study. The choice is motivated by the researchers' expectations that these tools and methods of collection and analysis can help examine EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic problems, their causes, and the possible solutions to overcome them.

In this study, the researchers assign the following research instruments to investigate the above stated concerns:

- Content analysis.
- A questionnaire.
- An interview.

### **3.1.3.1. Content Analysis**

The researchers have adopted content analysis as the principle pillar of the data gathering tools. The aim behind implementing this method of data collection is exploring the pragmatic breakdowns in EFL learners' online dyadic conversations. This technique is a reliable source for data analysis as it is used to account for the different attitudes, thoughts, and behaviours. Scholars have claimed that this method is applicable in the fields of historical and political research; just the same, it is more prevalent in social science subjects (Holsti, 1968; Wimmer & Dominick, 1994 as cited in Prasad, 2008). Therefore, content analysis denotes analysing certain sets of humans' practices related to the above mentioned domains. Since content analysis is meant to analyse EFL learners' online intercultural conversations, it is worthy to state Holsti's (1969, as cited in Riffe et al., 2019) inclusive definition that specifies the tool as follow: "Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 23). Henceforth, texts and messages can take the form of dairy entries, books, newspaper, videos, text messages, tweets, or Facebook updates.

### **3.1.3.1.1. Sampling Material**

The researchers of this work have opted for analysing the intercultural conversations that have taken place between EFL learners of Abbes Laghrour University, Khenchela and native speakers from different English speaking countries (The USA, Great Britain, and Australia). The overall number of the conversations' screenshots that were put under analysis is 52. These conversations are casual interactions with natives; some students have contacted random natives, while others have already been friends (see appendix A). These one-to-one messages take place through mediated platforms like Messenger, Instagram, and Twitter. The choice of online conversations out of the different social media platforms is motivated by their problematicity as they lack the ordinary conversational elements such as turn taking and non-verbal clues, apart from their diversity to obtain various and generalisable data. Those selected conversations are dyadic for the reason that the more personal the interactions get between individuals from different cultural backgrounds, the more learners are involved, and thus, more breakdowns are to be detected. It is noteworthy that these online dyadic messages are about daily life topics like sports, hobbies, fashion, music, and education (see Appendix A). The researchers, however, have not considered other conversations due to their inappropriate content.

### **3.1.3.1.2. Analysis Procedure**

By means of content analysis, the current study aims at analysing the learners' online dyadic messages with native speakers through extracting the breakdowns that may appear during these interactions. Since any sentence draws a chainlike relationship between the structure, the speaker's intention, and the effect of the utterance on the hearer, it is necessary to highlight what

each conversation holds as characteristics of what each culture demonstrates to classify each failure within its category. Henceforth, the researchers have relied on extracting and explaining any existing flouted maxims in relation to John Searle's speech acts of the illocutionary act in order to reveal the pragmatic problems occurring in online intercultural messages.

### **3.1.3.2. The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is one of the quantitative research tools that are used to gather data from a target population. It was invented by Sir Francis Galton, a British anthropologist, explorer, and statistician in the late 1800s (Roopa & Rani, 2012). It embodies a set of different types of questions written in a specific order for the purpose of statistically getting insights into large populations' thoughts, opinions, and behaviours. Babbie (1990, as cited in Acharya, 2010) has defined this tool "as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis" (p. 2).

Generally speaking, the written questionnaire can be either printed or submitted online to the targeted sample. In this study, the researchers take into account the electronic questionnaire as a method used to reach the target respondents where these latter are invited to participate in the research through visiting a particular web page (Roopa & Rani, 2012). The web-based questionnaire is one of the internet questionnaire types which allow submitting responses anonymously.

The web-based questionnaire has many options that are very helpful for the conduct of the study as it does not allow for the submission unless all the answers are completed. The use of pre-defined answers is another advantage of such a research instrument as it becomes easier for

the respondents to answer and for the researcher to analyse (Keinath & Neuner, 2014). The internet questionnaire is fast to conduct and tabulate. Alternatively, some software products allow questionnaires to be customised depending on the respondents' answers and to avoid interviewer bias and distortion. Besides, answers are unlikely to be socially influenced, they are also easy to administer and relatively less costly (Roopa & Rani, 2012).

The researchers' choice of adopting the internet questionnaire as one of the necessary data gathering tools in this study is based on the above-stated expediencies. It magnifies the research objectives due to the respondents' consistent and complete responses. Its selection is inspired by the researchers' urge to reveal the variant causes of the problems that students undergo during an online dyadic interaction with natives.

#### **3.1.3.2.1. The Sample**

The sample size of the population is 74 second-year students studying English at Abbas Laghrour University, Khenchela. They represent the whole population of second year students. The participants are chosen due to their involvement into the cultural and the linguistic context. At this stage, they do not have full mastery of more complicated language conceptions. This is a plausible reason for the possibility to encounter variant intercultural pragmatic problems when communicating with native speakers.

#### **3.1.3.2.2. Description of the Questionnaire**

This data gathering tool constitutes of 16 questions that are arranged into two main sections. The whole questionnaire is deliberated in the form of different types of questions as

part of closed and open-ended interrogatives. The researchers have made use of different types of questions including rating scale questions, multiple choice questions, ranking questions, and dichotomous questions (see appendix B) to ensure the respondents do not get bored when answering the questionnaire. The electronic questionnaire has been created in Google forms where the researchers have conserved the sample's anonymity to guarantee the concept of objectivity. The link has been published in the second-year Facebook group and sent to the learners' personal messenger accounts via private messages.

### **Part One: Personal Background (question item one to question item seven)**

The first section comprises seven questions that all target the learners' background and perceptions as far as foreign language, culture, and communication are concerned (see appendix B). The four first questions interrogate the learners' period of English learning (question one), whether this latter is their own choice (question two), and if they are inquisitive as to its target culture (question three) respectively. On top of that, their openness to communication with people from a different culture has been addressed in question number four. These questions aspire to investigate the extent to which time, personal decisions, and interests affect learners' language mastery.

Question number five seeks to explore the students' attitudes towards culture as being a crucial criterion to learn language. It intends to explore EFL learners' capability to accept culture and language as complementary elements. The questionnaire goes deeper to question the learners' personal exposure to authentic materials to enhance their language and cultural knowledge (question six). It aims at uncovering the learners' efforts to learn the target language

and culture. The last question (question seven) scrutinises the learners' travelling to an English-speaking country, spotting any possible difficulties that might have taken place there. It examines whether face-to-face interactions undergo the same intercultural pragmatic problems as the online dyadic communication does.

### **Part Two: Intercultural Pragmatic Problems (question item eight to question item 16)**

The second section addresses EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic breakdowns and is an attempt to unmask the variant reasons behind them (see appendix B). In the first question, which is number eight in this section, learners are asked about the implication of interacting with people from different cultures as far as their awareness about the language and culture of these people is concerned. It aims at exploring the real role that communication plays when it comes to learning the target language and culture, an issue tackled in the following question (question nine) which explores the learners' internal consistency about whether communication with native speakers is helpful for learning a foreign language.

The third question (question 10) aims at discovering whether EFL learners tend to conduct online dyadic interactions with native speakers, and whether they have encountered some difficulties while doing so. This question directly leads the path towards the degree of misunderstanding prevalence alongside the learners' emotional state in relation to the issue, which appear in questions 11 and 12 respectively. The researchers here desire to investigate how learners' emotional status contributes to the success of a certain online dyadic interaction along with the students' level of intercultural competence.

Question 13, however, addresses the variant reasons why an online dyadic communication fails. The most frequent problems that EFL learners may undergo during an online dyadic communication have been presented in question 14. It is used to discover the different stumbling blocks that learners face during their interactions with native speakers. The next question, which is number 15, is an attempt to know the learners' language improvement after a series of online dyadic communications. The last question (question 16), tends to unmask the possible techniques and strategies that learners opt for when failures take place in their online dyadic conversations.

#### **3.1.3.2.3. Analysis Procedure**

After submitting the questionnaire in Google forms and collecting the required number of responses, the researchers have obtained the results automatically generated in Google forms. They have opted for revising each participant's response to then confirm the whole results using excel software. The researchers have as well combined certain questions through making a set of comparisons between the findings to achieve both consistency and accuracy. The data obtained have been represented using pie charts, bar charts, and histograms designed in excel software.

#### **3.1.3.3. The Interview**

The interview can be defined as one of the most important data gathering tools that help explore, understand, decode, and expose the interviewees' attitudes towards certain subjects, concepts, or issues. Alternatively, Boyce and Neale (2006), who prefer to label it 'In-depth interview', have defined the interview as "a qualitative research technique that involves

conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation” (p. 3).

This technique has become highly recommended within the educational sphere and is used merely in qualitative researches. Cohen and Manion (2007, as cited in Dilshad & Latif, 2013) have stated that “since the purpose of the research interview is to obtain research-relevant information from the interviewee, it is centred on the evidence to be generated for achieving the research objectives of describing, predicting or explaining the phenomenon” (p. 191). The interview aims at exploring the interviewee’s own construction and perception of meanings. Here, the researcher’s duty is to restrain from imposing his/her own perspectives. It is noteworthy to mention that conceptions and attributes that arise do not always conform to the predictions settled by the interviewer (Batmanabane & Kfourri, 2017).

One of the common methods that researchers tend to use nowadays is email interviews that can be defined as the interview that takes place through electronic mail. It consists of sending the predetermined questions to respondents via email and waiting for their responses in order to collect the desired information. Walker (2013, as cited in Hawkins, 2018) states that email exchanges are one of the many methods utilised, for they allow not only overcoming multiple barriers (geographical distance, financial matters, and time wasting) but also conducting asynchronous interviews.

The researcher’s choice of implementing the email interview as one of the research instruments in this study is impelled by the plenitude of merits that it guarantees. It has the unique feature of educing one’s own perspectives that are culturally pertinent to their own being,

without being obliged to stick to a set of choices. It also allows assuring honest, consistent, and complete feedback as respondents are not restricted by time. It is also motivated by the researchers' will to uncover the teachers' own perspectives about the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that students may encounter during an online dyadic interaction. This e-interview mainly serves to address the main suggestions and solutions to overcome such issues.

#### **3.1.3.3.1. The sample**

The researchers have conducted an email interview composed of open-ended questions with five teachers who are specialised in Applied Linguistics and Cultural studies at Abbes Laghrour University, Khenchela. These teachers are selected due to their teaching contributions to enhance EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic competence and develop their communicative skills. The main purpose of this e-interview is to reveal the way teachers tend to deal with the possible intercultural pragmatic failures and the suitable strategies they prefer to use in order to overcome these issues.

#### **3.1.3.3.2. Description of the Interview**

The e-interview embodies 12 questions assigned to three main sections. It starts with general interrogations about teachers' teaching experience. It then traces the different challenges to integrating culture and pragmatics in EFL classes and ends with examining the variant suggestions to repair intercultural pragmatic breakdowns (see appendix C). The researchers have used a structured form of the interview wherein the questions are predesigned and distributed to the interviewees in the same order. The structured e-interview is implemented to ensure the respondents' internal consistency.

The first section titled “Teaching Experience” consists of four questions centred on the context of pragmatics and culture teaching in EFL classes (see appendix C). The first interrogation delves into the teachers’ years of work experience. It aims at obtaining variant opinions from teachers with different teaching experiences. The second one questions the teachers’ preference to include culture and pragmatics as subject matters in EFL classes. This question leads to investigate the main objectives behind incorporating such subjects, which is clearly tackled in the third question. Question four is, however, a trial to examine EFL learners’ variant attitudes and perspectives towards the inclusion of pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching.

The second section labelled “Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes” comprises five questions (see appendix C). The first question (question five in the interview) scrutinises the teachers’ assessment of EFL learners’ ability to understand native speakers. The purpose behind this question is to examine whether teachers are truly aware of their learners’ intercultural communicative problems. The three remaining questions within this section (question six, question seven, and question eight) delve into the teachers’ preconception of the so-called “Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdown”, enquiring into the pragmatic problems that the learners face and the factors leading to such breakdowns respectively. The previously mentioned questions aim at questioning teachers’ awareness of this new field that encompasses culture and pragmatics under one holistic sphere. They are as well an attempt to examine the potential leading aspects of the students’ weaknesses that hinder an effective online communication, opening the gates for the appropriate ways to deal with them.

The third section is entitled “Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns”. With four question items, it is designed to look into the teachers’ involvement in the process of addressing and promoting learners’ efficiency in intercultural communication (see appendix C). The possible approaches, strategies, and techniques applied in the teaching process to promote EFL learners’ intercultural communicative competence are revisited in question one and four (question nine and 12 in the interview). These questions attempt to identify conceivable ways to reinforce the learners’ competence in such contexts.

Question 10 interrogates whether teachers prefer to use these strategies intrinsically or extrinsically, with spotlighting a required justification for their choice. This interrogation intends to unmask the teachers’ variant functional ways in EFL classes and the reason why they prefer it this way. The remaining question, which is number 11 in the interview, pinpoints the teachers’ opinions about online communication as a way to enhance the students’ intercultural pragmatic competence. Its purpose is enquiring about whether the teachers support online dyadic interaction as an exterior way for learning.

To all intents and purposes, the above-stated questions are advised to guide the researchers to gain deeper understanding about the following essences:

- The teachers’ familiarity with the main issues that EFL learners encounter during the learning process covering culture and pragmatic subject matters.
- The teachers’ awareness of the new field called “Intercultural Pragmatic Communication”.

- The teaching approaches implemented by teachers in teaching culture and pragmatic-related courses in EFL classrooms and the objectives of adopting such subjects.
- The learners' readiness to delve into the exploration of a new culture and their ability to grasp natives' speech.
- The extent to which teachers are aware of the learners' pragmatic problems and their position as far as online communication is concerned.
- How teachers value learners' intercultural pragmatic competence and how they contribute to enhance it.
- The teachers' variant suggestions and solutions that may actually overcome intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that the learners demonstrate in intercultural interactions.

#### **3.1.3.3.3. Analysis Procedure**

Since the interview is delivered online to EFL teachers, the researchers pre-selected respondents that would, as anticipated, contribute into providing the necessary insights into the research problems raised in the current investigation and brought their personal emails. The interview questions, which have been designed on Word Processing Software (WPS), are preceded by a small introduction that clarifies the main goal behind interviewing them in order to put the interviewees in the research context. In order to analyse the teachers' feedback, the researchers have opted for an analysis by interviewee instead of conducting it by question as the purpose of the interview is to examine the teachers' experience as regard to the underlined issue. Thus, the researchers have read each response all alone thoroughly several times to make sure no

important detail is unnoticed and tried to pick up the key words that best serve the variant objectives of the interview. After doing so, the researchers have reflected upon the educators' answers by extracting the common points among the responses of the five teachers so that the results are consistent and that the different points that they have alluded to before reporting the teachers' responses are italicised in a way that serves their objectives.

## **3.2. Data Discussion**

### **3.2.1. Content Analysis**

#### **3.2.1.1. Analysis of the Sampling Material**

On account of the fact that EFL learners are required to know not only the language but also how to make use of this latter for communicating, they can correctly achieve this by means of the speech acts. In foreign language teaching and learning, the speech acts mirror the pragmatic problems that occur between people belonging to different cultures (Bayat, 2013). Paul Grice's maxims are principles that any successful conversation should embody; they demonstrate how people are cooperative when communicating, but most importantly how the violation of these rules depicts and contributes to the eventuality of the breakdowns. Therefore, extracting any flouted maxims leads the path straightforward towards examining the different problems as being arranged under the following eight hindrances: context, the speaker's intention, turn taking, politeness, degrees of formality, low language proficiency, individual differences, and the students' psychological state. The eight categories are explained and exemplified in the following subsections.

## **Problem One: Context**

The environment that surrounds any message or information is crucial to the effectiveness of interpersonal communication, especially when the two parties do not share a common background. Henceforth, intercultural pragmatic breakdowns may be related to cultural differences and the environment's requirements. However, context is not always related to cultural or social environment but is sometimes pertinent to the situation in which the talk is taking place referred to as situational context. These following examples portray how situational context affects the interlocutors' responses and engenders misunderstanding.

- **Example one**

**Speaker M:** So "J", what do you do in your life?

**Speaker N:** I'm still at College and will graduate next year. I like swimming, play tennis, hang out mates, music and stuff.

**Speaker M:** That's cool, break a leg with that.

- I like music and writing books.

-Also tennis and fashion.

-That's seem great.

-That seems sorry.

In this conversation, **Speaker M** flouts the maxim of manner because he has answered a question that **speaker N** has not asked. Generally speaking, context plays a major role in the violation of maxims. In this case, **M**'s answer is due to his belief that context requires him to talk as well about his hobbies without a required interrogation. This case can be misinterpreted by the native speaker in other situations as a brag which can make him reluctant to communicate with the EFL learner.

- **Example two:** same speakers.

**Speaker N:** I'm learning Spanish.

**Speaker M:** Me too but I stopped needa focus on my university studies.

**Speaker N:** Ok

**Speaker M:** I know sentences. Like hola Cómoestá.

-Buenas notches.

-Buenas días.

**Speaker N:** he he eh buono

In this conversation, **speaker N** flouts the maxim of manner when he has responded "Ok" as he has made his contribution ambiguous and has left **speaker M** without a clear answer. This led **speaker M** to flout the maxim of manner by talking about the sentences he knows in Spanish

without being asked to do so, based on the idea that context requires him to do so (situational context).

In the examples above, context has a share in directing the communicators' talk (Situational context). Speakers make their contribution ambiguous by talking about something else or answering a question that has not been asked on the grounds that context compels them to do so. This proves that context can create misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

### **Problem Two: The Speaker's Intention**

One of the most prominent factors that lead to misunderstanding in any communication is the inability to grasp what the speakers really mean. This usually happens when the interlocutors are from different societal or cultural backgrounds. The speaker's intention may create many problems in understanding the message being sent. This is possible to happen very frequently, especially because the non-verbal and vocal cues are unavailable.

- **Example Three**

**Speaker C:** Hi

**Speaker D:** Hey girl

**Speaker C:** Miss u

-how r u

**Speaker D:** Same girly I've been cleaning all week

-We're re arranging our house

**Speaker C:** Did you like your new house or the oldest is better?

**Speaker D:** Oh! We didn't move

-We are just cleaning everything

-And throwing away unnecessary stuff

This conversation displays that the maxim of quantity is flouted as **speaker D** does not give enough information to answer her interlocutors' question. The utterance "I've been cleaning all week" implies that **speaker D** is tired; therefore, when **speaker C** has asked "Did u like ur new house or the oldest is better?", she has misunderstood **speaker D** who has supposed that her interlocutor would understand her intention that implies being tired. This misinterpretation of the speaker's intention has opened the door to misunderstanding to take place because **speaker C** has decoded the meaning of the same utterance as they are moving, which is demonstrated in her response "Did you like your new house or the oldest is better?".

- **Example Four**

**Speaker B:** Do you know anyone native

-from any country

**Speaker A:** I know some people but they will not help, I'm afraid

**Speaker B:** I want just make conversation like now me and you

-because i'm just a student

In this interaction, **Speaker A** flouts the maxim of quantity; she has given some unneeded information. This statement is an indirect speech act (directives); she is advising him to not waste his time with them. However, **B's** answer shows that misunderstanding has occurred; he states that he just wants to make friends because he is just a student. This displays that he misinterpreted his interlocutors' advice; he thought that the latter is being un-cooperative and probably does not want to help him. This utterance as well involves the use of an indirect speech act "commissives"; it seems that he promises that it is only done for educational matters.

### **Problem Three: Turn Taking**

An essential aspect to take into consideration for a successful communication is turn taking which is the flow of conversation that shows that when the speaker's turn ends, the other's starts. It refers to the idea that in any interaction, the speakers have to wait for their turn to speak without interrupting the other party. This rule helps to keep a smooth flow of ideas between the interlocutors. If turn taking is not respected, communication will undoubtedly backfire, and communicators will eventually break maxims. Yet, when it comes to online communication, turn taking is hard to be maintained due to the absence of vocal and non-verbal signs. In such cases, the communicators can depend on verbal clues solely. Beneath are two interactions where turn taking is violated in the first and respected in the second.

- **Example Five**

- **Conversation One**

**Speaker K:** Hi!

-How are u

-??

**Speaker L:** Hello, Nice to meet you

**Speaker K:** Glade to meet u to

**Speaker L:** Do you want teach English language??

-I am good

-Where are you from??

**Speaker K:** Actually I want to make a conversation with a native speaker and I like your profile

-You look a pretty and good person

-So

-I'm "A" from Algeria, i'm 18 years old

-And you?

➤ **Conversation Two**

**Speaker M:** My name is "A" I'm 18years old

-What about you?

**Speaker N:** cool

-“J”17 YO and Lives in the UK

**Speaker M:** Like you name “J”

-It’s nice one

**Speaker N:** awww thx

**Speaker M:** Don’t mention it

-So “J”, what do you do in your life?

**Speaker N:** I’m still at College and will graduate next year

The interlocutors of the second interaction have respected turn taking by means of verbal clues like the utterance “What about you?”, which signals the other party’s turn to talk or asking a question and waiting for its response. Hence, the communicators could keep an understandable and normal conversation. In the first conversation, however, **speaker K** has violated the maxim of manner; she is not answering the questions in order. When **speaker L** at the beginning of the conversation has asked her how she was, she has only stated that it was nice to meet her. Here, it can be noticed that she has violated the maxim of quantity as well since she does not give as much information as required. Then, **speaker L** has asked her interlocutor another question without giving **speaker K** the opportunity to express her idea in her turn. Once again, the maxim

of quantity is violated but this time by **speaker K**; she has provided more information than required when she has said that her interlocutor looks pretty and a good person.

The violation of turn taking has a negative impact on both sides of the communication; it demonstrates that the one interrupting is unwilling to listen or even uninterested in his interlocutor's ideas which engenders another issue referred to as "politeness". It can be noticed that the first conversation is awkward and disorganised; no clear idea is communicated and has ended very fast as none of the interlocutors could keep pace with the other. However, the first one is very organised and clear, and the interlocutors have continued the interaction. The problems highlighted above demonstrate the way online interactions can be problematic.

