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Sciences of the language

Unravelling cultural understanding through Language in Facebook dialogues.

The case of third-year students of English at Biskra university.

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Declaration

I, "HEDDADJ Mohamed Islam", solemnly declare that the dissertation titled "Unraveling Cultural Understanding through language in Facebook Dialogues" submitted to the Department of the English Language and Literature at Biskra University is entirely my own work, free from plagiarism, and has not been submitted to any other educational institution. I have appropriately acknowledged and cited all sources used, and I have conducted myself with academic integrity throughout the process. I understand the severe consequences of academic misconduct and affirm the authenticity of my dissertation.

Signature

Dedication

First and foremost, *ALHAMDOULILLAH*.

I've thought about this moment many times before, it never felt like this tho.

I come from very far away, I faced many challenges physically, emotionally, and financially. I needed people I could count on, people I could trust. I needed a family and found nothing less, all praise be to god. From NEBBAR Saif Eddine, my first friend in this university, to Mouada Karim, my last and one of my favorite friends I made here, thank you both for everything.

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To M.F.W.D.A, I love you.

Every single person I mentioned has shown me support one way or another. A simple written dedication wouldn't even be remotely close to do any of them justice for what they've done for me. They're the reason I'm here today.

From the deepest places in my heart I finally say thank you for everything.

I'm sorry if I have forgotten anyone.

Last but not least, *FREE PALESTINE*.

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to explore the effectiveness and impact of Facebook chats on students' cultural awareness. It also seeks to provide a deeper understanding of students' attitudes towards the concept cultural understanding, its relation to the mega platform and the optimal strategies for its implementation. The primary aims of this dissertation are to provide background information about the cultural aspects of the language as well as the exposure that Facebook chats provide on those aspects. The concept is explained and demonstrated in the context of various academic disciplines. The goal is to improve students' cultural sensitivity by encouraging them to engage in more intercultural conversations, integrating it into the learning process. We hypothesize that Facebook dialogues can be a valuable tool to enhance student cultural understanding, therefore a better understanding of the language which in itself ameliorates the learning outcomes. To achieve the intended aims of our dissertation, we adopt a descriptive approach that involves using a questionnaire as a qualitative method of data collection. The questionnaire administered to the students, targeting a sample of third year students (N=30). The findings indicate that students recognize the potential of Facebook dialogues as a tool for gaining cultural. Students reported increased understanding of the English language due to understanding the values, traditions, and norms behind the English language. The results suggest that Facebook chats can significantly enhance the overall learning experience by spreading more cultural sensitivity, supporting our hypothesis that it is an effective tool for promoting active learning and improving educational outcomes.

Keywords: Facebook dialogues; Culture; Language, third year; UMKBiskra

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Those who can speak and comprehend English are at an advantage in today's globalized world. But fluency entails more than reciting verb tables and word lists. Culture is language: a living fabric of expressions, practices, and values which are sewn into each other by the social codes of life. At this point cultural understanding comes on stage; it is no longer about understanding what is said with words, but rather getting at the nuances, implied meanings and views guiding the communication between English speakers. This therefore equips learners to navigate such complexity through providing them with information vital for effective dialogue. Through this way students can avoid such instances where they will be misunderstood hence committing minor offences or even failing to take opportunities for themselves. The only thing that they need to do is bridge that chasm of cultural difference so as not to put off people accidentally or miss opportunities by having authentic relationships that one can depend on with a lot of benefits both personally and career-wise.

Among the most familiar social media sites is Facebook, which goes across all geographical boundaries and supports networking on a global basis. Such relations, whether they are established through group discussions or casual talks in messenger chats, offer an awesome chance to learn about culture via language. On Facebook, EFL students have the opportunity to interact with native speakers and explore English as it is commonly used in everyday life situations. Through interaction with people from different parts of the world, students come across cultural references, idioms, and humor that textbooks usually don't teach. This kind of exposure promotes cultural literacy-the ability to understand and value other cultures. As they navigate conversations about traditions, holidays and societal norms however students start challenging stereotypes and get more nuanced perspectives towards the world. This improved understanding directly reflects their fluency in English. By relating to the language appropriately using culture-specific backgrounds, EFL learners can enrich

their speaking skills further; improve their vocabulary retention rates; increase their competence in grammar in natural communicative environments. In essence, Facebook acts as a bridge, connecting learners with the cultural context that breathes life into the English language, ultimately propelling them towards a deeper and more meaningful understanding of both the language and the cultures it represents.