#### **Problem Four: Politeness**

Politeness is one of the characteristics pertinent to human interactions and differs from one culture to another. Linguistic politeness is categorised according to Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (1978) as positive and negative politeness. The former comes in the form of jokes and encouragements for instance, while the latter consists of social distance, the use of irony, or by being vague (Salo-Lee, 2006). Negative politeness is presented in the coming examples.

- **Example Six**

**Speaker I:** what are you doing in your life?

**Speaker J:** i'm taking it easy

**Speaker I:** i meant to ask about your job

**Speaker J:** i can't work any

**Speaker I:** why

**Speaker J:** i'm ill

**Speaker I:** i'm really sorry

- can I know what kind of illness you have?

**Speaker J:** God is good

- i would rather not say

In the last part of the interaction between the two speakers, **speaker I** misused the utterance “What are you doing in your life?” Such a question is considered ambiguous since the interlocutor used the continuous form making the utterance mean “what plans do you have for your life” or “What actions are you going to take to improve yourself”. **Speaker J** flouts the maxim of manner in this situation by answering “I’m taking it easy”; she is being vague to politely decline any invasion of her personal life. In this case, **speaker I** flouts the maxim of quality by making use of an indirect speech act (expressive) by apologising. In fact, he/she is not really apologising for doing something wrong; it is a type of comfort as he/she is trying to be polite. **Speaker J** on the other hand, is opting out as she clearly declares that she does not want to talk about the issue.

Despite the fact that **speaker I** is trying to be polite, he/she is considered to be disrespectful because he/she sticks his/her nose where it does not belong. Although **speaker J** is trying in all ways to politely allude to her interlocutor to avoid the subject, **speaker I** is impolitely insisting to get answers from the native speaker. This misunderstanding has taken place due to the cultural differences. In **I**'s culture when someone does not want to talk about something, they are more direct in expressing their refusals, while in **J**'s culture, as it can be seen, she has continued to be polite and indirect in refusing to talk about her personal issues despite the many trials of **speaker I** to invade her personal life.

#### **Problem Five: Degrees of Formality**

Whether it is spoken or written, language is featured by distinct levels of formality that are determined by social relations between the speakers, and how close they are. There are basically two forms of register: formal and informal. The informal register is used with people who are close enough to allow using slang, idioms, exclamations, and even misspelling; in the case of this study. This occurs when the native speaker and the EFL learner are old acquaintances. The formal register, however, is specific to newly made contacts where good language and grammar are respected. Degrees of formality can be a major problem that may lead to the failure of certain conversations. Misspelling, contractions, abbreviations, and symbols may mislead the message from its purpose. It is noteworthy that some speakers tend to determine the real level of their interlocutors based on the degrees of formality existing in their messages. For instance, if an EFL learner misspells a certain word either consciously or subconsciously, the native speaker may ridicule the learner's level.

- **Example Seven**

- **Conversation One**

**Speaker C:** Hi

**Speaker D:** Hey girl

**Speaker C:** Miss u

- How r u

**Speaker D:** Same girly, I've been cleaning all week.

-We're re arranging our house

**Speaker C:** Did u like ur new house or the oldest better?

**Speaker D:** Oh we didn't move

-We're just cleaning everything

-And throwing away unnecessary stuff

**Speaker C:** Ah right ppl in USA do that

-I saw this in movies

**Speaker D:** Lol yeah

-We have so much crap that we don't need so we're either donating it or throwing it out

**Speaker C:** Yeah I understand

(...)

**Speaker C:** Usa like the heaven for us

**Speaker D:** I've always wanted to live in another country

(...)

**Speaker C:** England my wish too ☹

**Speaker D:** Maybe it'll be easier for you to get there than me it is so expensive

➤ **Conversation two**

**Speaker I:** what are you doing in your life?

**Speaker J:** i'm taking it easy

**Speaker I:** i meant to ask about your job

**Speaker J:** i can't work any

**Speaker I:** why

**Speaker J:** i'm ill

**Speaker I:** i'm really sorry

- can I know what kind of illness you have?

**Speaker J:** god is good

- i would rather not say

**Speaker I:** as you wish dear

As it can be noticed in the first conversation, the speakers are already friends and this has led the conversation to be informal. This is demonstrated in the use of contractions, texting language, conversation deletion, abbreviations, grammatical mistakes, and figures of speech. The second conversation shows a remarkable degree of formality; the interlocutors have used standard and correct language avoiding the use of colloquial language since they are recent acquaintances. Despite the fact that the subject being tackled requires a less formal language, the use of a very formal language between these new acquaintances may lead to fewer opportunities for both speakers to be friends.

The degree of formality between the speakers plays a role in the pragmatic problems that the learners encounter. Being too informal with their interlocutors leads to be less restricted to language and grammar which influences the learners' correct use of language not only in their chat sessions but also academically. This issue, in the sphere of pragmatics, affects the pragmatic meaning of utterances and contributes strongly to increase the learner's low language proficiency.

## **Problem Six: Low Language Proficiency**

Learners' weaknesses in language use and comprehension are one of the factors that will make the interlocutor reluctant to maintain a conversation with them. The interaction becomes boring and heavy as the interlocutor has to clarify what he/she wants to say whenever the other party fails to comprehend his/her speech. The chats below illustrate the situation.

- **Example Eight**

**Speaker E:** That does not mean you can't give me some shattered peices.

**Speaker F:** what pieces?

**Speaker E:** lol

- peices of plenty

- Meaning...What else are you in to?

- music

- movies

- tv

**Speaker F** does not understand what **speaker E** has said due to the former's low language proficiency. This breakdown of meaning occurs because **speaker E** constructs an indirect relationship between the structure and its function. In this case, **speaker E** flouts the

maxim of quantity in the statement “That does not mean you can’t give me some shattered pieces”. It seems that **speaker F** does not want to expose much about himself, so **speaker E** denotes that his interlocutor can instead provide him with some information about what he likes which is an indirect speech act belonging to “directives”. When **speaker F** asks for clarification, **speaker E** makes a joke and explains his intentions as he flouts the maxim of quality again since he is obviously not asking for pieces of plenty.

- **Example Nine**

**Speaker I:** what are you doing in your life?

**Speaker J:** i’m taking it easy

**Speaker I:** i meant to ask about your job

**Speaker I**, due to his/her low language proficiency, has put to wrong use the utterance “What are you doing in your life?”. He/she thinks that the utterance is used to ask about one’s occupation which actually means “what plans do you have for your life” or “What actions are you going to take to improve yourself”. The learners’ low language proficiency through misusing sentences or words can generate serious misunderstanding.

- **Example 10**

**Speaker M:** It is nice to talk to ya

**Speaker N:** We stay in contact

**Speaker M:** Yeah

-Do you like reading books

-Or learning languages?

On account of his low language proficiency, **speaker M** has used the utterance “It is nice to talk to ya” to mean that he enjoys talking to his interlocutor, while in fact the utterance conveys that he is politely ending the conversation which is obviously understood by his interlocutor. Such a misunderstanding can generate tensions between both interlocutors. **Speaker N** will undoubtedly get confused owing to the fact that his interlocutor has politely ended the conversation then continued to have a normal talk. It can even lead him to think that he has mental issues and thus end the communication.

### **Problem Seven: Individual Differences**

This element is closely related to culture as it embodies stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, and overgeneralisation. These attitudes and beliefs can negatively affect and eventually hinder communication. The forthcoming exchange portrays an overgeneralisation.

- **Example 11**

**Speaker D:** Oh we didn't move

-We're just cleaning everything

-And throwing away unnecessary stuff

**Speaker C:** Ah right the ppl in USA do that

- I saw this in movies

**Speaker D:** Lol yeah

-We have so much crap that we don't need so we're either donating it or throwing it out

The overgeneralisation spotted in the utterance “Ah right the ppl in USA do that, I saw this in movies” demonstrates that the EFL learner is unconscious of the impact of her words on her interlocutor. This latter has subsequently clarified that they do not need the things, and they either donate or throw them. Not everything seen on TV is related to real life or applied to all individuals. Invoking such utterances does not only end a conversation but can also generate disputes between the communicators.

### **Problem Eight: The Students' Psychological State**

The term psychological state is referred to as the psychological barrier of communication. It is defined as “The influence of psychological state of the communicators (sender and receiver) which creates an obstacle for effective communication” (Businessstopia, 2018, para. 4). The process of communication is influenced by the mental state of the person; the effectiveness of communication depends on the well-being of the communicators mentally and emotionally. The following sets of interactions are examples that depict how the psychological state, represented as lack of confidence and fear of rejection in the case of EFL learners, leads them to violate one of the maxims in order to maintain communication with their interlocutors.

- **Example 12**

**Speaker A:** Hello I got an invitation from you. Do we know each other?

**Speaker B:** Hi lady. No I don't think so but I'm just wanna you help me

- could you do me a favour?

In this conversation, **speaker B** violates the maxim of quality by saying "I don't think so" since **speaker B** is talking with the native speaker for the first time. Hence, it is obvious that they do not know each other at all, yet **speaker B** has lied about this issue when he says that he does not think so (probably to trigger her curiosity). In this case, **speaker B** does not want to be rejected by **speaker A** if he honestly says that he does not know her, which would ultimately end their communication. The maxim of quantity is flouted as well when **speaker B** has uttered "Could you do me a favour?" He has provided more information than required. The utterance belongs to a sub categorisation of speech acts named "directives". Once again, he has anticipated the talk in order to maintain the conversation with **speaker A**.

- **Example 13**

**Speaker A:** so where do you actually live?

**Speaker B:** OK I'll let you try to find it by yourself As I said before my language is Arabic.

Where do think I came from?

This conversation includes a flout of the maxim of quantity. **Speaker B** does not provide enough information to answer his interlocutors' question by using an indirect speech act

(directives). This flout is due to the interlocutor's excitement to add flavour to the conversation by using allusion "As I said before my language is Arabic" and then asking a question to continue the flow of the conversation to increase his interlocutor's curiosity about his place of inhabitation. All of this is done for the purpose of decreasing the tension that appeared at the very beginning of the conversation.

- **Example 14**

**Speaker M:** So "J", what do you do in your life

-?

**Speaker N:** I'm still at College and will graduate next year

-I like swimming, play tennis, hang out mates, music and stuff

**Speaker M:** That's cool break a leg with that

- I like music and writing books

- Also tennis and fashion

- That's seem great

- That seems sorry

In this interaction, **speaker M** flouts the maxim of quantity. The whole response "I like music and writing books also tennis and fashion" provides more information than needed. This is

related to the student's willingness to make the other party impressed with his hobbies and with the fact that he, too, has many things to do along with studying.

- **Example 15**

**Speaker L:** Hello. Nice to meet you

**Speaker K:** Glade to meet you to

**Speaker L:** Do you want to teach English language??

-I am good

-Where are you from??

**Speaker L:** Actually I want to make a conversation with a native speaker and I like your profile

- You look so pretty and good person.

- So

- I'm "A" from Algeria, i'm 18 years old.

- And you?

**Speaker L** flouts the maxim of quantity when asked about her place of inhabitation. She gives more information than required as an attempt to give more details about herself as a kind intention to keep the conversation with her interlocutor. It is also an attempt to clarify the confusion that has taken place at the beginning. It is worthy to state that this flout is due to **L's**

trial to flatter the other party with the aim of furthering one's own interests despite the fact that they are newly acquainted.

- **Example 16**

**Speaker C:** Ah right the ppl in USA do that

-I saw this in movies

**Speaker D:** Lol yeah. We have so much crap that we don't need, so we are either donating it or throwing it out.

**Speaker C:** Yeah I understand.

-I bought a Dr Martinez (sent a photo)

**Speaker D:** They are cute.

**Speaker C** flouts the maxim of relevance when she has changed the topic and talked about what she has bought. This can be due to her feeling of embarrassment when she has realised that she has misunderstood what the native speaker has said, providing that this latter has kept explaining the situation more than once.

In all the examples above, the interlocutors are trying to keep the conversation going by adding unnecessary details or information because of their fear of rejection, lack of confidence, embarrassment, and even as an attempt to control the exchange. Such psychological circumstances can be a nuisance to any communication; the other interlocutor will not have

enough space to express him/herself if s/he is being overloaded with data. Additionally, in similar cases the learners' psychological state namely their fear of rejection might confuse the native speaker. This can possibly lead to misunderstanding about their real intentions.

### **3.2.1.2. Interpretation of the Content Analysis**

To summarise the implications that the analysis of the conversations brought to light, these annotations are to be imparted:

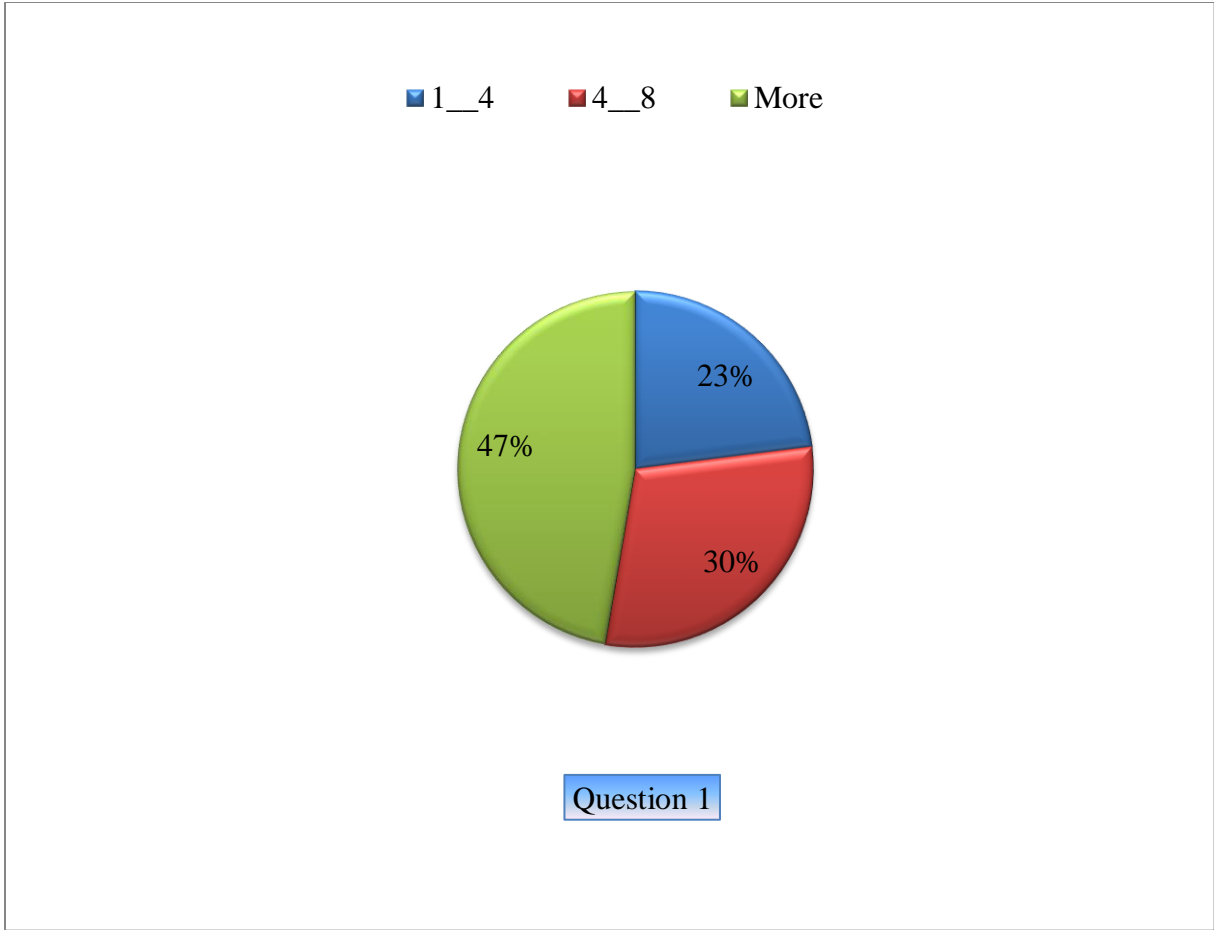
- It can be postulated that the EFL learners' breakdowns include pragma-linguistic, sociopragmatic, and pragmastylistic issues. Pragmatically speaking, the most flouted conversational principle is the maxim of quantity.
- The intercultural pragmatic breakdowns cover specifically the psychological state, low language proficiency, the speaker's intention, individual differences, and context. It can be fathomed that these proposals, depending on their involvement in the interaction, behave as the core problems of or the contributing factors to those failures under the umbrella term "misunderstanding".
- The communicative breakdowns of the learners although being critical, yet do not lead to the termination of communication with natives.

### **3.2.2. The Questionnaire**

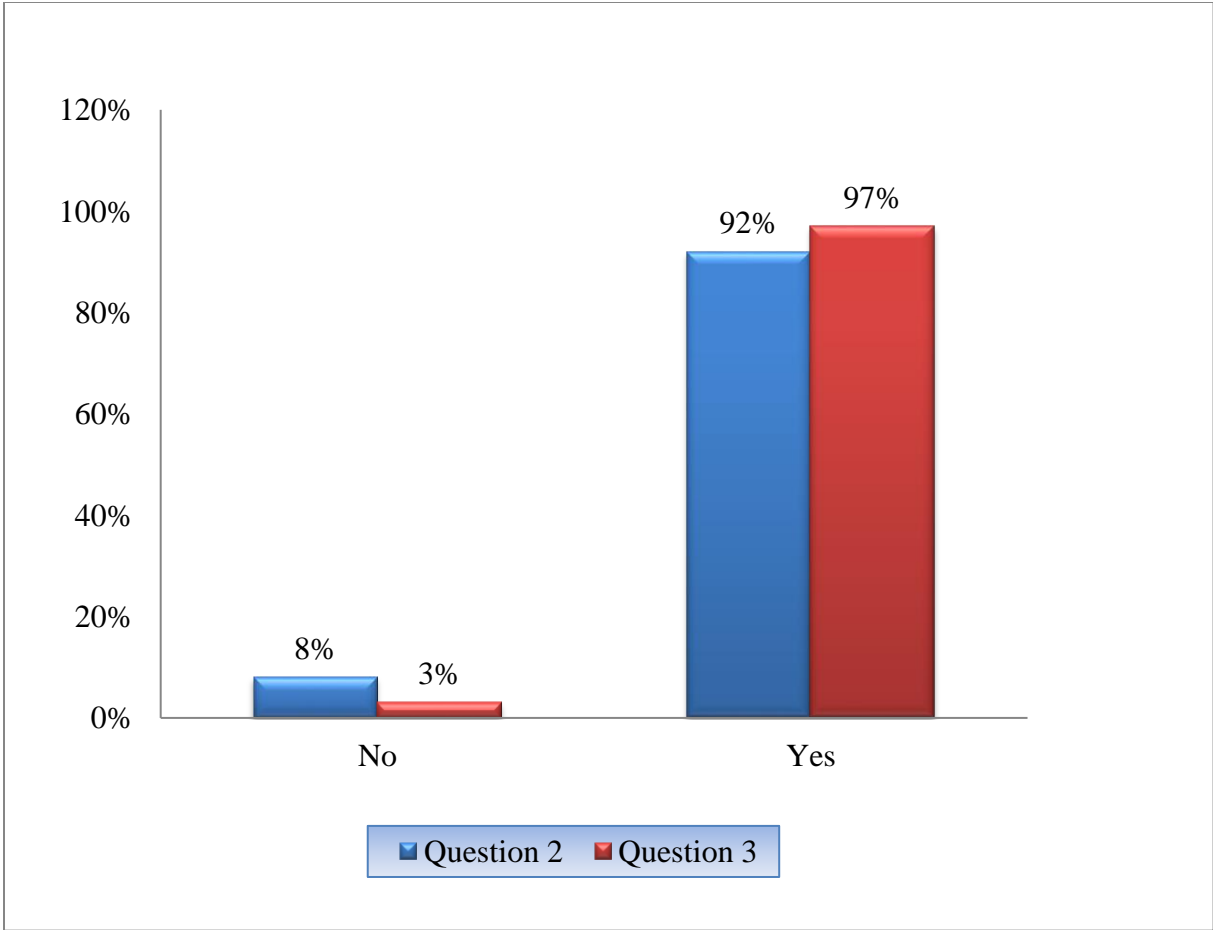
#### **3.2.2.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire's Results**

##### **Part One: Personal Background**

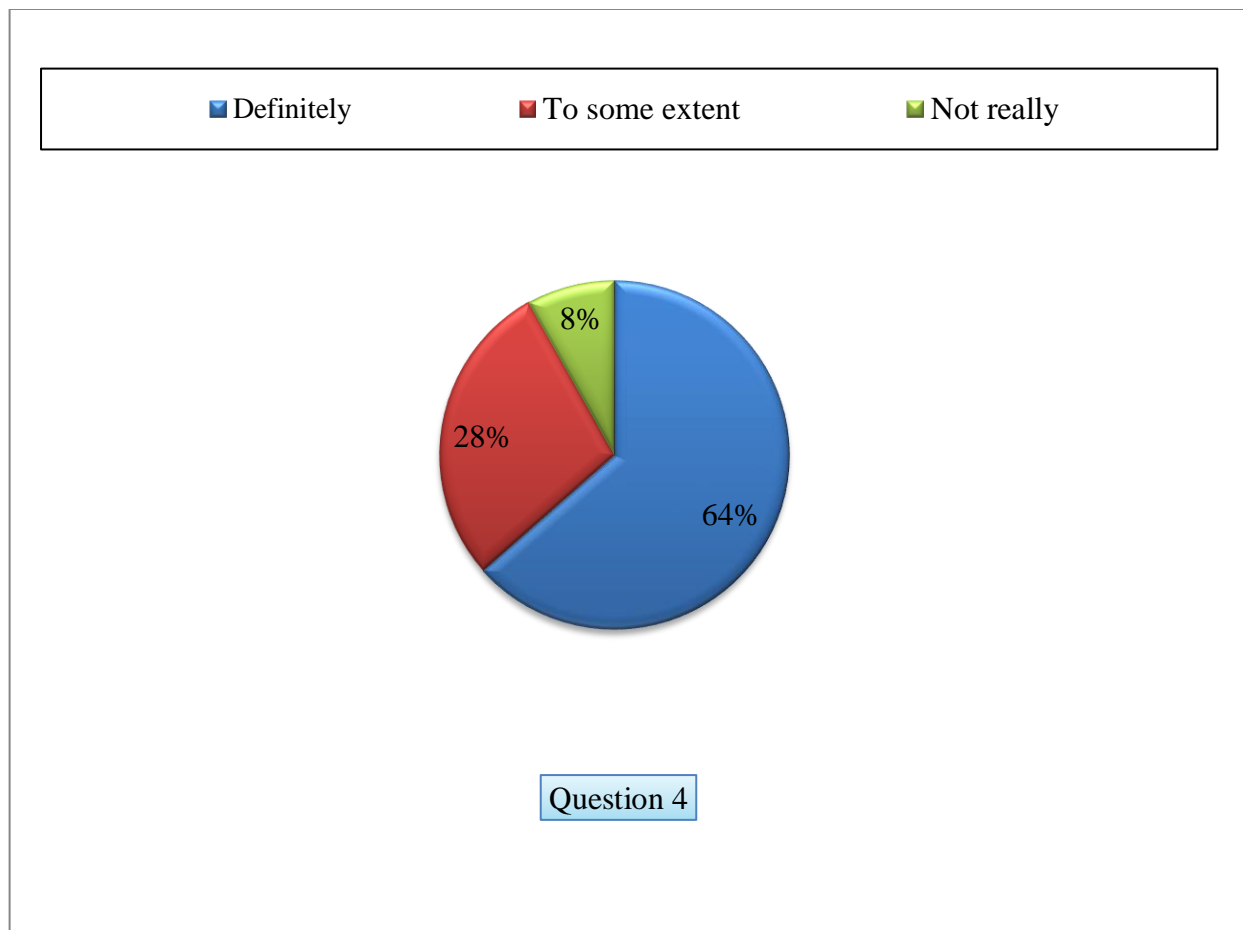
This part's intent is to grasp EFL learners' personal data and their attitudes towards certain subjects as far as foreign language learning and cultural knowledge are concerned. As for the first question, 23% of the students spent from one to four years learning English, while 30% say that their period of learning English ranges between four and eight years. The majority of the respondents with 47% claim that their span of learning English exceeds the two above-highlighted periods. This gives access to the second question, which spotlights that the majority of learners (92%) have a positive attitude concerning their choice of learning English. As for their interest in delving into a foreign culture, 97% report a positive attitude as well (question three). For the sake of measuring EFL learners' openness to communication with people from different cultures, 64% of the population show extreme readiness to communication with people having a different cultural background. Yet, only 8% have declared that they are not really willing to do so (question four).



**Figure 1:** EFL Learners' Period of Learning English



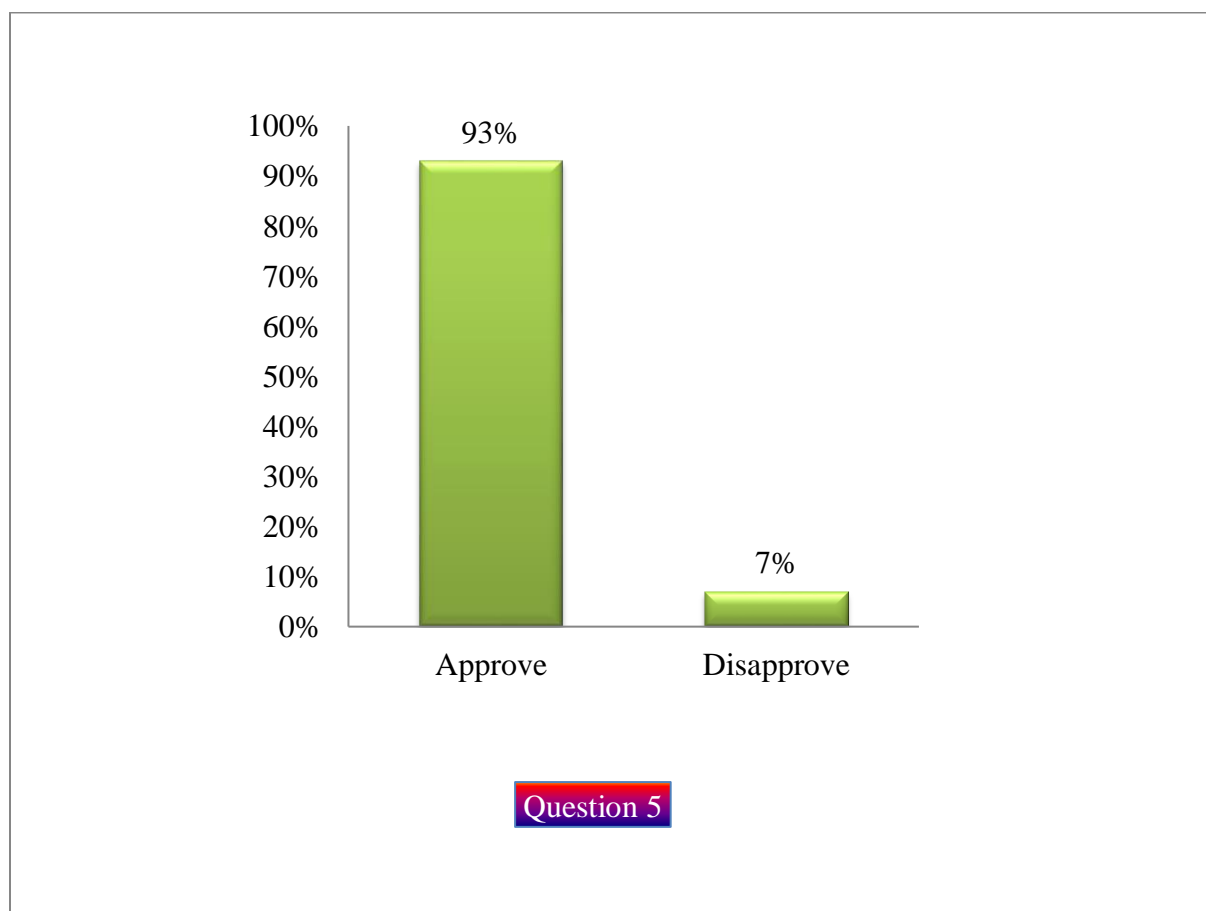
**Figure 2:** Learners' Interest in Language and Culture



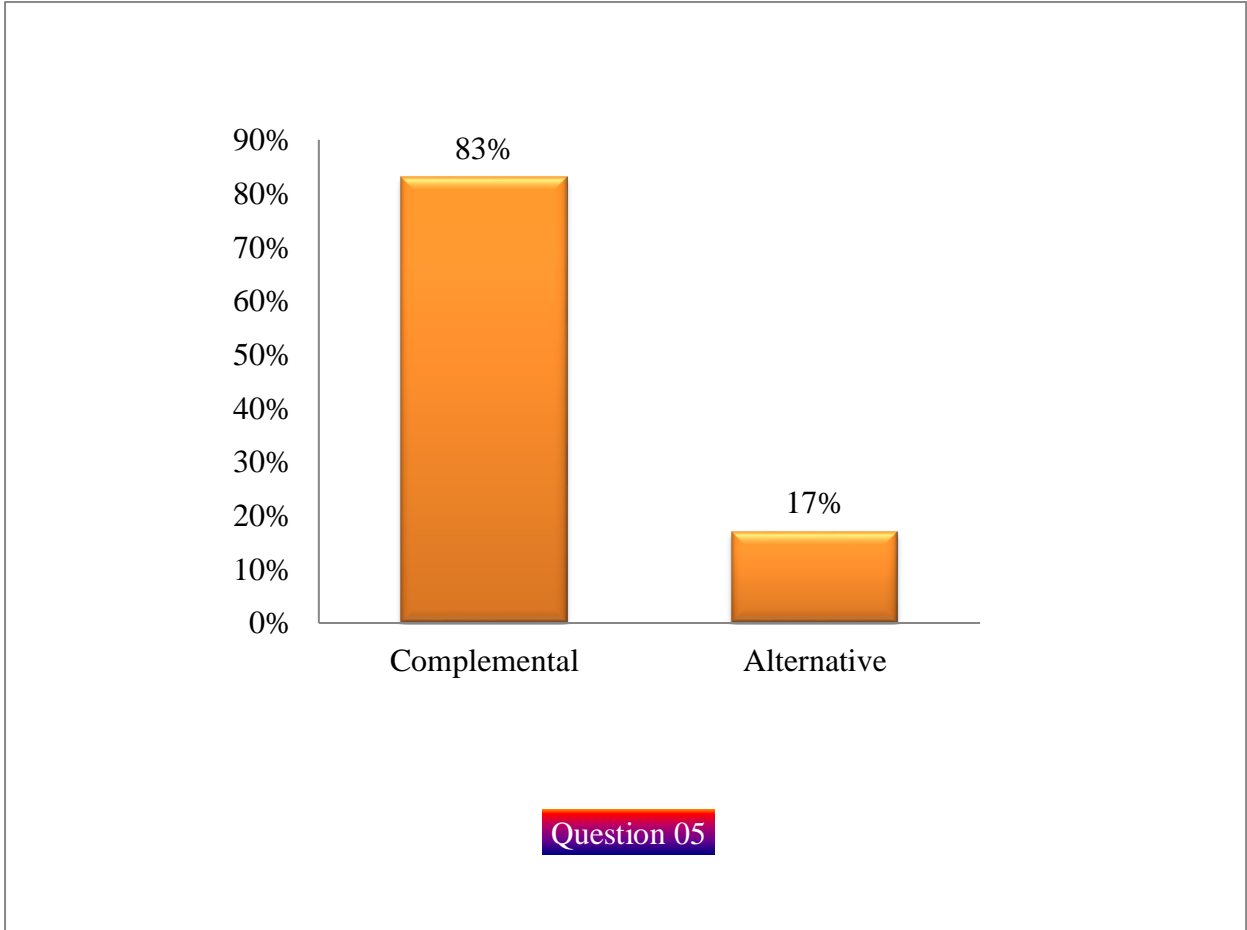
**Figure 3:** EFL Learners' Openness to Communication

Question five, which inquires about the respondents' views regarding having knowledge about a language through its culture, displays that 93% of the learners are aware of the importance of culture in language learning as they have approved the statement. However, they have different views as regard to the issue. Eighty-three percent of them argue that both elements are interrelated and complete one another. For them, cultural materials are an easy and fun way to learn language as they provide language with context. Some learners have also referred to culture as a key to understand native speakers, and that its absence renders communication limited. Seventeen percent are convinced that it is not the only way for language learning arguing

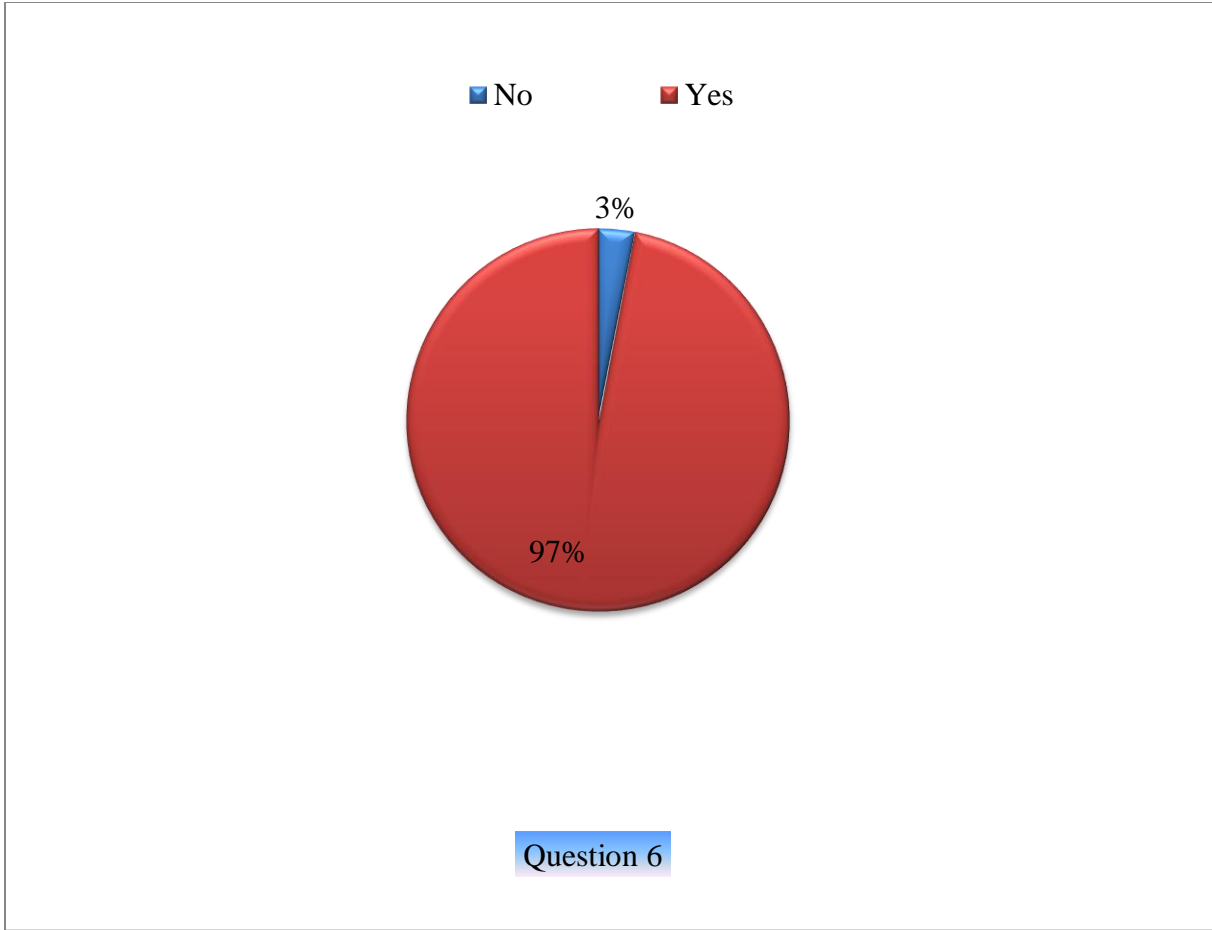
that culture is just one aspect of language but still agree that it has a good impact. Still, 7% of the population have disapproved the saying arguing that learning a language is about desire and practice explaining that it has nothing to do with culture. As a matter of fact, 97% of the population attest that their knowledge about the target culture is not limited to the academic sphere, but they tend to expose themselves to different types of authentic materials (question six). Among them, 61% have stated that they constantly use authentic materials, whereas only 4% have reported that they resort to external authentic materials on rare occasions.



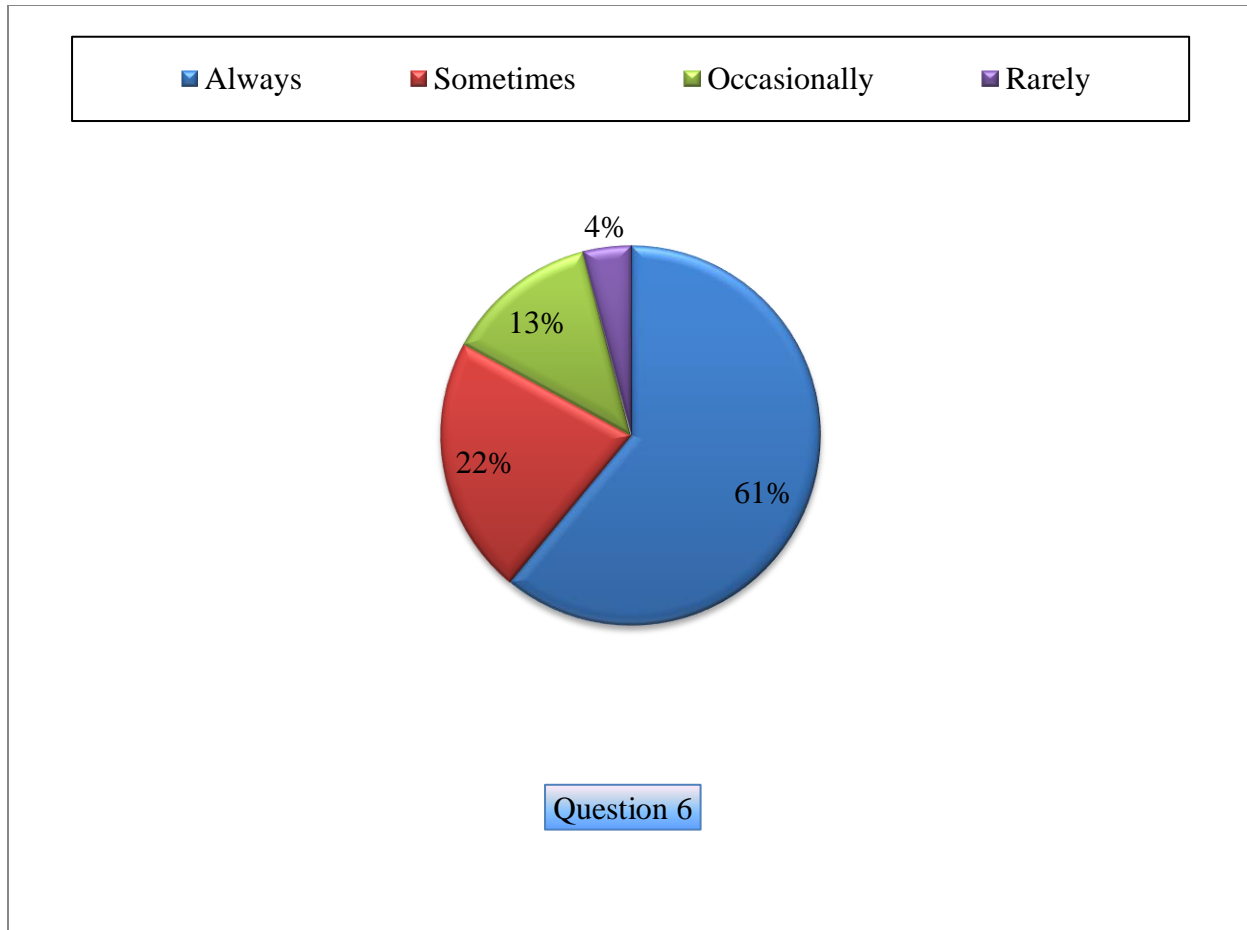
**Figure 4 : Culture and Language Relationship**



**Figure 5 : Culture and Language Relationship's Nature**

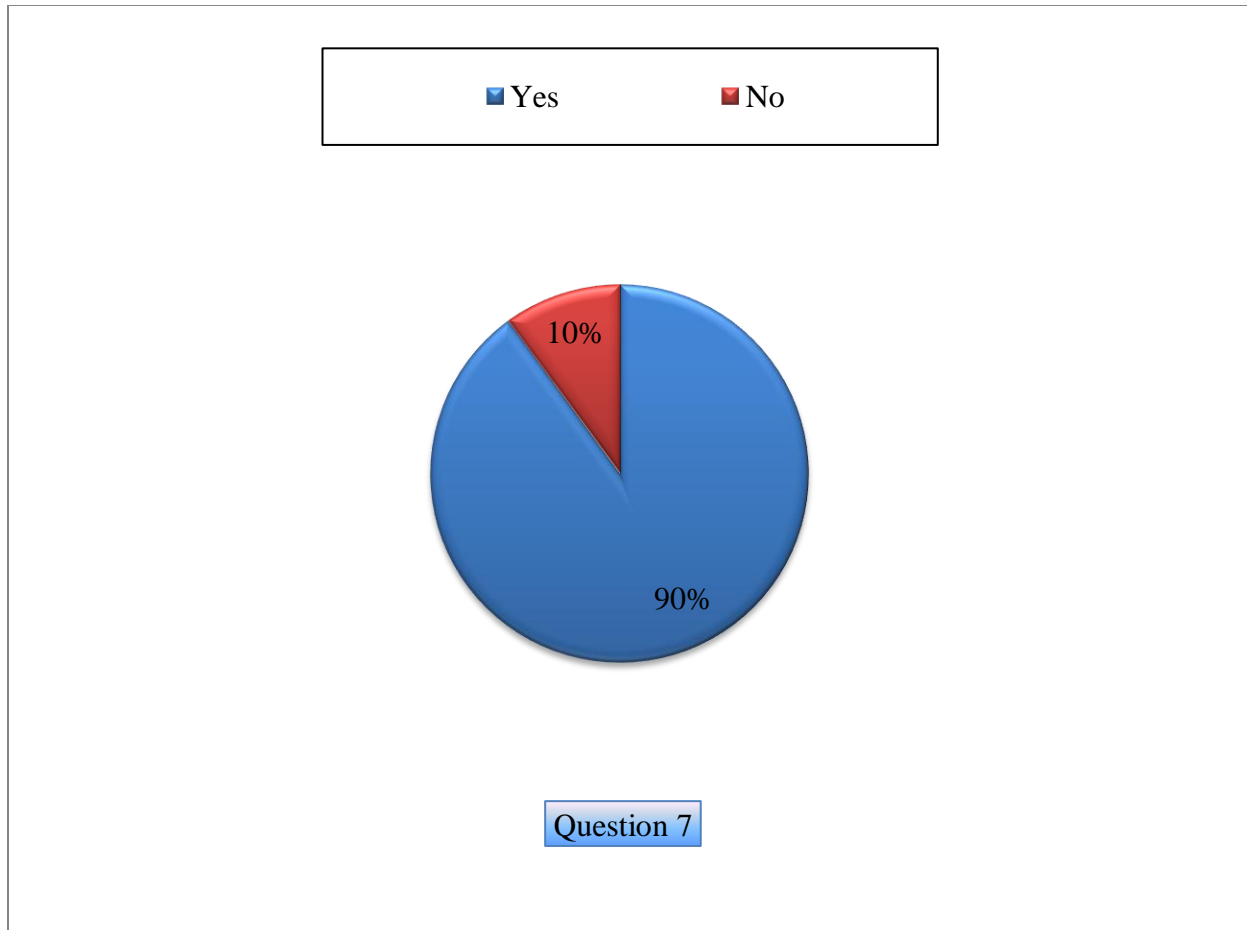


**Figure 6:** Exposure to Authentic Materials outside the Classroom



**Figure 7:** Frequency of Exposure to Authentic Materials outside the Classroom

The last question in this section, which is number seven, enquires into the learners' exposure to culture and authentic language in real life. It indicates that only 10% of the participants have visited an English speaking country. They declare that they have faced difficulties when it comes to vocabulary, pronunciation, cultural fluency, and proper language use.