Statement of the problem

Inextricably, human language is intertwined with culture and exists in an interdependent relationship. Language is the life of culture carrying its traditions, values, and beliefs that make a given society. It has become the main means of passing on these cultural specifics to future generations where they can grow and develop. For communicating between speakers from different backgrounds successfully, this natural bond that exists between language and culture demands deeper understanding of the target culture. Non-native speakers or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners often experience difficulty in grasping cultural references embedded within the language. These references may entail idiomatic expressions that are not literally translated, nonverbal cues that have specific meanings within a particular culture, and sometimes jokes that rely on an understanding of other cultures. Without knowledge about these cultural foundations even simple conversations might be baffling causing confusion.

Bridging this gap requires development of cultural awareness among EFL learners for effective communication. This dissertation explores the potential use of social media platforms particularly Facebook to enhance students' cultural awareness and subsequent impact on English

Literature review

Many studies have shown that social media conversations can significantly benefit EFL learners in acquiring insights about English culture and, therefore, learning more about the language itself.

A British Council Learn English Parents Facebook Live video titled "Exploring English: Language and Culture" (2023) highlighted the benefits of online interaction with native English speakers for EFL learners. It was stated that engaging in conversations with native English speakers on Facebook allows EFL learners to directly interact with speakers of the target language. This can help learners understand the nuances of the language, including accents, dialects, and colloquial expressions that are often not covered in traditional learning materials. The direct interaction can also provide insights into the cultural contexts in which English is used, enhancing learners' cultural understanding. The educators also argued that Facebook dialogues can expose EFL learners to real-life contexts of English use, including informal conversations, discussions on various topics, and interactions within communities of interest. This exposure can help learners understand how English is used in different social, cultural, and professional settings, thereby enhancing their cultural understanding. Furthermore, it was mentioned that learners can gain cultural insights by sharing and discussing content related to English-speaking cultures. This can include sharing and discussing videos, articles, and other media that reflect the culture, values, and lifestyles of English-speaking communities. Such content sharing can provide learners with a deeper understanding of the cultural contexts in which English is used.

Cruz and Waemusa (2020) investigated the potential of Facebook Messenger group chats for enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' communication skills. Their study suggests that engaging in Facebook chats allows EFL learners to observe and

participate in the expression of emotions and attitudes through language. This can include recognizing the use of paralanguage (e.g., emoticons, exaggerated punctuation) to convey emotions and the expression of emotions using adjectives (e.g., love, sadness, hatred, silliness). By observing and engaging in these expressions, learners can gain insights into how different cultures express and understand emotions, which is a fundamental aspect of cultural understanding. The investigation also shows that the cohesive aspects of communication, such as greetings, salutations, and social sharing, provide a window into the cultural norms and practices of the participants. By observing how people use social function language to communicate casually and engage in small talk, EFL learners can gain insights into the cultural contexts in which English is used. Additionally, reflecting on course-related topics or sharing evaluations about the course can provide further insights into the cultural values and attitudes of the participants.

In conclusion, the research indicates that Facebook chats can be an effective medium for English language learners to communicate in a realistic and dynamic way, which helps them to build cultural competence.

Significance of the study

This dissertation examines the possibility of using social media in general and Facebook dialogues as well as group chats to create cultural awareness in second language learners, with English being our case. Unpacking the use of language in these online talks, the research discovers how learners can have a better understanding of it, which is not limited to grammar rules and vocabulary lists. This is because Facebook dialogues and group chats provide you with a chance to be part of everyday English usage by native speakers. The exposure surpasses textbooks that are confined to classrooms, providing insights into cultural references, jokes, and colloquialisms that influence spoken languages. From such

interactions, students understand more about subtleties within the target culture, therefore enhancing their learning experience in terms of language acquisition. The results add another voice to a growing body of research that shows that social media sites are potential tools for fostering foreign language skills among students

Research questions

This dissertation seeks to answer the following questions:

RQ1: Do social media platforms like Facebook play a role in cultural understanding?

RQ2: How do Facebook conversations help third-year EFL learners achieve cultural understanding of the English language?

Hypothesis

Based on the research questions above we suggest the following hypothesis

RH: We predict that Facebook dialogues can assist third-year EFL learners in achieving cultural understanding.

Aims of the study

The globalized world in which we live is characterized by increasing digital connectivity, which necessitates the understanding of cultural barriers so as to communicate efficiently and promote positive cross-cultural relations. This research probes this critical aspect by examining Facebook as a possible mediator between cultures. The dissertation aims at utilizing Facebook's unique characteristics that facilitate communication and interaction across geographical boundaries with an aim of gaining a profound understanding on language use within cultural contexts. In other words, it is more than a mere communication platform as it acts like a key into the culture behind where one can see how individuals interact in their everyday life based on their customs, traditions and values. The students' exploration does

not end in just understanding what others may perceive as different from theirs; rather they are trying to experience real situations on Facebook regarding culture gaps. How then will this analysis help us to understand some challenges and opportunities associated within Facebook concerning intercultural learning? Moreover, this dissertation surpasses its presentational goals by also acting as an advisory document for future researchers who want to continue with similar work. Hence, the knowledge obtained from the works of these scholars will give them directions or approaches through which they can realize more about how useful Facebook and its likes could be in fostering intercultural understanding.