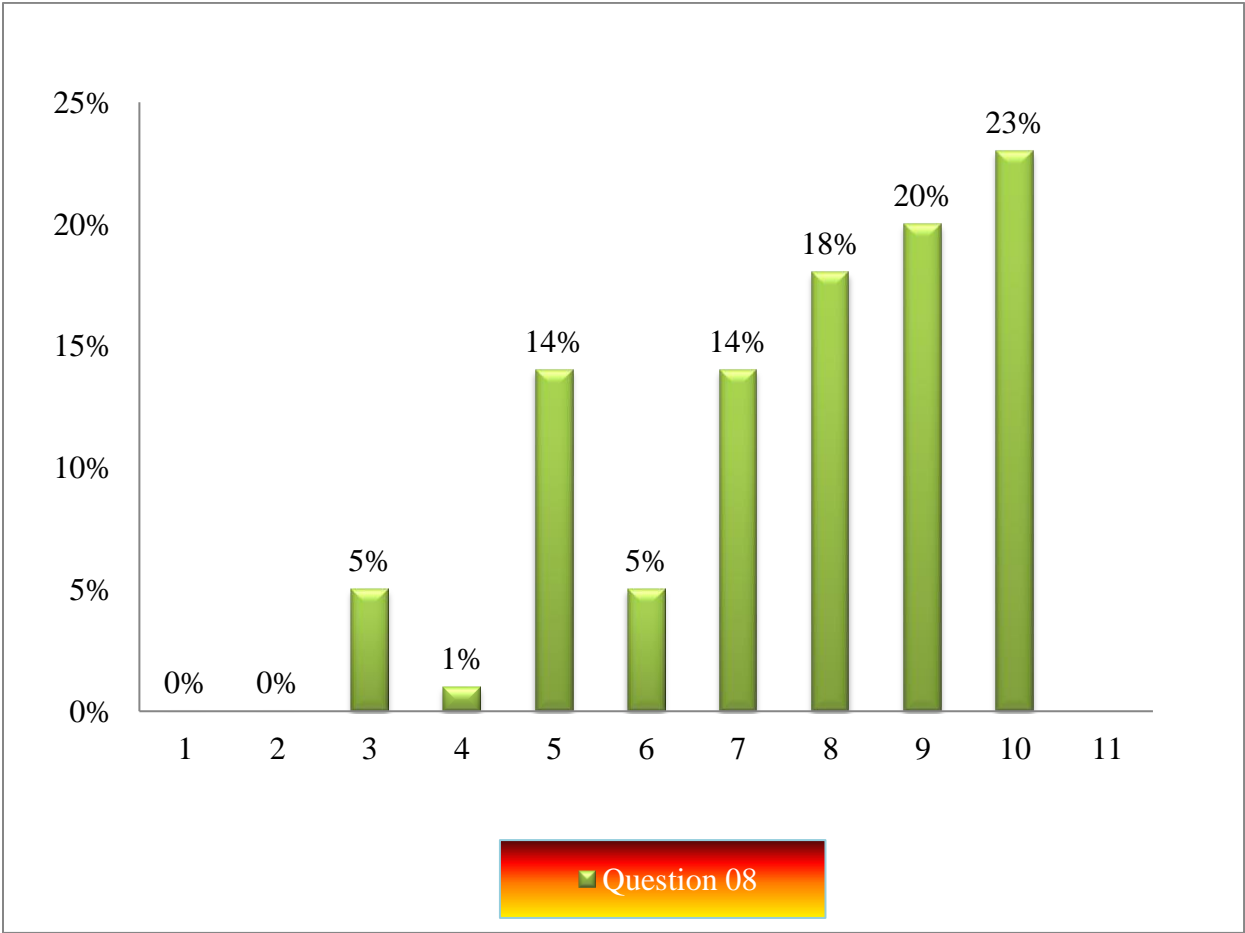
**Figure 8:** Learners' Exploration of English-Speaking Countries

## **Part Two: Intercultural Pragmatic Problems**

This part moves from general questions about dyadic communication to specifically tackling online dyadic interactions with native speakers as it is the main concern of the study. This section discusses mainly the pragmatic breakdowns' causes, directly or indirectly, as the questions are centred on misunderstanding reasons and setting.

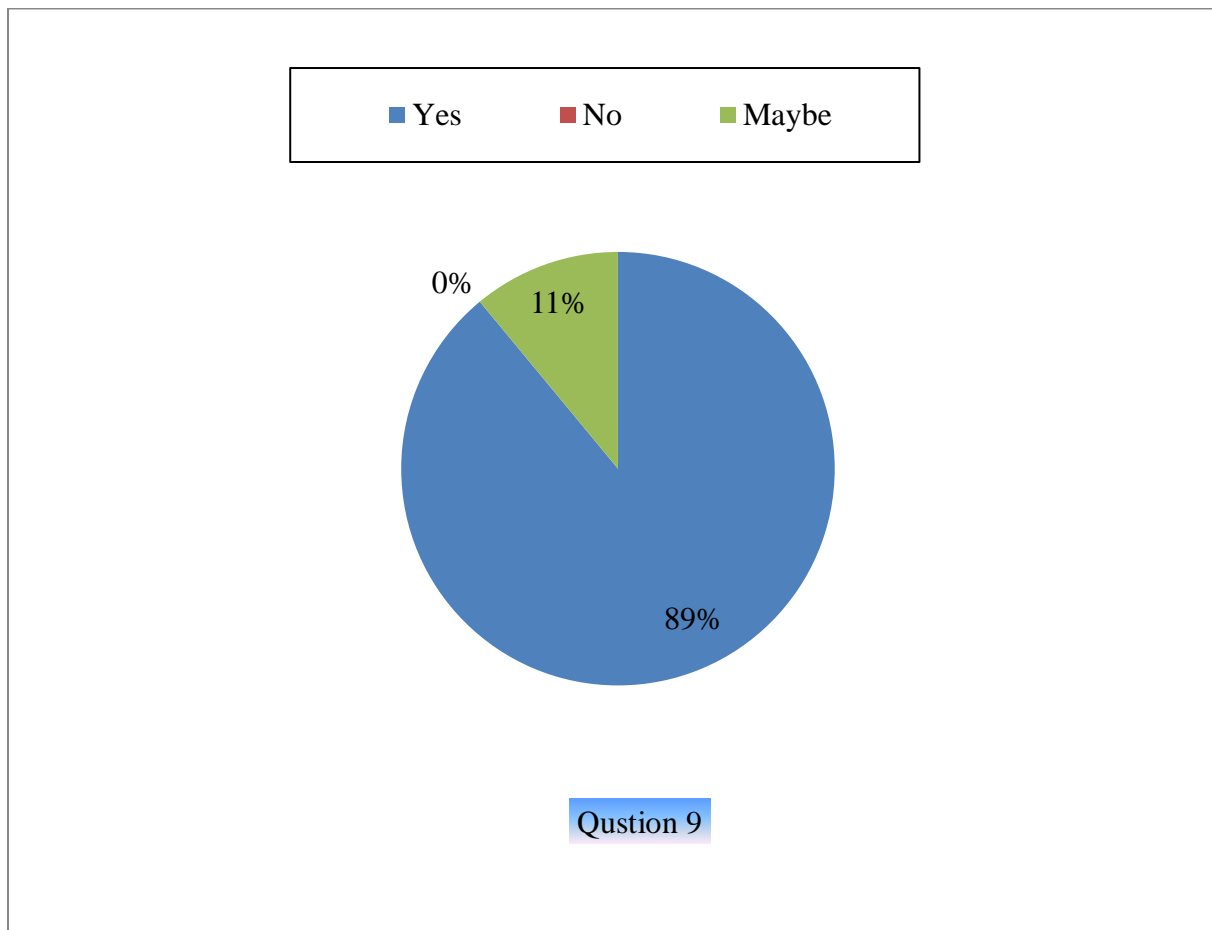
In the first question of this section (question eight), the learners have been asked to rate the extent to which communication affects their awareness about the target language and culture.

The majority of the population (75%), with a rate ranging between seven and 10, have asserted that interaction with people from different cultures affects their awareness about language and culture. Nineteen percent state that conducting a communication with native speakers moderately affects their mindfulness about both conceptions (rate ranging between five and six). However, 6% with a rate ranging between one and four claim that communication has a little influence on learners' awareness about both elements.



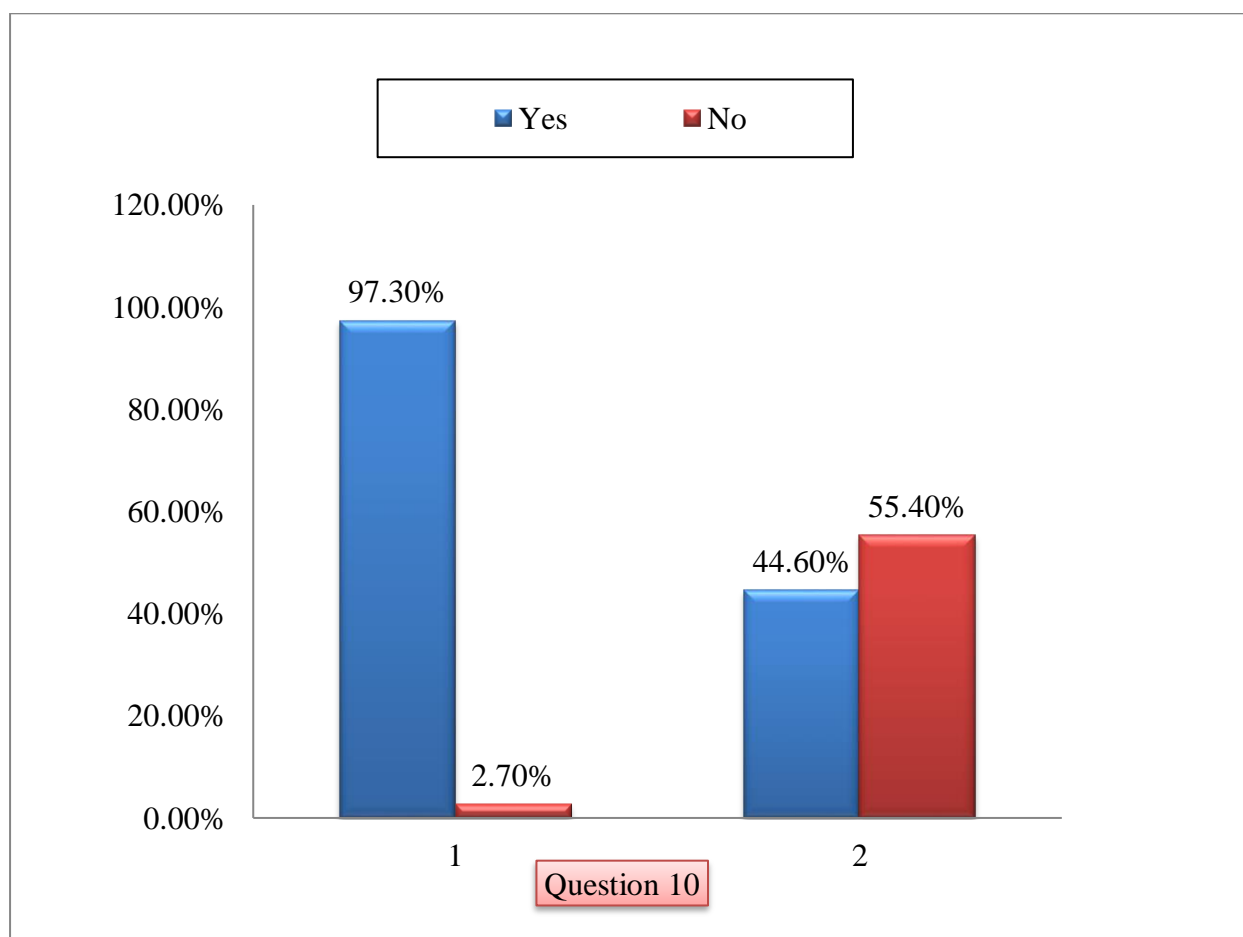
**Figure 9:** Learners' Intercultural Communicative Awareness

For the sake of reaching the learners' internal consistency, question number nine interrogates the learners' perspectives about whether communication with natives is helpful for learning a foreign language. Eighty-nine percent respond positively. On the other hand, 11% take the in-between side "Maybe" and consider that they are not totally sure about the effectiveness of interaction with natives on learning their language. This suggests their lack of awareness about the importance of online communication which might pave the way towards misunderstanding occurrence.



**Figure 10:** Effectiveness of Online Dyadic Communication on FL Acquisition

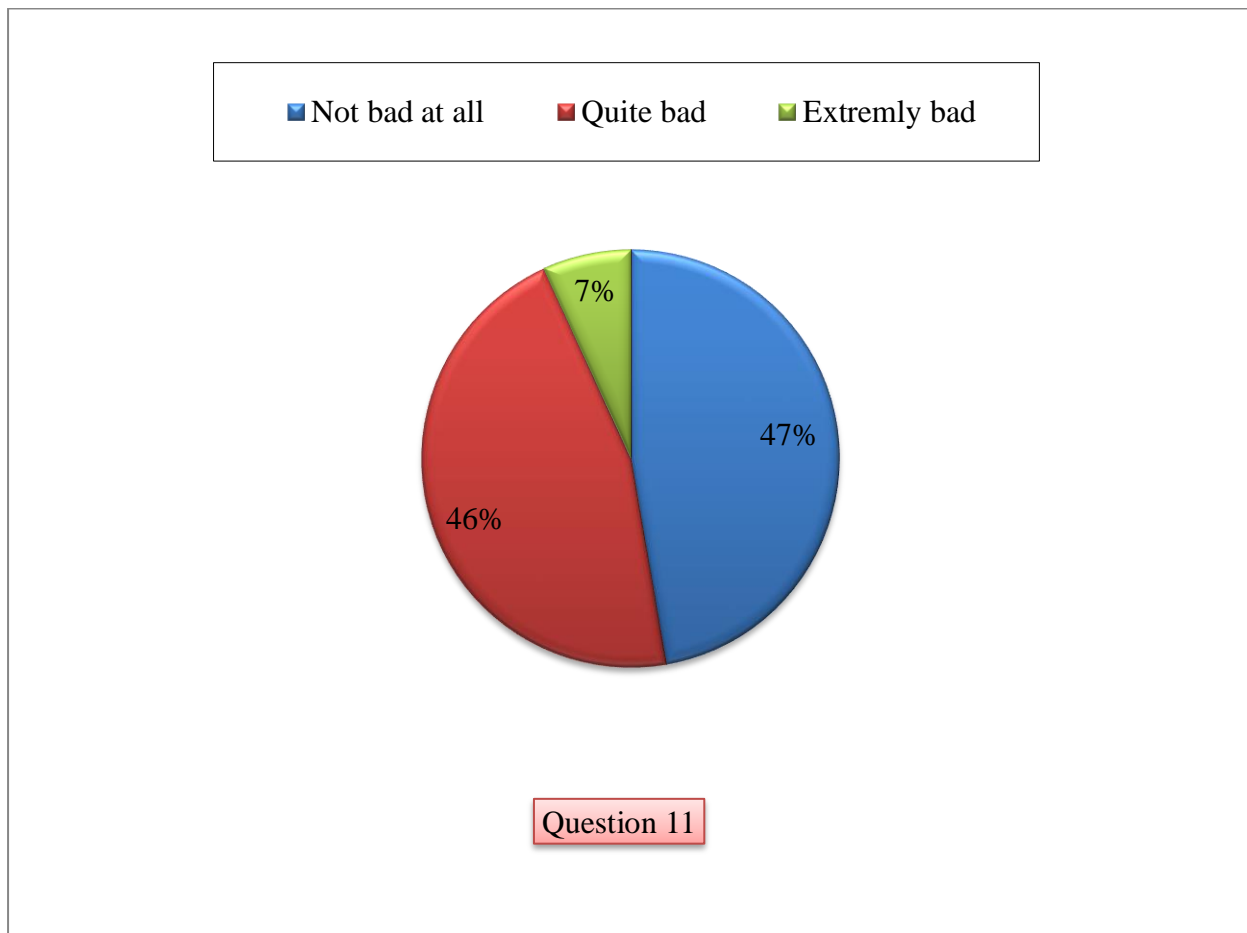
The 10<sup>th</sup> interrogation questions the learners' engagement in online dyadic interactions with native speakers, and if they have encountered any problems during the communication. The majority of the sample (97.3%) state that they have already had a conversation with natives via social media. Among them, 44.6% claim that they have encountered some conversational problems, while 55.4% have not faced any breakdowns.



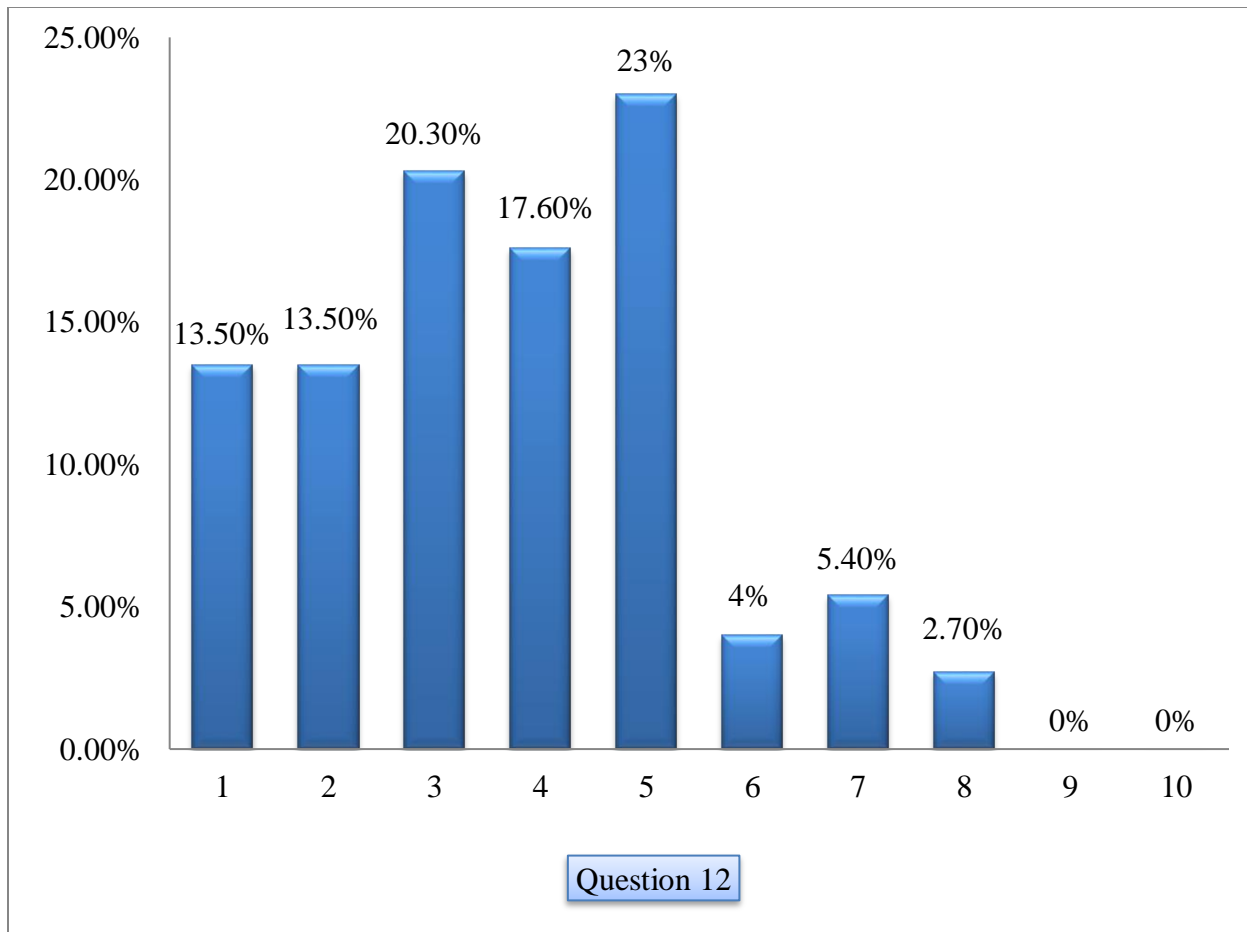
**Figure 11:** Learners' Engagement in Online Dyadic Conversations

The next question (question 11) aims at exploring whether the students' feelings play a role in inciting misunderstanding occurrence in their online dyadic conversations with native

speakers. Unlike 47% who have a positive attitude towards misunderstanding, 46% state that they feel quite bad when the issue occurs. Seven percent, however, feel extremely disconcerting when misunderstanding happens. This question gives the green light to rate the degree of misunderstanding occurrence during a conversation (question 12). High problem occurrence is reported by 8.1% of the students. Compared to it, 27% state that misunderstanding fairly occurs, while 64.9% announce a low occurrence of breakdowns in their conversations. These results indicate that the learners are possibly not aware of the problems they have.



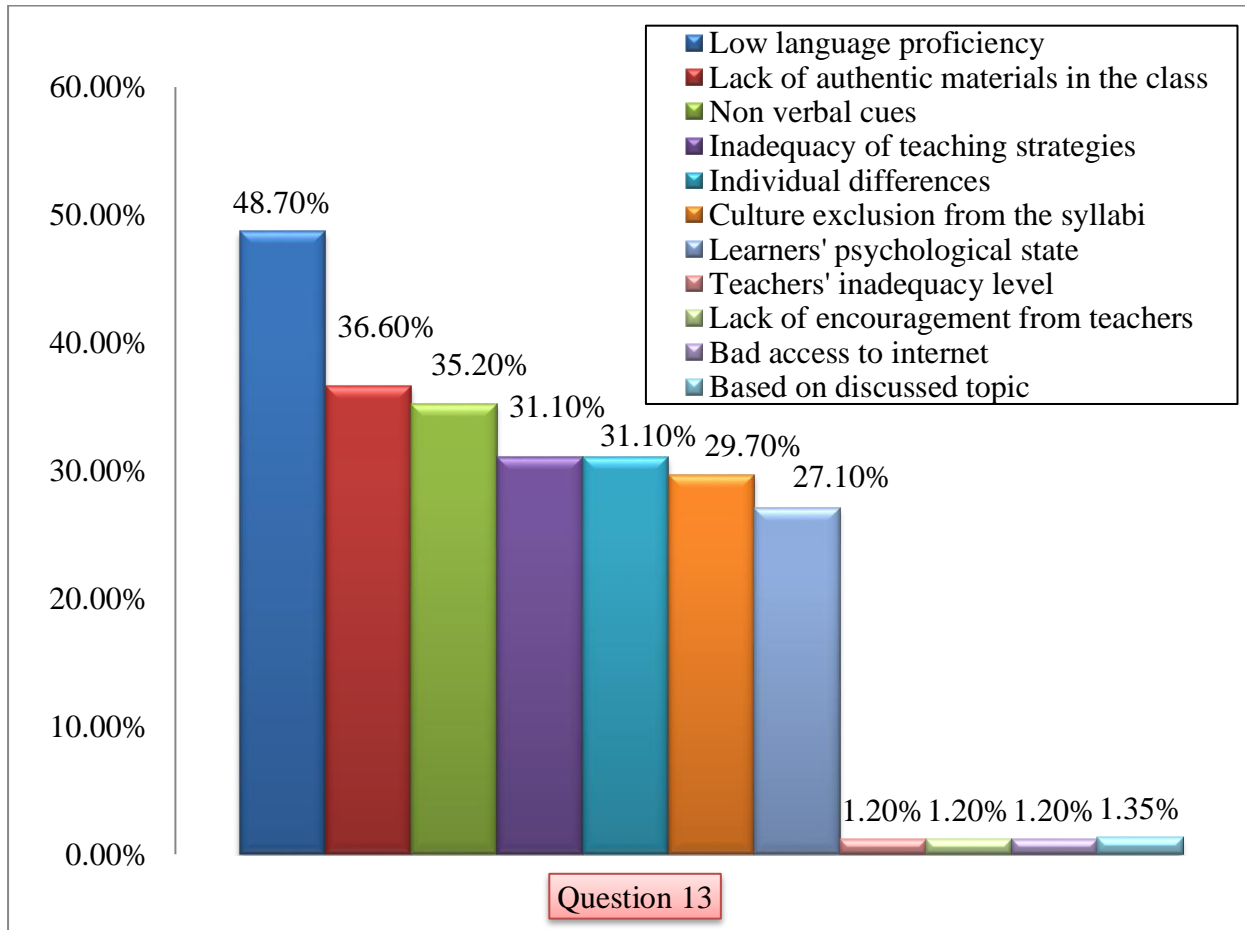
**Figure 12:** Learners' Feelings towards Misunderstanding



**Figure 13:** Degree of Misunderstanding Occurrence

Question 13, whose aim is highlighting the reasons behind the failure of online dyadic communication with natives, illustrates that low language proficiency is the most prevalent reason among the proposed ones (48.7%), followed by the lack of authentic materials in the classroom (36.6%) and the absence of verbal clues (35.2%). The inadequacy of teaching strategies and individual differences come in the fourth position with a percentage of 31.1%. The following reason is the exclusion of culture from the teaching syllabi (29.7%), followed by the learners' psychological state with a rate of 27.1%. Down in the line, the respondents have mentioned other reasons including teachers' inadequacy level, lack of encouragement from

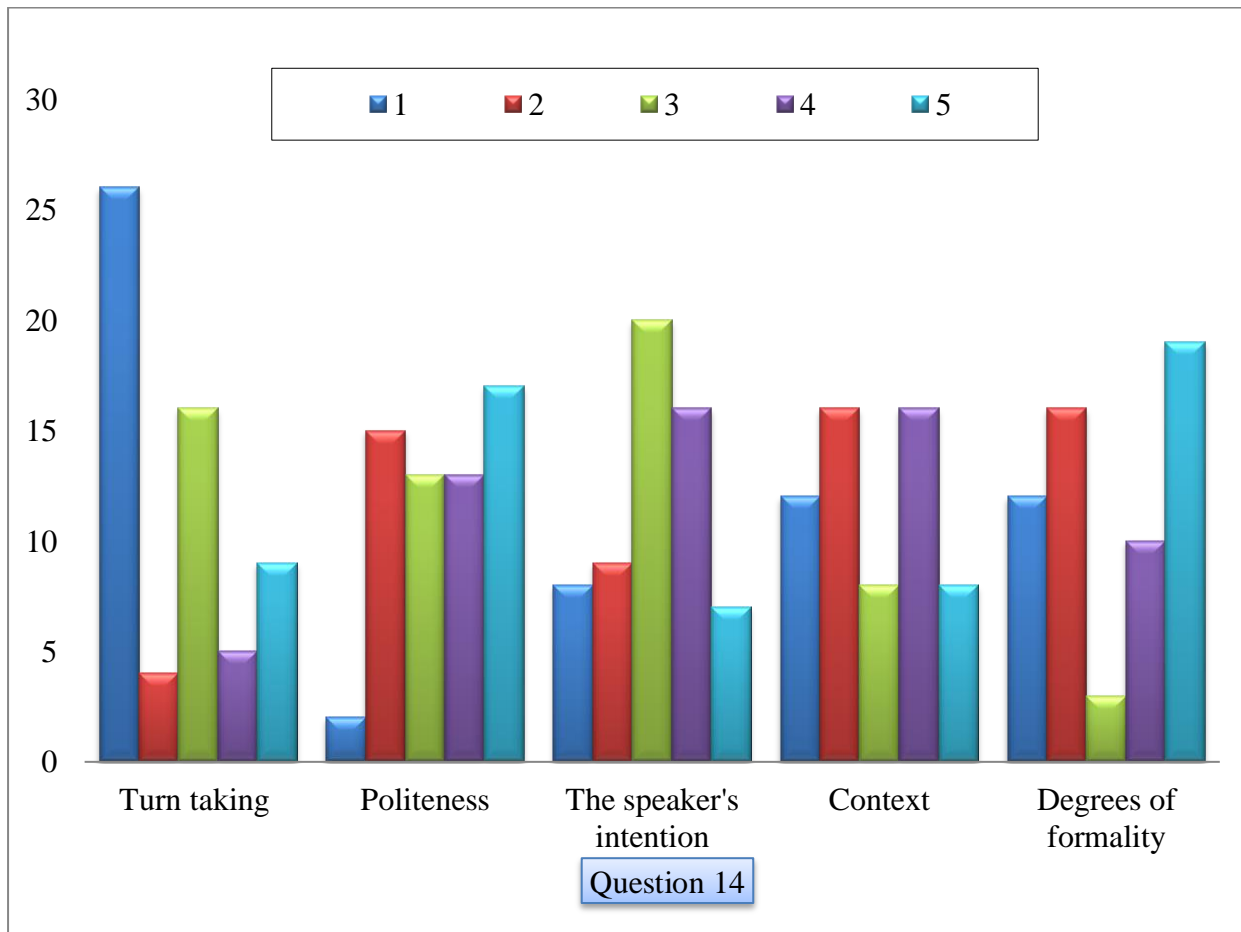
teachers, or external factors like bad access to the internet. A few participants (1.35%) have clarified that the reasons vary depending on the topic discussed.



**Figure 14:** Reasons behind Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns

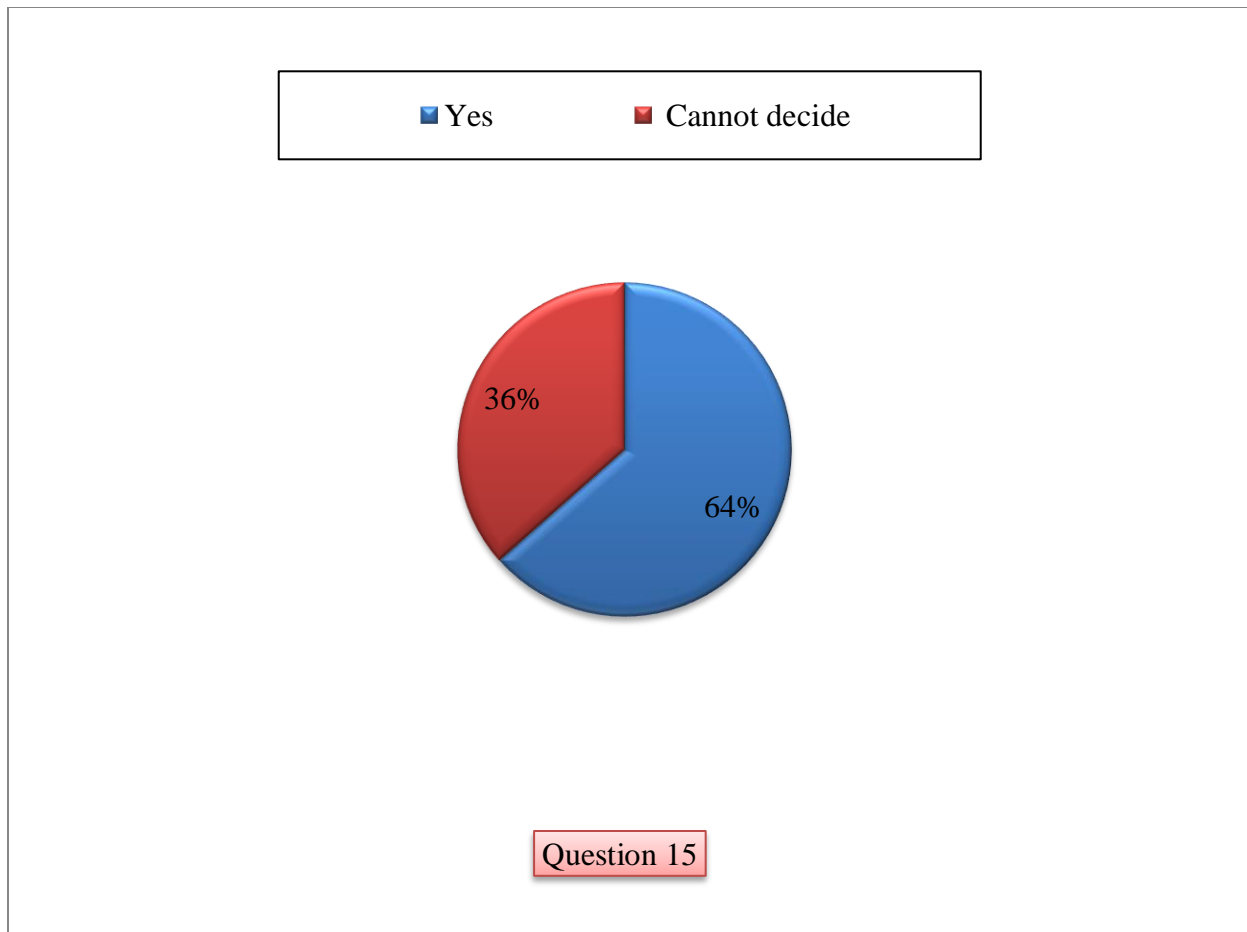
In order to grasp the most common problems encountered, learners are given five choices of the problems that may take place during their online dyadic interactions and are asked to reorder them from the most frequent problem to the least frequent one (question 14). Based on the findings, the participants agree to rearrange them as follow: turn taking, politeness, the speaker's

intention, context, and then degrees of formality. This, justifies one of the learners' challenges in such types of interactions, namely turn taking.



**Figure 15:** Frequent Conversational Problems

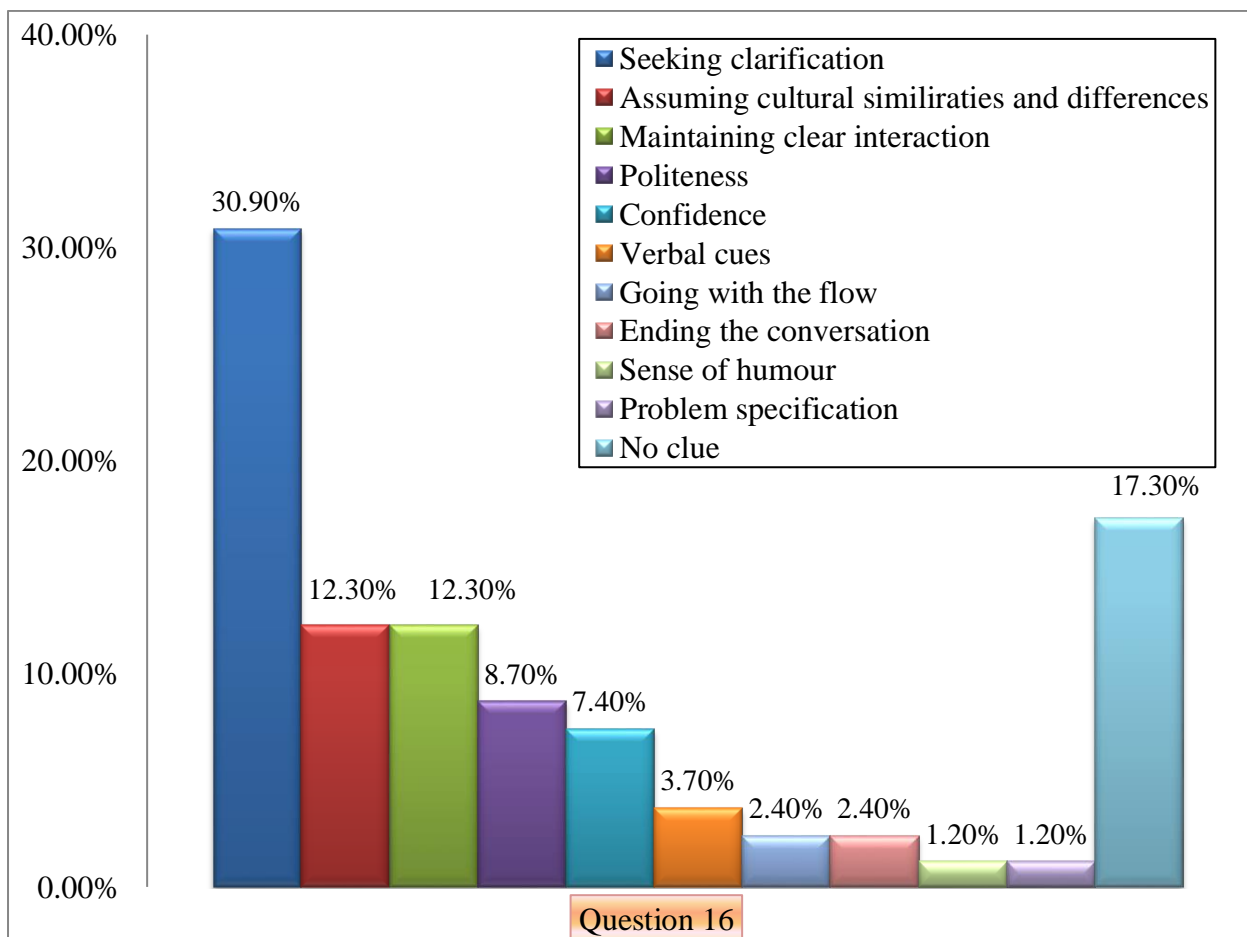
When learners are asked about whether they feel any improvement in their language use after a number of online interactions with natives (question 15), 64% claim that online dyadic communication helps to improve their language use level. The remaining 36%; however, report that they cannot decide about the issue which is probably due to their little interactions with native speakers.



**Figure 16:** Learners' Language Improvement

Since EFL learners are subjected to intercultural pragmatic breakdowns during their online dyadic conversations with native speakers, the researchers have given them a chance to jog down the variant strategies they opt for when these problems take place. Endeavour for understanding, demanding clarification from the person him/herself, or searching for pieces of information from other sources like Google or dictionary is the most ordinary technique with a percentage of 30.9%. However, The use of cognate, alternative, and common terminology along with assuming cultural differences are other tactics to approach the issue (12.3%), whereas 8.7% is the percentage attributed to politeness as a reliable strategy. Besides, 7.4% represent

confidence as one of the keys that help control any possible undesirable outcomes. With approximate percentages, ranging between 3.7% and 1.2%, verbal clues, “just going with the flow of the conversation”, being reluctant to communicate, and using sense of humour have been respectively proposed as well. It is worth mentioning that 17.3% of learners state that they have no clue as regard to the ways of overcoming the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns. This could be possibly due to their unawareness of those problems.



**Figure 17:** Strategies to Overcome Online Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns

### 3.2.2.2. Interpretation of the Questionnaire's Results

The above stated findings signify the following exceptions:

- Second-year students demonstrate positive attitudes towards foreign language, culture communication, and breakdowns.
- Second-year EFL learners anticipate maintaining online dyadic conversations with natives as a way to increase their language and cultural knowledge as online dyadic communication has proved its efficiency for them. A considerable number of them have asserted that after a number of online dyadic conversations, they have noticed an improvement in their language use.
- Most of the learners who have reported that they have encountered problems, have studied English for a period of less than four years. This shows that the longer the span of learning English is (four years and more), the less misunderstanding occurrence will be. All those who have spent four years and more learning English claim that misunderstanding rarely takes place in their online dyadic conversations. Additionally, the findings allude to the fact that learners who are interested in the foreign culture can practically conduct problem-free conversations with natives.
- Low language proficiency, most specifically lack of vocabulary, is the chief reason behind EFL learners' breakdowns whether it is online or face-to-face communication alongside the lack of authentic materials. It is important to take into account that a fair number has announced that they infrequently expose themselves to genuine and natural language use.

- The majority of learners encounter different types of problems when communicating online. The results show that turn taking is the most common problem that takes place between EFL learners and native speakers. This is because learners are used to face-to-face dyadic conversations or group interactions which are less organised compared to online dyadic communication. This fact makes this type of interactions more problematic.
- Solicitation of explanation, attempts for clarity, and embracement of cultural differences present the most used strategies to handle misunderstanding in mediated communication.

### **3.2.3. The Interview**

#### **3.2.3.1. Analysis of the Interview Data**

The researchers have conducted an interview with five teachers who are specialised in Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies at Abbes Laghrour University, Khenchela. The interview is done for the purpose of eliciting their perspectives concerning the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that take place in an online intercultural communication to disclose their feasible solutions and suggestions to overcome such intercultural pragmatic failures. It consists of 12 questions that address the main concern of the investigation. The following subsequent paragraphs spotlight the teachers' responses to the interview questions (see appendix D).

**Interviewee A** (see appendix D)

#### **Section One: Teaching Experience**

Interviewee A, who has four years of teaching experience in the field of culture, argues that culture and pragmatics incorporation in EFL classrooms is undoubtedly legitimate, for its

effectiveness and usefulness in foreign language teaching that no practitioner in this domain can deny. He claims that the objectives of this incorporation are centred on raising the learners' awareness towards the use of the foreign language in everyday life. He further emphasises that the most important point is that the cultural values and the pragmatic norms of the language ought to be reproduced in the EFL class. He also clarifies that the learners show positive attitudes towards including pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching, especially when Internet and other interesting sources are involved.

## **Section Two: Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

Concerning the learner's ability to understand native speakers, interviewee A asserts that generally speaking, more students are adept to not only understand English natives but also to communicate using the target language. This is evidence owing to the learners' nowadays access to multitude resources and materials related to the target society, emphasising that exploring a target language and culture academically is nothing like dealing with it in its contextual frame. According to this teacher, an intercultural pragmatic breakdown is "the failure to make sense of a linguistic situation because of unawareness of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of the target setting, leading therefore to inability to comprehend the target cultural item in question from one's own cultural lens". Strictly speaking, the educator correlates the linguistic meaning of utterances with their pragmatic and social background; these elements pertinent to the target culture cannot be grasped from the cultural perspective of the learners. He justifies that the learners' breakdowns are ascribed to their ignorance of the strategies to realise speech intentions and their inability to recognise the social conditions that govern language use in the target language.

The educator has displayed some pragmatic problems mentioning elements as collocations, idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs, and metaphorical use of language as being most problematic for his learners as well as any learner discovering a new language. He adds that both linguistic-contextual factors and contextual factors are elements playing a role in the occurrence of an intercultural pragmatic breakdown.

### **Section Three: Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

The teacher attests that all teaching approaches have their merits and demerits when being asked to suggest teaching approaches to help learners acquire an intercultural pragmatic competence. He denotes that opting for an eclectic approach will reduce the weaknesses and promote the advantages of each approach; it would be senseless to depend on a particular approach at the cost of the others. He, moreover, points that the subject being taught has to be considered, for it would not be appropriate to opt for an approach when this latter is applicable for another subject.

The teacher concludes that the communicative and the functional approaches are to be the teaching approaches most advisable for the acquisition of the intercultural communicative competence. The teacher maintains that whether the integration of pragmatic-related approaches should be explicit or implicit depends on the types of learners, their level, and the kind of the subject, arriving at the conclusion that it remains the teacher's personal choice. When being asked about his views regarding online communication as a way to enhance learner's intercultural pragmatic competence, he reposts that "Online communication is, besides yet other considerations, a fruitful way for the underlined purpose".

**Interviewee B** (see appendix D)

### **Section One: Teaching Experience**

Interviewee B, with an experience of four years of teaching Applied Linguistics, asserts that teaching a language without the inclusion of cultural components relevant to the target culture is doomed to be pointless. In regard to the objectives of integrating culture and pragmatics in EFL classrooms, the teacher assumes that “Enhancing learners’ linguistic and communicative competence, building learners’ intercultural tolerance, and increasing their motivation towards English classes” are the main targets in this process. The educator further underlines that subjects related to culture or about culture itself ignite learners’ passion about learning a foreign language.

### **Section Two: Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

When asked about her learners’ ability to understand native speakers, the interviewee B specifies that most of them are not able to comprehend what their teachers are saying, henceforth, it would be too much to expect them to interpret what natives say and mean. She adds that most of the time, listening to an authentic material requires her to paraphrase the talk in question.

According to this teacher, an intercultural pragmatic breakdown is “A negative transfer of a message interculturally”. As a matter of fact, she affirms that the incapability to apprehend culture-related courses, incompetence to riposte to a bunch of authentic situations (apology, invitation, greeting), and the tendency to translate culture-related items and expressions to Arabic

are some of the pragmatic problems that her learners demonstrate. Moreover, the teacher illustrates that the absence of language authenticity in EFL classes, the learners' impassivity as regard to the foreign culture, and defective command of language are factors that may contribute to an intercultural pragmatic breakdown.

### **Section Three: Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

As far as teaching is concerned, this educator suggests the Communicative Approach, the Cross-cultural Approach, Foreign Culture Approach, Transcultural Approach, and Multicultural Approach as effective approaches for foreign language teaching. On the other hand, when it comes to the integration of pragmatic-related approaches, she prefers it to be implicit; she clarifies that teachers do not even need to make it that way since culture is already embedded in language. Furthermore, she emphasises that the teaching process ought to be "sweet, simple, stupid" on the grounds that throwing words like "pragmatics" and "intercultural communication" at the learners' face will just fuel their frustration.

The teacher qualifies online communication as the best technique to enhance the learners' intercultural pragmatic competence. She certifies: "I always say that in order to learn a foreign language best, there is no better way than interacting with the language's native speakers". She goes on to say that "it is more fruitful than a face-to-face interaction" given the fact that learners would feel more comfortable when using social media which undeniably has an impact on the length and the nature of the conversation. She emphasises dyadic interactions' importance, highlighting that they familiarise the learners with turn taking and behaviour in some situational contexts, especially for beginners.

Assuming EFL learners' lack of pragmatic competence, the educator proposes that strategies to foster their competence ought to be both extrinsic and intrinsic. She advises the incorporation of some English authentic materials in the teaching process like songs, movies, podcasts, and documentaries. She also recommends that teachers make use of authentic language when addressing learners (via including idioms, proverbs, and collocations in their talk), and that learners, likewise, had better anticipate to meet with people belonging to English speaking countries and take careful notice of the language being used.

**Interviewee C** (see appendix D)

### **Section One: Teaching Experience**

Interviewee C, who has been teaching culture for 14 years, recommends the incorporation of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL teaching as it aims chiefly to drill learners to be competent communicators in real situations. When being asked concerning her learners' perspectives in regard to the embracement of those elements, she has claimed that the more students are acquainted with cultural elements and instructed on how to act properly in every situation, the more they will be able to understand language and culture. She concludes that such issues will boost their motivation to acquire the matters in question.

### **Section Two: Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

As to her learners' understanding of native speakers' talk, this teacher mentions that a great number of them do not make sense of what natives are saying. In this context, interviewee C interprets an intercultural pragmatic breakdown as a "Breakdown of communication". She

further states that one of the pragmatic problems that her learners exhibit is that they are not able to comprehend native speakers' speech despite their linguistic knowledge. The teacher proceeds to enumerate some of the factors that may generate an intercultural pragmatic breakdown. These are cited as follow: the lack of serious training concerning cultural elements and learners' unwillingness to make efforts to improve their pragmatic and intercultural competence outside the classroom.

### **Section Three: Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

To this teacher, the Communicative approach is the teaching approach to be adopted to enable EFL learners to acquire an intercultural pragmatic competence. Speaking of teaching approaches, the educator thinks that pragmatic-related ones can be taught implicitly and explicitly, justifying her choice by referring to the variation of subjects and used materials. With regard to learners' intercultural pragmatic competence, the teacher approves that online communication has a positive impact on this latter. This teacher explains that multitude techniques and ways can be used to enhance the learners' communicative competence. These can be "role plays, songs, videos, movies, news broadcasts, newspapers, brochures, menus, bus tickets, novels, short stories, and any authentic element that belongs to the target culture" in the light of EFL learners' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence.

**Interviewee D** (see appendix D)

### **Section One: Teaching Experience**

Interviewee D, who has three years of teaching experience, announces that culture and language are inseparable concepts. Therefore, the interviewee does not only highly recommend the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes but also sets the main objectives behind it. She considers that teaching language is quite impossible without looking deeply at its culture. Alternatively, to her, demystifying the cultural components of any language is of incredible importance. She adds that some scholars and researchers in the field of ‘language teaching’ consider culture as ‘the fifth skill’ to be mastered by learners. She justifies this by referring to the fact that proficiency in language cannot be established unless the learner accumulates a certain cultural knowledge about the language whether it is big ‘C’ culture or small ‘c’ culture. She also claims that the adequate knowledge of the target culture assists learners to conduct a successful communication with natives and eliminates the potential of being misunderstood or misinterpreted.

When she was asked about EFL learners’ attitudes about including pragmatics and culture-related elements in the teaching process, the interviewee clearly focuses on the learners’ first impression when they are introduced to such subject matters. She states that EFL students exhibit a favourable stance towards the inclusion of some cultural components at the class-time. Simply put, to her, they seem extremely excited and enthusiastic when it comes to talking about the target language and culture. According to her, lifestyle, famous personalities, history, well-

known locations, culture's tradition at certain feasts and celebrations, taboo-topics, superstition, proverbs, idioms, and folktales are the welcomed topics by the learners during cultural sessions.

## **Section Two: Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

Interviewee D focuses her attention on the extent to which the access to native speakers becomes easier than ever, especially because the growing pace of globalisation has turned the world into a small village. Undoubtedly, the majority of EFL students would show a modest if not a good command of manipulating conversations or audios from natives in this teacher's viewpoint. When asked about her own definition of an intercultural pragmatic breakdown, she states that this issue occurs when the learner's intercultural pragmatic competence is inadequate and insufficient to handle culturally-loaded topics, deals, and situations. She reports as well that her students, sometimes, miss the focal point of what she says when she tends to mix her lecture content with proverbs, idiomatic expressions, or quotes from a piece of a literary work. She further clarifies that other times, they seem lost when she provides them with authentic materials and then asks them to analyse and detect the main idea behind these materials. She even adds that they cannot read between the lines or think appropriately in English. As a teacher, she complains about her students' prejudgments based on stereotypes about the other cultures, which may lead to bias regarding their intercultural competence.

To her, learners are subjected to certain cultural and pragmatic failures due to some reasons related to the learners and teachers' attitudes towards the target culture. She states lack of openness to others' culture, learners' prejudgements towards the otherness, besides teachers and

learners' unwillingness to embrace the target culture and act according to its norms and rules as the main factors behind these intercultural pragmatic breakdowns.

### **Section Three: Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

Interviewee D asserts that 'pragmatic approaches' are sufficient like adopting 'a pragmatic approach to teaching literature'. She elucidates her point by ensuring that learners can investigate cultural elements embedded in literary works like Shakespeare's poems and drama which depict the British culture during the Elizabethan Era. She does not clearly announce a preference for an explicit or an implicit implementation. Instead, she emphasises both strategies due to their dependence on the nature of the component to be introduced in class. She explains that certain elements are taught explicitly as to draw learners' attention towards them, while other elements would remain tacit and are preferred to be implicit all along the lesson.

When she was interrogated about her viewpoint concerning online communication as a way to increase the learners' intercultural pragmatic competence, she appeared insistent on considering it the best, easiest, and the shortest way to get into contact with natives. At the end, this teacher has suggested many examples of techniques and strategies that can be employed to promote EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic competence. She recommends watching movies, series, shows, and even cartoons in the target language. Also, reading very recent volumes, magazines, or journals is applicable. Besides, listening carefully to native channels on TV or streams on Facebook is helpful. She advises as well the learners to use their critical thinking skills along with these activities in order to detect embedded cultural components. They should as well question any inconsistencies or dissimilarities with their mother culture.

**Interviewee E** (see appendix D)

### **Section One: Teaching Experience**

Interviewee E, who spends a fifteen-year teaching experience at the Department of English, reports that he is in favour of incorporating cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes for the objective of making EFL learners more familiar with the hidden aspects of language. According to this teacher, students hold positive vantage points towards cultural and pragmatic elements' insertion in the learning-teaching process.

### **Section Two: Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

Interviewee E clearly declares that the learners' ability to understand native speakers is weak. When asked about the variant problems that his learners demonstrate in the learning process, he distinctly states that teachers generally emphasise the language aspects and totally ignore the cultural elements of language that are considered the most important criteria to understand it.

### **Section Three: Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

Interviewee E reports that he prefers to explicitly introduce his learners to authentic materials like newspapers and movies in order to help them acquire an intercultural communicative competence. When asked about his point of view towards online communication, he has made it obvious that it is one of the good methods to enhance EFL learners' level of intercultural pragmatic competence.

### 3.2.3.2. Interpretation of the Interview Data

Based on what has been reported above, the following focal points can be extracted:

- The five teachers have legitimised the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic-related elements within the curriculum of EFL classes, emphasising that the main objectives focalise on language everyday use in real contexts and the acquisition of various skills (communicative, linguistic, and behavioural).
- They have all referred to culture as being the main element that enables EFL learners to understand the language's aspects. For them, culture and language are "two sides of the same coin".
- The five teachers have certified EFL learners' positive attitudes in view of inserting elements pertinent to culture and pragmatics in the learning process which will primarily stimulate their interest to embrace a new language alongside its cultural facets and to better engage in it.
- The interviewed teachers have made reference to the factors associated to these failures, mentioning lack of exposure to, interest, and serious training in the target language besides insufficient efforts to improve their competence.
- Only two of the teachers have demonstrated their satisfaction with the learners' ability to assimilate natives' talk, while the other teachers have shown complaint about the matter in question. Yet, all the teachers have delineated expressions and cultural elements proper to English in tandem with their incompetence to get the message as the chief challenges that learners encounter.

- They have all agreed upon the use of authentic materials as a good method to enhance EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic competence, and have considered the Communicative Approach as the most suitable way to gain mastery in intercultural communication. They have also referred to other effective teaching approaches (eclectic, functional, multicultural, and transcultural).
- All the teachers have agreed that online dyadic communication is one of the best, easiest, and quickest ways that can be used to ameliorate the learners' pragmatic and intercultural competencies. This can be achieved through, for instance, listening to what natives offer on Facebook. Their claims are based on the method's advantages that it has diverse forms and is not restricted by time or place. They have also denoted that learners are more comfortable when engaging in Messenger or Skype interactions which would promote a longer discussion and impact its nature. It has been further clarified that Dyadic interactions are especially more suitable for beginners, and that the conversations of this kind enable EFL learners to know how turn taking takes place and how to behave in variant situational contexts.

## Conclusion

As mentioned in the present chapter, the researchers have recourse to a combination of qualitative and quantitative research which displays a triangulation of tools. This method rationalises the use of three data gathering tools that include a content analysis, an internet questionnaire, and an email interview. These instruments are ratified in accordance with the study's research questions and objectives. The chapter clearly shows the way these tools are used to identify the intercultural pragmatic problems, their reasons, and the possible resolutions to reduce these issues. It analyses the students' online dyadic conversations, their views, and the teachers' attitudes as far as pragmatic breakdowns are concerned. The results deduced from the implementation of the three tools are discussed in the second part of this chapter. The content analysis discloses misunderstanding being the major breakdown. The latter covers subsequent problems, including pragma-linguistic, sociopragmatic, and pragmastylistic issues that are unanticipatedly not attributable to failure of communication. The questionnaire's statistical findings display the learners' positive attitudes towards mediated communication and claim language proficiency and absence of authenticity as the principle factors behind miscommunication. On the other hand, the findings of the interview emphasise the significance of integrating pragmatic and cultural matters in EFL classes and utilising online communication as a functional and applicable method to ameliorate the students' language proficiency and cultural fluency.

## General Conclusion

The present research paper tends to investigate the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that occur in EFL learners' online dyadic messages with native speakers. This study has been motivated by the perceived inability of learners to maintain successful communication with native speakers, especially with the absence of the necessary non-verbal clues that facilitate such communications. As the main objectives centralise the pragmatic problems, their reasons, and the solutions to overcome them, the study is a trial to raise teachers' awareness about the implementation of cultural and pragmatic-related elements within the syllabi to enhance the learners' pragmatic and cultural competencies. It also seeks to urge both teachers and learners to adopt online dyadic communication as a method to improve the students' language proficiency and cultural fluency. With a view towards implementing the requirements of the present investigation, the latter has been established from the subsequent research questions:

1. What are the intercultural pragmatic breakdowns that take place in EFL learners' online dyadic interactions with natives?
2. What are the reasons behind the pragmatic problems that EFL learners encounter during online intercultural communication?
3. What are the possible solutions to overcome these intercultural pragmatic breakdowns?

For the sake of providing decent answers to the aforementioned queries, the researchers started collecting the possible data that are relevant to the main concerns of this research paper through a theoretical foundation that has been represented by the adequate literature review. The

latter has opened with bringing to light the prominence of pragmatics throughout the history of language study, the way it has been implemented in different frameworks, and the variant perceptions of scholars as regard to this area. The work further elucidates how pragmatics has been conceptualised within this sphere through accounting for the most critical aspects of pragmatics comprising the speech acts theory, the politeness theory, and the conversational implicature.

The literature review moves forward to shed light on the relation between pragmatics and human communication, examining how the former is put into practice to understand how the latter operates. Previous literature gives credit to studying culture, defining intercultural communication, and identifying its models and strategies. It also investigates the concept of intercultural communicative competence that vindicates the importance of culture in the domain of foreign language teaching and learning. The dissertation draws its path towards examining the relation between pragmatics and human relations on a more technological level through examining online communication, its features, types, and how it influences and is influenced by certain levels of interaction.

The data gathered specifically explain how dyadic communication in mediated contexts is different, tracing the variant principles that govern the interaction. It also highlights the pluses and minuses of such relations. With the invasion of social media, it has become easier for learners to enhance their communicative skills when interacting online with native speakers. However, this area is neglected in contempt of not only by virtue of its unfamiliarity in the pragmatic sphere but also considering the demand of implementing the latter due to the absence of the non-verbal elements that usually guide the face-to-face interactions. The entire above-

mentioned theoretical framework has been set by the researchers in order to put into context the matter of concern.

On the basis thereof, in order to achieve the study's reliability, consistency, and objectivity and realise the main aim of this research, the researchers adopted a triangulation approach that accumulates both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Each of the instruments was implemented to answer each of the above stated research questions and to meet the investigation's main objectives. The researchers conducted a content analysis on a set of second-year EFL learners' conversations with native speakers on different social media platforms. This instrument addresses the research problem on a more practical level as an attempt to examine their variant breakdowns being the main concern of the study. The results demonstrate a number of breakdowns ranging between pragma-linguistic, sociopragmatic, and pragmastylistic problems accessing a multivalent position which uncovers the distinction between breakdowns and miscommunication.

The second data gathering tool is the internet questionnaire intended to discerning the origin of those breakdowns. It was administered to 74 second-year English students at Abbes Laghrour University. The findings of the questionnaire reveal that the students' breakdowns are mainly due to their low language proficiency and the lack of authenticity in EFL classes. For sustaining the study's objectivity and validity, an email interview with five teachers of Applied Linguistics and Culture studies was also adopted as the third pillar. It aims at highlighting the plausible solutions to deal with those problems. When all is said and done, the teachers have expressed their endorsement of culture and pragmatic-related elements in EFL classes and suggested authentic materials and online communication to promote the learners' intercultural

pragmatic competence. The final results have shown that teachers are aware of the pragmatic problems that learners face whenever an online dyadic conversation gathers EFL learners with native speakers, whereas the learners are not completely aware of those breakdowns in some situations.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Any research paper has the chief aim of contributing to the field of study in which it has been investigated. The study purposes to improve and provide further assistance in the domain of foreign language learning and teaching as far as EFL learners' intercultural pragmatic breakdowns are concerned. Henceforth, the researchers have devoted this section to proffer a set of suggestions and pedagogical implications. These recommendations are suggested to be applicable at the level of the educational system by making alterations in the syllabi, optimising the teachers' expertise in the matter, and meeting the students' pedagogical needs.

- **The Integration of Cross-Cultural Pragmatics in the Algerian Syllabi**

With the proliferation of globalisation and technological modernisation in the field of communication, the downside to which miscommunication gives rise cannot be neglected. Scholars have become aware that culture is a critical element in the EFL teaching and learning process (Stadler, 2012). Since language and culture are interrelated, it is necessary to integrate culture into the foreign language syllabus. Hence, previous literature showed that teachers have relied on authentic materials, drama, role-plays, and creative writing in order to develop EFL learners' intercultural competence (Çakir, 2015). Some researchers have even considered culture

as the fifth skill along with speaking, writing, reading, and listening (Tomalin, 2008, as cited in Çakir, 2015).

But most importantly, previous literature has demonstrated that relying solely on the linguistic features of utterances is no more adequate for understanding what is said or written. Alternatively, the educators have come to the realisation that the linguistic competence on its own cannot content for a successful intercultural communication between EFL learners and natives (Stadler, 2012). Several studies have revealed that having mastery of the linguistic features of the target language may not always be sufficient for mutual intelligibility. This is due to the fact that in many conversations in culturally specific settings, speakers might get confused by some illiterate utterances which might result in misunderstanding. Therefore, educators have sought to rely on either a systematic approach where the lesson is pre-prepared or spontaneous approaches where teachers introduce the target culture without pre-planning, depending on the learners' participation and course content (Çakir, 2015).

The actual manifestation of the above-stated concern is that previous researchers have called for an explicit incorporation of pragmatic studies in EFL classes. Rose and Ng (2001, as cited in Choraih, Loutfi & Mansoor, 2016) have favoured the use of explicit instructions based on an experiment that has demonstrated that their explicit instruction group performed native-like compliment responses better than implicit instruction group. Educators' efforts for a successful implementation of pragmatics within the curriculum reflect its chief significance. Roever (2009, as cited in Choraih, Loutfi & Mansoor, 2016) has argued that a task-based syllabus, which considers students' target tasks in real world, would ensure the development of the pragmatic competence.

Recently, the subjects linked to culture and pragmatics have gained popularity in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. The awareness of the cruciality of both elements have prompted the exploration of the cultural dimension of pragmatics (Stadler, 2012). The field of cross-cultural pragmatics, whose aim is to understand how sets of meaning are affected by the cultural background of the interlocutors, is a renowned method to approach intercultural pragmatic breakdowns. Indeed, the interviewed teachers' pedagogical suggestions advocate the efficacy of communicatively incorporating cross-cultural pragmatic elements in EFL syllabi as a way to improve the learners' intercultural and pragmatic competences.

On the grounds that intercultural pragmatics is concerned with how meaning is attributed to utterances through the language's sociocultural implications, adopting cross-cultural pragmatic elements in the Algerian syllabi will contribute to facilitate the learners' understanding of natives' talk. It will also enhance their communicative competence to reduce pragmatic misunderstanding. Therefore, it is important for learners to be exposed to both subject matters for the sake of raising their openness, acceptance, and tolerance towards the world's diversities. They are also necessary for the learners' language level improvement and understanding.

- **Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) in EFL Classes**

One other necessary implication is the required reliance on online dyadic communication with native speakers as a way to enhance learners' intercultural pragmatic competence. Since the findings of this study proved online dyadic communication's efficiency, and that it is highly welcomed by both teachers and learners, it is crucial to encourage learners and teachers' to adopt it through an actual implementation of this method in EFL classes. Different developments have

come about it in the last twenty years. Today, there is more emphasis on individualistic instruction, authenticity in language learning, and a greater focus on the learner and on the development of communicative -as opposed to simply linguistic- competence (Kitao & Kitao, 1998, as cited in Boulmerka, 2016).

Many researchers have encouraged teachers to use internet instruction in EFL classrooms as it has marked its applicability. Grauss (1999, as cited in Boulmerka, 2016) has claimed that EFL learners can communicate immediately straightaway, cheaply, and handily with other learners or speakers of the target language 24 hours a day from school, work, or home. One can say that this method cannot be applicable due to certain limitations related to the lack of access to high-quality internet services, low levels of computer skills, low speed of the Internet, and lack of online teaching materials and resources (Gharehbakloo, 2005, as cited in Dashtestani, 2014). However, these issues must be taken into consideration by the educational authorities and planners to cover any existing pedagogical challenges. This can be applicable through the implementation of computer-mediated communication (CMC).

Computer-mediated communication is a blanket term which designates human interaction via internet computers. This concept has become a fast growing phenomenon over the last decade. Through this type of interactions students can communicate in a chat-room context in real time, known as synchronous computer-mediated communication. They can also interact with natives through asynchronous CMC where the participants share a talk with one another but are not synchronically online (Abrams, n.d).

Researches have demonstrated that computer-mediated communication proposes the following benefits for EFL learners:

- Can help increase students' motivation to learn the foreign language.
- Lower their anxiety.
- Increase their fluency in the target language.
- Lead to improved intercultural competence and democratise classroom communication (Abrams, n.d, para. 2).

The integration of CMC as a teaching method requires a good and considerable planning. Abrams (n.d) further explains that in an attempt to make the most of computer-mediated communication in EFL teaching and learning, teachers need to develop applicable CMC activities for the learners which are required to conform to the syllabus fundamentals.

A further subsequent pedagogical suggestion is to make the English teaching curricula based on an interactive mode that allows for an interaction between EFL learners and native speakers all around the world. The next example demonstrates how Internet was employed to promote an integrated communicative environment for EFL students in Bulgaria. Nowadays, they profit from a high/low technological combination to apply an integrated-skills approach in which an array of language skills are studied with the aim to encourage communicative competence. This experiment has shown that Bulgarian students have got insight into the American culture through electronic mail (Email) communication, concordancing software, and audio tapes both inside and outside classrooms (Meskill & Rangelova, 1995, as cited in

Boulmerka, 2016). Expanding on the above stated suggestions, the researchers propose the following protocol that should be taken into account to allow the implementation of online communication in EFL classes:

- With this technological advancement, the Algerian government should account for a higher online learning system. The researchers look forward, based on the findings, to actualise what was only theoretical in the previous years. Therefore, the Algerian government should guarantee a high speed spread of Internet throughout Algeria.
  - Students should be encouraged to conduct online conversations with native speakers and should be pre-prepared that they may undergo some conversational breakdowns, which is a normal issue that can be easily solved after a series of messages and classroom lessons.
  - Learners should be kept under the supervision of their teachers for a better evaluation and assessment of their language and cultural level.
  - Teachers should take into account that not all learners have access to Internet at home. Therefore, the Algerian universities should allow manoeuvring Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) that supplies links between teachers and remote students. This will enable distant learners to access education at any time.
- **Enhancing the Use of Authentic Materials in EFL Classes**

As the results of the current study demonstrate, one of the chief reasons behind learners' intercultural pragmatic breakdowns is low language proficiency, an issue traceable to the deficiency of authentic material use in the classrooms. Actually, the deficit of genuinity in the

teaching materials is, in itself, a prevailing reason behind those problems in intercultural communication, a fact which has been established through the findings of this research.

Necessarily, the reinforcement of authenticity in EFL classes becomes compulsory; such materials provide cultural context to language and fuel the learners' motivation and interest in discovering the target culture. This, consequently, paves the way to ameliorate their understanding of natives in a more practical, implicit, and enjoyable way. Yet, the actual issue does not lay in the adoption of authentic materials but in the choice of those materials, the way of implementing them, and the frequency of their integration. All the aforementioned specifics ought to be revisited.

- **Vocational Training for Teachers Abroad**

The teachers' contribution to the whole teaching-learning process is quintessential. The point of departure towards taking measures as regard to EFL learners' communicative breakdowns is the teachers' performance. The study's findings stipulate that the educators necessitate professional development in order to attain an optimal level of competence in the teaching process. As a matter of fact, a vocational training program abroad is, in the field of EFL language teaching, a must. It is necessary for the teachers to ameliorate their language proficiency, teaching ideology, native English speaking (NES) on a personal level, and to experience new teaching styles and pedagogical implications on the educational level. Such international training programs ought to be held annually for graduate and postgraduate students before engaging in their teaching careers.

## Suggestions

There are many gaps in the current study that require certain suggestions for further studies. These are stated as follow:

- Since the study's results call for an actual incorporation of pragmatic and culture-related elements within the syllabi, further research might centralise the variant challenges that teachers and learners may encounter during the teaching-learning process.
- In-depth exploration of how online dyadic communication can be efficient in language and culture learning. Future research might compare, for instance, traditional strategies of teaching language and culture to new techniques and methods. It also opens the door to explore the latest methods applied to improve EFL learners' communicative competence through mediated tools.
- Although the investigation proved online communication's significance in the educational sphere, a logical suggestion might be related to the other face of the coin. Alternatively, advantages and disadvantages of implementing online dyadic communication in EFL classes might be a topic of interest for future studies.
- Investigating the position of internet instruction within the curriculum of English teaching in the Algerian universities could be a further study as an attempt to raise the educational authorities, especially the Ministry of Higher Education's awareness, about its pedagogical significance.
- As the final result suggests, breakdowns do not necessarily lead to failure of communication, as opposed to the current interchangeable use of concepts. Based on this premise, further researches might be about experimentally investigating the differences

between the two concepts “Intercultural Pragmatic Failure” and “Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdown”, what they imply, and their relation to intercultural interactions.

- The same research can be constructed addressing the problem in a different context. For instance, investigating intercultural pragmatic problems of EFL learners as regard to watching foreign TV shows.

### **Limitations**

After gathering all what seemed of relevance to the investigation and implementing three data gathering tools as an attempt to strengthen the validity of the present study, this latter has not been exempt from a number of limitations. The current state of Algeria because of Covid-19 have created some hindrances for the researchers, especially when it came to the sources. The researchers have relied only on electronic versions “Portable Document Format (PDF)” of different books, dissertations, and documents which was not totally appreciated by the writers of this work. Also, the researchers have suffered from a shortage in the referential sources pertinent to the specific elements of the inquiry, taking the fact that the areas of pragmatics and culture -as related to online communication- are recent.

The quarantine restrictions have led the researchers to lose four months of time not being able to conduct the practical part due to the unlikelihood to collect the necessary data. Henceforth, another limitation is related to the use of email interview. This latter, unlike face-to-face interview, does not give the interviewers the opportunity to explain to the teachers the questions that accept variant interpretations. Within sight of the same circumstances, not all the interviewed teachers could collaborate as most of them were giving online classes. The other

limitation that the researchers met was the sample size targeted in the questionnaire; the researchers have not reached the ultimate number that they have opted for at the beginning (142). They had to wait more than two months to receive only 74 contributors and considered them as the whole population. This is due to the fact that the questionnaire was submitted online on account of the Corona virus pandemic measures, and it was challenging to get to the whole population in such circumstances. For this reason, internet questionnaire, despite of being an easy way, it cannot be applicable due to the learners' laziness to answer a Google form questionnaire or due to their lack of internet access.

Some pedagogical constraints are related to time; the submission deadline was announced by the administration only three weeks earlier which was not sufficient to complete the remaining work. This created an atmosphere of frustration and pressure, especially with the changed dates for submission and vivas every now and then coupled with the diverse decisions concerning the matter.

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A:** EFL Learners' Online Dyadic Conversations with Native Speakers

**Appendix B:** The Questionnaire

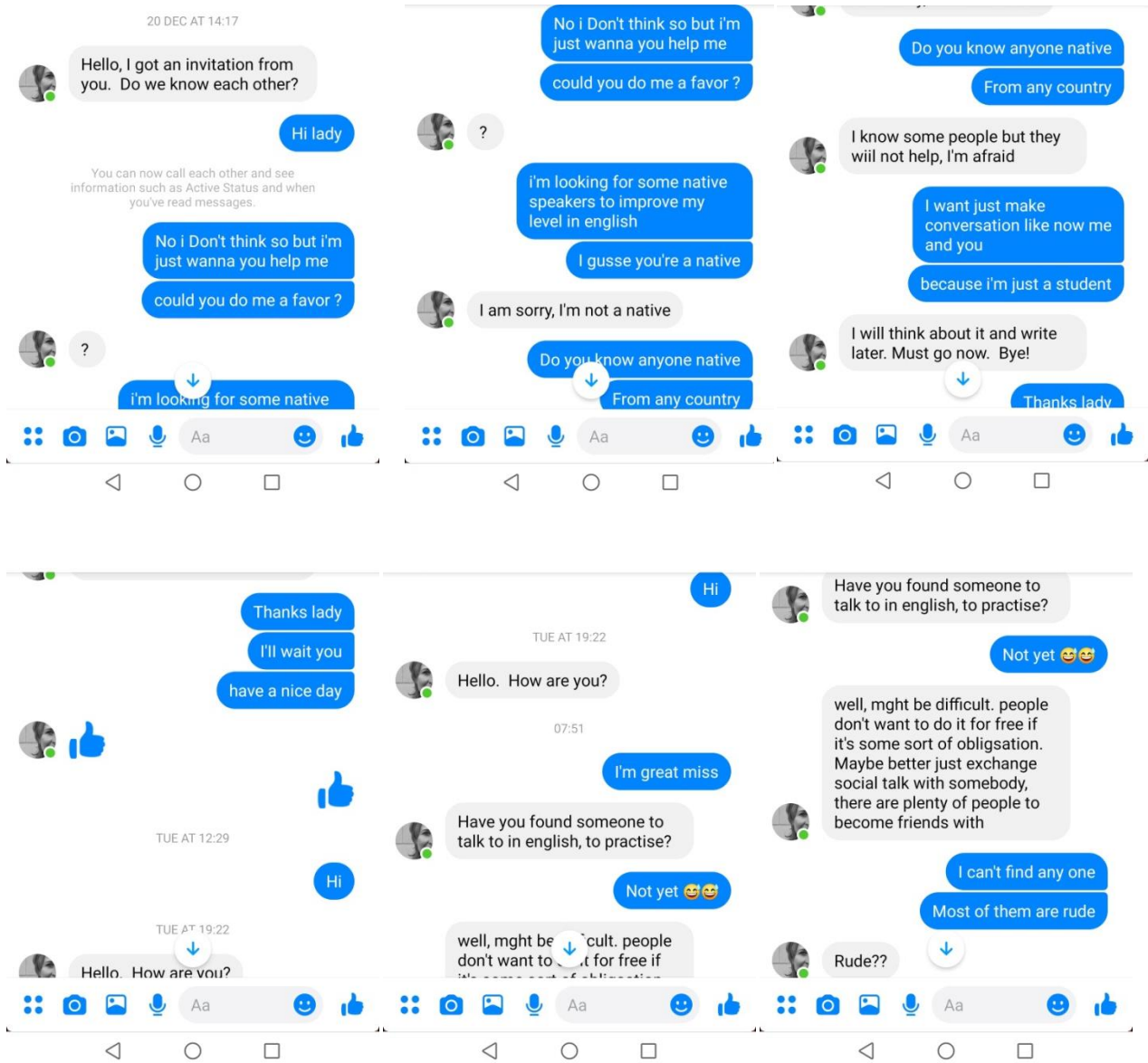
**Appendix C:** Interview Questions

**Appendix D:** Teachers' Responses to Interview Questions

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### EFL Learners' Online Dyadic Conversations with Native Speakers



Kind of that

Because some of them aren't helpful

They reject me in a bad way

well, internet is full of that maybe people think you want sth from them (like , sort of, too much ) and they reject , just in case. I can't really explain.... Sorry, happened to me, too, I was writing to some people , having good intentions but they misunderstood.

I know that you're 100 %

intentions but they misunderstood.

I know that you're 100 % right but to be rude with people it's not a good behavior. Every person is obliged to respect others. They judge people from their religion or their culture but we're all humans.

absolutely true

but what can you do, most people judge, yes, that's the word, judge before they know

Judge because of What they hear from TV and social

Judge because of What they hear from TV and social media

I know. That's it.

For example if 'm a Christian and you're a Jewish I judge that you're ignorance

Rude

..... Etc

But

That's not true

We judge other without be certain about their religion.. Cuture.. Etc

That's right. People tend to generalise, makes life easier. Also, politics and media do their bad job, dividing people..... One should always look for some friends, who don't judge, although it can be difficult. But there is one thing I don't understand, In your profile you have information that you live in the States. Do you? If so, you should have plenty opportunities to practise English.

Actually I'm not from US it's just my fault when I put my informations because I don't like to put all things about me

But you persive that my language is Arabic

Yes

so where do you actually live?

OK I'll let you try to find it by your self As I said before my language is Arabic. Where do think I came from?

my goodness, I have no idea

my goodness, I have no idea, Arabic is spoken in many countries probably

Yeah you're right

I'm from Algeria

Do you know it?

Of course I heard about it

but never been there

And you where are you from?

I am from Poland in Europe

I am from Poland, in Europe. Now I remember that when I was at high school, many young people from Algeria studied in my town, must have been some cooperation between our countries, don't know...

now I am reading that Algeria is a huge country!! Where exactly do you live?

somewhere called (batna)

Batna?

It's province

We have in our country 48 provinces

My country is largest state in africa

yes, I see it on the map

must be nice

are you happy there?

Yes it's great

But

There is some problems

There are 😊

yes, grammar 😊

problems are everywhere

but if you don't have war or hunger, then it is good

Yes you're right

Thanks god

People i Poland complain a lot

but I always tell them this

People i Poland complain a lot

but I always tell them this

there is no war, no famine

nobody is chasing you

so what do you want

if they need more money, they can emigrate

I am quite poor

but my family situation keeps me in Poland

and I try to look positive sides

otherwise life becomes horrible

of course I wish I had a better life

but it is not bad, I am free

But remember that you're a patient women so God never let you.

As you say always look forward the bright side of life

I'm not rich

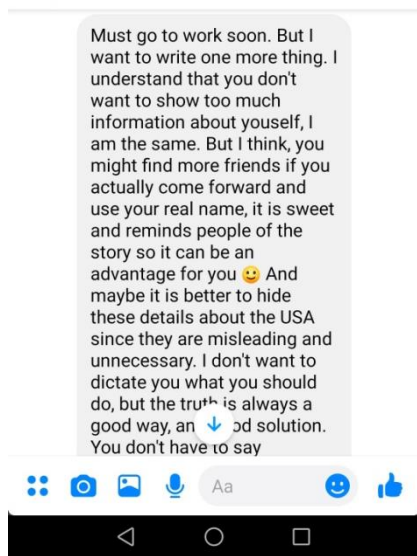
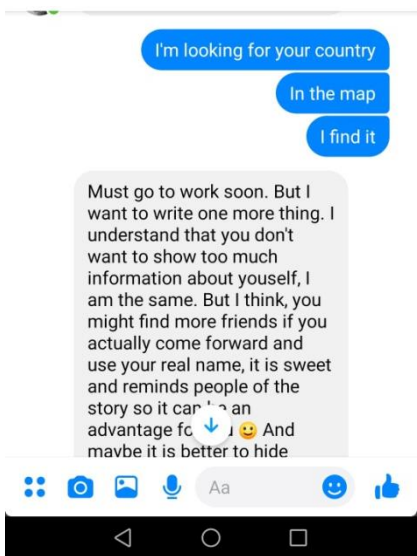
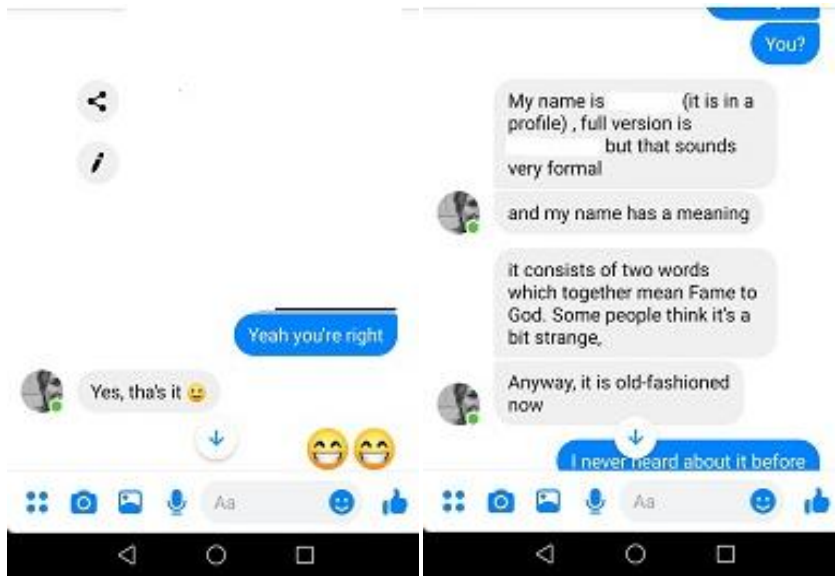
Just ordinary life

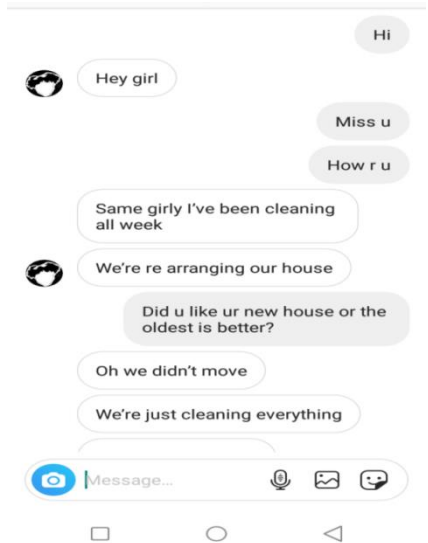
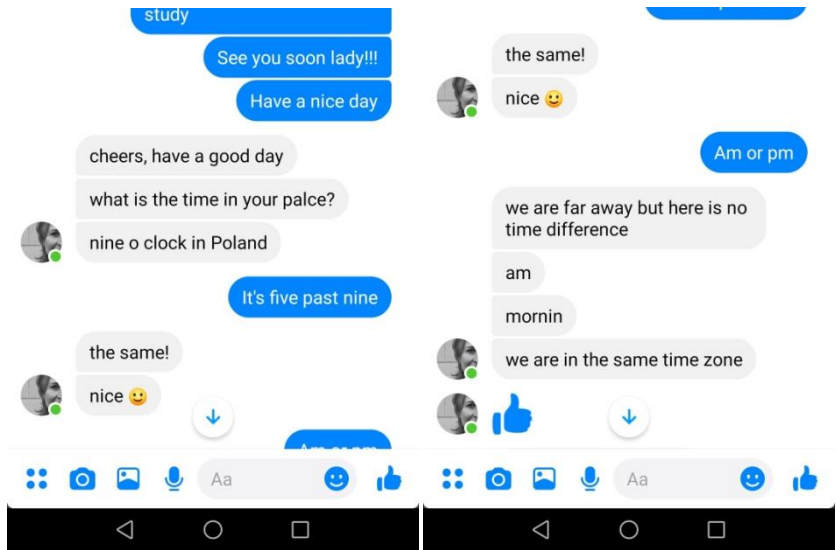
Just ordinary life

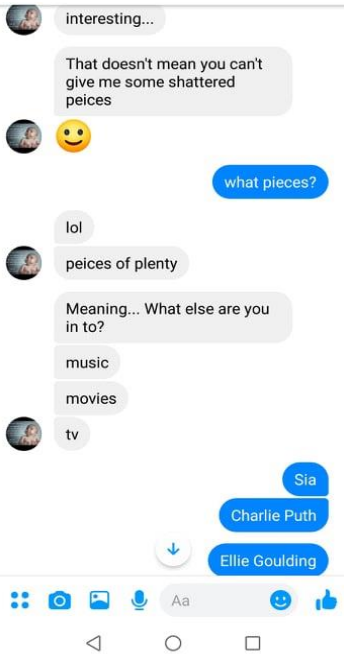
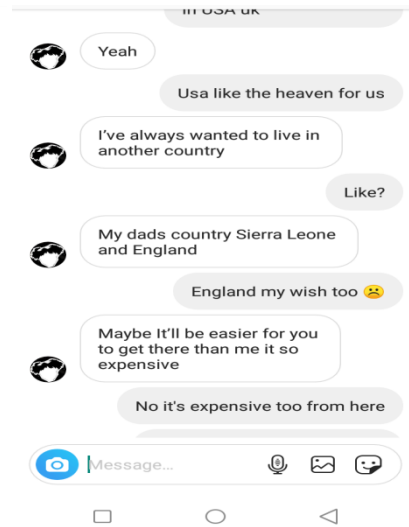
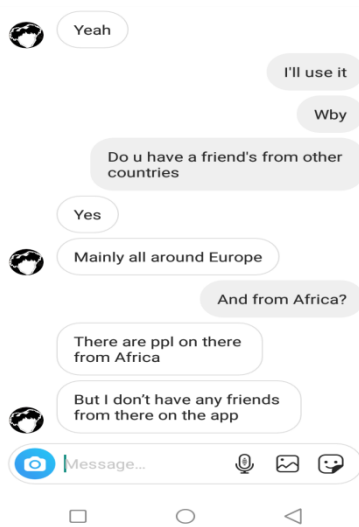
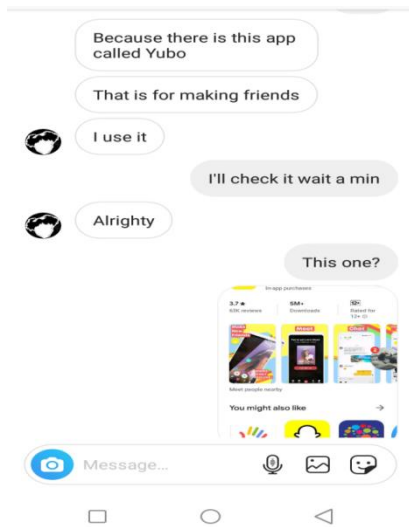
And what is your name?

I'm

is this a name like from a fairy tale?







Heey

How are you, long time no see 🥰🥰

Yes it is really long time

M fine hamdulillah wbu

Hmd great hhh, so what's up

Well nothing new m just getting mad of staying at home all the time

I can't even study

WHAT!!!, the raven [redacted] misses study.?

How do you think I'm doing then if you are feeling like this 🥰🥰

🥰🥰🥰 yes I did

I guess now u r feeling mad

Hhh not only that 😊but I really miss my chair

I miss everything including to university and I miss all of u

Yeah, feel the same, and I really hope to not repeat the year

I really don't know how I want that too 😊 ← ...

But I guess this website don't exist

No, it does exist, but I didn't know how

No I don't think so

I don't know 😊

Well, hope to see you tomorrow, good night 🥰

Have a sweet dreams

APR 6, 2020, 8:48 PM

I invited you to the group

APR 6, 2020, 10:31 PM

Yeah thanks for that

I appreciate it 🥰🥰

It is nothing

Check the publications

They post a website where we study

i am great dear what about you?  
 i'm in the a pain to day but i'm making it  
 i wish you the best  
 thanks  
 what are you doing in your life  
 i'm taking it easy  
 i meant to ask about your job  
 i can't work any  
 why  
 im ill  
 i am really sorry 😞

im ill  
 i am really sorry 😞  
 can i know what kind of illnesses you have?  
 god is good  
 i would rather not say  
 as you wish dear  
 thanks  
 where are you from  
 for understanding  
 atlanta georgia  
 great, happy to know you  
 where are you from  
 i am from algeria

Hi Pretty i'm a girl from Algeria. I want to talk with u if u want  
 So what do u think 😊😊  
 13:12  
 Hi! 😊  
 How are u  
 ??

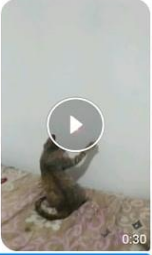
Hello .Nice to meet you  
 Glade to meet u to  
 Do you want teach English language??  
 I am good  
 Where are you from??  
 actually i want to make a conversation with a native speaker and i like your profile


Where are you from??  
 actually i want to make a conversation with a native speaker and i like your profile  
 You Look a pretty and good person  
 So  
 I'm [redacted] from Algeria ,i'm 18 years old  
 And you?

Yeah 😊  
My name is [redacted] I'm 18 years old  
What about you?  
?  
cool  
[redacted] 17 YO and Lives in the UK  
Like your name [redacted] 😊  
It's nice one  
awww thx  
Don't mention it 😊  
So josh, what do you do in your life?  
?  
I'm still at College and will graduate next year  
I like swimming, play tennis, hang out mates, music and stuff

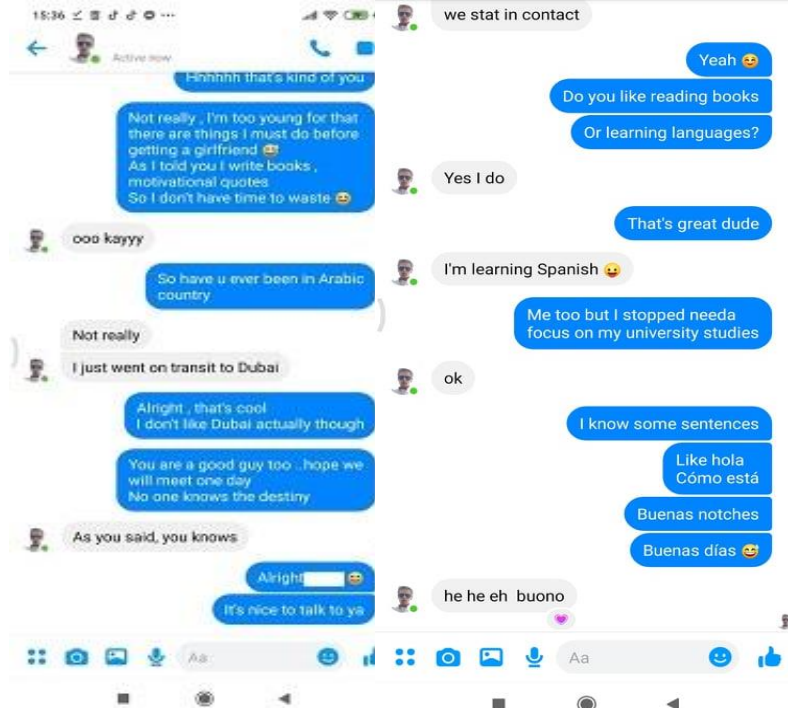
Like your name [redacted] 😊  
It's nice one  
awww thx  
Don't mention it 😊  
So [redacted], what do you do in your life?  
?  
I'm still at College and will graduate next year  
I like swimming, play tennis, hang out mates, music and stuff  
That's cool 😊 break a leg with that 😊  
I like music and writing books  
Also tennis and fashion  
That's seem great 😊  
That seems sorry  
cool

what animals do you like?  
And why?  
I like dogs  
Hbu?  
  
I love cats and birds  
cool  
Your dog seems loyal  
that's my dog charlie  
That's the reason I like dogs  
Nice name Charlie

cool  
Your dog seems loyal  
that's my dog charlie  
That's the reason I like dogs  
Nice name Charlie  
thanks  
  
This is my cat it's new, actually my sister brought it from a friend  
That's so cute

  
This is my cat it's new, actually my sister brought it from a friend  
That's so cute  
Yeah she is adorable ❤️  
And funny too  
yes I bet  
cool

Hbu?  
That's awesome 😊 I'm already at university I'm freshman  
I study English language and I also teach beginners  
That's awesome  
Thanks yeah ❤️  
It is  
Are you working atm?  
At moment no. I just teach online  
ok  
Because of the Epidemic  
Covid 19  
Is it because of covid-19  
okk  
Yeah it is, exactly



## Appendix B

### The Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at discovering the reasons behind the pragmatic problems that EFL learners encounter during their online intercultural communication with native speakers. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions taking into consideration the instructions provided. Your names and level are not required, for the study is only interested in your views regarding the research. Thank you for your cooperation.

#### Part One: Personal Background

1. How long have you been learning English?

a. 1\_\_4

b. 4\_\_8

c. More

2. Is studying English your own choice?

Yes

No

3. Are you interested in learning a new culture?

Yes

No

4. Are you open to communication with people from a different culture?

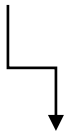
Definitely  to some extent  not really  not at all

5. It is said: “learners know the language through its culture” What do you think?

.....  
.....  
.....

6. Do you rely solely on what teachers offer about the target culture in the classroom?

Yes  No

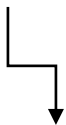


If no, how often do you prefer using English authentic materials (books, films, songs, and documentaries...) to learn about the target language and culture?

Always  sometimes  occasionally  rarely  never

7. Have you ever been to an English speaking country?

Yes  No



If yes, what difficulties have you encountered?



12. On a scale of ten, rate the degree of misunderstanding occurrence during a conversation.

Rarely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Always

13. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind the failure of online communication with natives? You can choose more than one option.

a. Lack of authentic materials in classrooms

b. The exclusion of culture teaching from the syllabi

d. Low language proficiency

e. Inadequacy of language teaching strategies

f. Individual differences

g. The students' psychological state

h. Lack of exposure to non-verbal clues

Others.....

.....

.....

14. Rank each of the following pragmatic problems in order of occurrence in an online conversation with 1 being the most frequent problem and 5 being the least frequent problem.

a. Turn taking

b. Politeness

c. The speaker's intention

d. Context

e. Degrees of formality

15. Did you feel any improvement in your language use after a number of online conversations?

Yes

cannot decide

no

16. What strategies do you opt for when intercultural breakdowns take place during your online conversations?

.....

.....

.....

.....

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Questions**

#### **Teaching Experience**

1. How long have you been teaching at the Department of English?
2. Do you recommend the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes?
3. What are the objectives of incorporating culture and pragmatics in EFL classrooms?
4. What, do you think, are the attitudes of EFL learners towards including pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching?

#### **Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

5. What can you say about your learners' ability to understand native speakers?
6. According to you, what is an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?
7. What are the pragmatic problems that your learners demonstrate?
8. What are the factors that may contribute to an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

#### **Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

9. What teaching approaches do you suggest to help learners acquire an intercultural communicative competence?

10. Do you prefer the integration of pragmatic-related approaches to be explicit or implicit?

Justify.

11. What do you think about online communication as a way to enhance learner's intercultural pragmatic competence?

12. Considering EFL learners' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence, what other techniques and strategies would you offer to foster their intercultural pragmatic competence?

## **Appendix D**

### **Teachers' Responses to the Interview Questions**

#### **Interviewee A**

##### **Teaching Experience**

1. How long have you been teaching at the Department of English?

- 4 years

2. Do you recommend the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes?

- A recommendation for culture and pragmatics incorporation in EFL classrooms is no doubt legitimate. The integration of both the cultural and pragmatic aspects within language teaching is highly recommended given the array of advantageous outcomes this inclusion brings into the process. No one expertly wise foreign languages practitioner would deny the centrality and usefulness of cultural and pragmatic approaches for an effective foreign language teaching, TEFL is for that matter no exception.

3. What are the objectives of incorporating culture and pragmatics in EFL classrooms?

- Incorporation of culture and pragmatics within EFL courses aims basically at making the learners more aware of, initially, the actual use of language as a daily operation and, likewise, the different dimensions of employing it in the frames of life routine practices in the society it relates to. The essence lies in going about dealing with real-life linguistic situations and social practices as well as reflecting on everyday language use; this simply

means that the pragmatic norms of the language and the cultural values of its respective users should be reflected in class.

4. What, do you think, are the attitudes of EFL learners towards including pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching?

- Apart from dull elements, students sure are of positive attitudes towards an increasing inclusion of culture and pragmatics into the process of teaching and learning considering the importance of it. More so indeed regarding the unconditional and open exposition of learners to the target language and culture nowadays, by means of internet and else.

### **Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

5. What can you say about your learners' ability to understand native speakers?

- Learning a language from a book, and hence only academically, is nothing like learning it in its contextual frame. It all depends on which kind of learner's reference is made to here. But generally, for the more recent generations, and because of the open and easy access to resources and materials relating to the target society and language (films, online courses, YouTube videos, chat platforms and social media...), more students are found able to understand English native speakers more easily and are less troubled with communicating with them.

6. According to you, what is an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- Intercultural pragmatic breakdown is the failure to make sense of a linguistic situation because of unawareness of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of the target

setting, leading therefore to inability to comprehend the target cultural item in question from one's own cultural lens.

7. What are the pragmatic problems that your learners demonstrate?

- Obviously most problematic for any learner of a new language, including my students, are such target language elements as collocations, idiomatic expressions, phrasal verbs, and metaphorical use of language....

8. What are the factors that may contribute to an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- Both linguistic-contextual factors and contextual factors have a hand in intercultural pragmatic breakdown.

#### Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns

9. What teaching approaches do you suggest to help learners acquire an intercultural communicative competence?

- All teaching approaches have their pros and cons. It would not be wise to lean on any one particular approach at the expense of the others; this leads us to opt for an eclectic approach to cover and make up for the weaknesses and reinforce the strengths of each approach if used solely. The case has also to do with the subject being taught, so it would not be as effective, for instance, to opt for the community language learning approach in teaching grammar while it is in fact more appropriately applicable for an oral expression class. Regardless of the previously mentioned rationalisation, however, I consider the communicative approach and the functional approach to be the teaching approaches most

suitable for the purpose of helping learners acquire an intercultural communicative competence.

10. Do you prefer the integration of pragmatic-related approaches to be explicit or implicit?

Justify.

➤ It depends.

➤ Explicitly or implicitly integrating any such approaches is not a matter of mere personal choice of any kind; it basically has to do with the type of learners, the kind of subject, and even course, taught; as well as the level (Bachelor Degree, Masters Degree...).

11. What do you think about online communication as a way to enhance learner's intercultural pragmatic competence?

➤ Online communication is, besides yet other considerations, a fruitful way for the underlined purpose.

12. Considering EFL learners' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence, what other techniques and strategies would you offer to foster their intercultural pragmatic competence?

➤ No answer has been provided.

## **Interviewee B**

### **Teaching Experience**

1. How long have you been teaching at the Department of English?

➤ Four years

2. Do you recommend the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes?

- Certainly, for teaching a language without integrating cultural elements pertinent to the target culture would make the whole teaching process useless.

3. What are the objectives of incorporating culture and pragmatics in EFL classrooms?

- a. Enhancing learners' linguistic and communicative competence.
- b. Building learners' intercultural tolerance.
- c. Increasing learners' motivation towards English classes.

4. What, do you think, are the attitudes of EFL learners towards including pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching?

- Issues in and about culture fuel learners' passion about learning a second language.

### **Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

5. What can you say about your learners' ability to understand native speakers?

- The majority of learners cannot even understand what their teachers are saying, let alone decode what a native speaker says and means. Usually, whenever they listen to some authentic materials, I need to paraphrase the talk being considered.

6. According to you, what is an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- A negative transfer of a message interculturally.

7. What are the pragmatic problems that your learners demonstrate?

- Inability to understand culture-related courses.
- Inability to respond to various authentic situations (apology, invitation, greeting...).
- The tendency to translate culture-related items and expressions from Arabic to English.

8. What are the factors that may contribute to an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- Lack of exposure to English authentic materials
- Lack of interest in the target culture
- Poor language proficiency

### **Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

9. What teaching approaches do you suggest to help learners acquire an intercultural communicative competence?

- The Communicative approach, the Cross-cultural Approach, Foreign Culture Approach, Transcultural Approach, and Multicultural Approach.

10. Do you prefer the integration of pragmatic-related approaches to be explicit or implicit? Justify.

- I would say implicit. Actually, we don't need to make it implicit; culture is already embedded in language, and if we go on filling learners' heads with concepts like "pragmatics" and "intercultural communication", they'll get easily frustrated. So let's just make the teaching process "sweet, simple, stupid"...Remember???

11. What do you think about online communication as a way to enhance learner's intercultural pragmatic competence?

- It is, to my mind, the best technique. I always say that in order to learn a foreign language best, there is no better way than interacting with the language's native speakers. I would even say that it is more fruitful than a face-to-face interaction because learners would feel more at ease when using Messenger or Skype, which would undoubtedly affect the length and the nature of the conversation. Dyadic conversations, in particular, are more

appropriate for EFL learners, especially if they are still beginners. This type of conversations allows them to notify how turn taking takes place and how one can behave in various situational contexts.

12. Considering EFL learners' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence, what other techniques and strategies would you offer to foster their intercultural pragmatic competence?

- Strategies ought to be used inside and outside the classroom. Teachers are required to integrate some English authentic materials in their teaching like songs, movies, podcasts, documentaries...etc It is also recommended that teachers use authentic language when addressing learners (via including idioms, proverbs, collocations,...in their talk). Learners, in turn, should attempt to know people belonging to English speaking countries and pay careful attention to the language being used.

## **Interviewee C**

### **Teaching Experience**

1. How long have you been teaching at the Department of English?

- 14 years

2. Do you recommend the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes?

- Yes, I do

3. What are the objectives of incorporating culture and pragmatics in EFL classrooms?

- To train learners to be effective communicators in real situations

4. What, do you think, are the attitudes of EFL learners towards including pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching?

- I think that the more the learners are provided with culture elements and trained how to behave in every situation the more they will comprehend and thus be motivated to learn the target language and culture.

### **Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

5. What can you say about your learners' ability to understand native speakers?

- A large number of students do not understand native speakers.

6. According to you, what is an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- Breakdown of communication

7. What are the pragmatic problems that your learners demonstrate?

- Sometimes do not understand what the native speakers say even if they know the English language

8. What are the factors that may contribute to an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- Lack of serious training concerning cultural elements
- Learners do not make efforts to improve their pragmatic and intercultural competence outside the classroom

### **Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

9. What teaching approaches do you suggest to help learners acquire an intercultural communicative competence?

- The communicative approach

10. Do you prefer the integration of pragmatic-related approaches to be explicit or implicit?

Justify

- Both, depending on the subject and the used materials.

11. What do you think about online communication as a way to enhance learner's intercultural pragmatic competence?

- Online communication affects learners' intercultural pragmatic competence positively.

12. Considering EFL learners' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence, what other techniques and strategies would you offer to foster their intercultural pragmatic competence?

- Many techniques and ways can be used to foster learners' intercultural pragmatic competence such as using role plays, songs, videos, movies, news broadcasts, newspapers, brochures, menus, bus tickets, novels, short stories, and any authentic element that belongs to the target culture.

## **Interviewee D**

### **Teaching Experience**

1. How long have you been teaching at the Department of English?

- I have been teaching at the Department of English for three years until now.

2. Do you recommend the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes?

- Of course, I highly recommend that for culture and language are inseparable, i.e., two faces for the same coin.

3. What are the objectives of incorporating culture and pragmatics in EFL classrooms?

➤ First of all, I would like to make it clear that there is no teaching of a given language without looking deeply into its culture; i.e.; demystifying the cultural components of any language is of incredible importance. Actually, some scholars and researchers in the field of ‘language teaching’ consider culture as ‘the fifth skill’ to be mastered by learners. This is believed so, because proficiency in language cannot be established unless the learner accumulates a certain cultural knowledge about that language be it big ‘C’ culture or small ‘c’. Also, we can say that adequate knowledge of the target culture assists learners to carry on successful communication with natives and eliminates the potential of being misunderstood or misinterpreted.

4. What, do you think, are the attitudes of EFL learners towards including pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching?

➤ Most of time, EFL learners exhibit a favourable stance towards the inclusion of some cultural components at the class-time. They seem extremely excited and enthusiastic around talking about the target language cultural issues such as: famous personalities, especially singers and actors, history of the country, well-known locations and panoramas, its tradition at certain feasts and celebrations, taboo-topics, superstition, proverbs and idioms, folktales, what is appropriate and inappropriate (topics for discussion) in this culture, its native people’s lifestyles and so on.

### **Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

5. What can you say about your learners’ ability to understand native speakers?

- With the growing pace of globalisation, the world became a small village and access to native speakers becomes easier than ever. Undoubtedly, the majority of EFL students would show a modest if not a good command of manipulating conversations or audios from natives.

6. According to you, what is an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- This may take place when the learner intercultural pragmatic competence is inadequate and insufficient to handle culturally-loaded topics, deals, situations and so on and so forth.

7. What are the pragmatic problems that your learners demonstrate?

- Sometimes they miss the focal point of what I say when I tend to mix my lecture content with proverbs or idiomatic expressions or quote a piece of literary work. Other times they seem lost when I provide them with real-life or authentic materials and ask them to analyse it and come up with the main idea behind it. It often happens that they cannot read between the lines or think appropriately in English. As a teacher, I face the problem of my students believing stereotypes about other cultures which would run the bias of their intercultural competence.

8. What are the factors that may contribute to an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

- Lack of openness to others' culture, and this can be solved through scaffolding knowledge about foreign culture at school and getting students motivated to explore different culturally-bound issues.
- Also, students are advised not to judge cultures because no specific culture is more prestigious or valuable than others. If we support culture-tolerance, we are literally

assisting our students to know more about the target language culture, embrace it and act according to its norms and rules when in need.

### **Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

9. What teaching approaches do you suggest to help learners acquire an intercultural communicative competence?

- I believe 'pragmatic approaches' will do good. Take for instance 'a pragmatic approach to teaching literature' wherein learners would investigate cultural elements embedded in literary works like that of Shakespeare's poems and drama which depicts the British culture using old English.

10. Do you prefer the integration of pragmatic-related approaches to be explicit or implicit? Justify.

- It depends on the nature of the component to be introduced at class, hence, both are common. Certain elements are taught explicitly as to draw learners' attention towards it, while other elements would remain tacit and referred to it implicitly all along the lesson.

11. What do you think about online communication as a way to enhance learner's intercultural pragmatic competence?

- I think online communication is the best, easiest and shortest way to get into contact with natives and to strengthen ones' intercultural pragmatic competence as it may take many forms and can be carried out at any time and place.

12. Considering EFL learners' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence, what other techniques and strategies would you offer to foster their intercultural pragmatic competence?

- I would recommend watching movies, series, shows and even cartoons in the ‘target language’. Also, reading lot up-to-date and very recent volumes, magazines, journals.....also, listening carefully to native channels on TV or streams on Facebook will work out. Learners are advised to use their critical thinking skills when doing all that in order to detect embedded cultural components and should question any inconsistencies or dissimilarities with their mother culture.

## **Interviewee E**

### **Teaching Experience**

1. How long have you been teaching at the Department of English?

- Since 2005

2. Do you recommend the inclusion of cultural and pragmatic approaches in EFL classes?

- Yes I do

3. What are the objectives of incorporating culture and pragmatics in EFL classrooms?

- The main objectives to familiarise our students with the hidden aspects of language.

4. What, do you think, are the attitudes of EFL learners towards including pragmatics and culture-related elements in teaching?

- Positive attitudes.

### **Challenges to Integrating Culture and Pragmatics in EFL Classes**

5. What can you say about your learners’ ability to understand native speakers?

➤ Weak

6. According to you, what is an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

➤ Authenticity.

7. What are the pragmatic problems that your learners demonstrate?

➤ Generally speaking, teachers always focus on language aspects and ignore totally the cultural aspect of language which we believe is the most important

8. What are the factors that may contribute to an intercultural pragmatic breakdown?

➤ As I mentioned in six providing our students with authentic material (real life English)

### **Suggestions to Repair Intercultural Pragmatic Breakdowns**

9. What teaching approaches do you suggest to help learners acquire an intercultural communicative competence?

➤ Authenticity. Using newspapers, and movies ...

10. Do you prefer the integration of pragmatic-related approaches to be explicit or implicit?

Justify.

➤ Explicit.

11. What do you think about online communication as a way to enhance learner's intercultural pragmatic competence?

➤ One of the good methods.

12. Considering EFL learners' lack of intercultural pragmatic competence, what other techniques and strategies would you offer to foster their intercultural pragmatic competence?

➤ No answer has been provided.

Cette étude vise à promulguer la dimension culturelle et pragmatique de la langue étant un sujet critique vis-à-vis de la compétence pragmatique interculturelle des apprenants de l'anglais comme langue étrangère, ainsi qu'à favoriser la communication médiatisée dans l'enseignement en Algérie. Cette thèse tente fondamentalement d'explorer les échecs pragmatiques interculturels des apprenants de l'ALE en communiquant avec des locuteurs natifs, les principales causes de, et les démarche pour entraver ces défaillances. La présente étude est incitée par le manque de compréhension des apprenants de l'ALE ainsi que de sa culture. Cette recherche adopte une approche de méthodes mixtes dans laquelle une analyse de contenu aspire à examiner les conversations des apprenants de l'ALE avec des locuteurs natifs. Les perspectives des étudiants concernant leurs causes ont été explorées en ayant recours à un questionnaire destiné à 74 étudiants en seconde année anglais à l'université d'Abbes Laghrour, Khenchela. Un entretien a été également mené avec cinq professeurs visant à prévoir des suggestions pour promouvoir la compétence pragmatique des apprenants. Les résultats de cette mise en œuvre démontrent des échecs pragmatique, sociopragmatique et pragma-stylistique dus à une maîtrise de langue insuffisante et un manque de mise en disposition de matériels authentiques. A terme, des suggestions pédagogiques convoient à sensibiliser les enseignants à la communication médiatisée pour renforcer la compétence pragmatique des apprenants.

*Mots-clés:* pragmatique, culture, échec pragmatique interculturel, communication en ligne

تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى تعميم الجانب الثقافي و التداولي للغة باعتبارهما مجالين بالغي الأهمية إزاء الكفاءة التداولية للثقافات المختلفة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (أ.ل.أ). كما تنصّ على الاعتماد على التواصل الإلكتروني ضمنّ المناهج الدراسية الجزائرية. إنّ اكتشاف كل من مجالات التجاوزات التداولية للثقافات المختلفة القائمة في المحادثات الإلكترونية الثنائية بين مُتعلّمي أ.ل.أ و مُتحدّثيها الأصليين، و أسبابها، و مختلف الحلول اللازمة لإعاقه فشل هذه المحادثات يُعتبر الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة. أمّا الدافع الأساسي وراء هذا التحقيق يتمثل في نقص إمكانيات مُتعلّمي أ.ل.أ لفهم اللغة و الثقافة الأجنبية. و عليه، اعتمد الباحثين على المنهج المندمج الجامع للأسلوبين الكمي والنوعي؛ بحيث تم تحليل محتوى المحادثات الثنائية بين مُتحدّثي اللغة الأصليين و طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية. بالإضافة إلى استبيان إلكتروني وُجّه إلى 74 طالب سنة ثانية لغة إنجليزية بجامعة الشهيد عبّاس لغرور-خنشلة- قَصَدَ معرفة مختلف الدوافع التي أدّت لهذه المشاكل. و في مقابلة عبر البريد الإلكتروني، تمّ تقصّي آراء خمس أساتذة فيما يخص هذه التجاوزات والحلول المُعتمَد عليها بُغْيَةً تطوير كفاءة الطلبة التداولية. و لقد أوضحت النتائج المُستنبَطة أنّ معظم التجاوزات الواقعة هذه المحادثات تشمل صعوبات في النشاط اللغوي و كذا التداولية الاجتماعية و الأسلوبية وهذا راجع إلى نقص الكفاءة اللغوية و نقص المواد الأصلية داخل الأقسام وخارجها. بالنتيجة، تمّ عرض بعض الاقتراحات و الإدراجات التربوية بهدف تعزيز إدراك الأساتذة حول تَبَيّن منهج التواصل الإلكتروني لتحسين وتطوير كفاءة الطلبة التداولية بين الثقافات المختلفة.

*الكلمات المفتاحية: التداولية، الثقافة، التجاوزات التداولية للثقافات المختلفة، التواصل الإلكتروني*