Methodology

To answer the previously asked questions and validate our hypothesis, we are going to use the qualitative approach since we will describe our research subject and also for accessibility.

Data collection methods/ tools

To collect data for the current investigation, two data collection tools were chosen.

The first tool is a questionnaire which will be distributed among the students to find out more about the impact of Facebook chats.

Population and sampling

Third-year LMD English students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra will be chosen as the population of the study. They are chosen for their familiarity with the English language background and its culture as well as their possible extended use of English in Facebook conversations. To conduct this research (30) students have been randomly selected.

Structure of the dissertation

The first chapter tackles the concept of cultural understanding. It studies how traditions, values, and norms can be perceived by an EFL learner.

The second chapter talks about English as a language and its relation to the culture surrounding it. It demonstrates the development of the culture and its effect on the language as well as the people using it.

The third chapter is devoted to highlighting the gaps and difficulties third-year EFL students may face in being culturally incompetent, as well as investigating the effect of participating in Facebook dialogues on cultural competence.

Limitations

- **Sample size:** Restricting the study to 3rd-year EFL learners at the University of Biskra limits the generalizability of findings to other EFL learners or universities.

- **Data collection:** Facebook chats might not capture the full range of cultural understanding gained through language.

- **Language focus:** The study may only explore cultural understanding conveyed through written language, missing out on nonverbal cues.

Delimitations

- **Target population:** Focusing on 3rd-year EFL learners allows for a more in-depth analysis of their specific stage in language learning.

- **Platform:** Choosing Facebook chats provides a specific and readily available source of data for student interactions.

- **Language analysis:** Limiting the analysis to written language streamlines the research and allows for a focused exploration of cultural understanding within that format.

Chapter One: Culture's Integration in EFL Learning

Chapter One: Culture's Integration in EFL Learning

Introduction

Culture is of the utmost importance in the field of language acquisition. It becomes vital to comprehend the complex fusion between culture and English as a foreign language (EFL) in a world where English is fast becoming the universal language. This chapter takes off into an exploration of how culture and EFL learning dynamics can affect students immensely. Consequently, embracing diversity and promoting cross-cultural awareness in EFL will go a long way towards enriching learners' experiences and turning them into successful communicators on the global stage. In this chapter, we will tread through various aspects of culture within the EFL learning process. As such, we will look at how cultural background influences processes for acquiring language and examine some challenges as well as opportunities that can be faced by learners who interact with different cultural outlooks.

Culture

Definition

The English scholar Sir Edward B. Tylor (1832–1917) was a founding figure of cultural anthropology. Tylor defined culture as "the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society" (1871). The word "culture" refers to a particular community or group of individuals who have similar experiences that shape their perception of the world. These are groups that we were born into, like national origin, race, religion, class, and gender. It can also include a group we join or become part of. As an illustration, moving to another region or country as well as a change in economic conditions can lead to having a different culture. This is simply everything that defines people in one specific locality. The group may be

either a family, religious sects, or strangers from far-off towns, neighborhoods, nations, and cities. Alternatively, it could refer to people sharing a common ethnic background with us, following the same life patterns, or having similar work ethics. We begin learning our own cultures at birth, which is why sometimes our beliefs and behaviors seem so natural since we have been doing them since we were kids.

Our values and beliefs are influenced by a wide range of interconnected life experiences that are collectively referred to as "culture." To comprehend how culture functions as a whole, one must realize that it is made up of a dynamic and interconnected collection of social, economic, and belief systems. Everyone has a culture. However, just like accents, we tend to take notice of cultures more when they diverge from our own. When we think of culture this broadly, we realize we all belong to many cultures at once.

Elements of culture

Culture is a complex system that consists of a few essential components. Together, these components give a specific group of people their own way of life. To delve deeper into these elements, we explore the perspective of writer Seline Shenoy from The Dream Catch blog. She identifies some key components of culture, including:

Symbols

Symbols are anything that carries a shared meaning within a culture. They might be behavioral (such as welcome gestures or flags), verbal (such as words or phrases with particular cultural connotations), or visual (such as flags or religious icons). Comprehending cultural symbols fosters a feeling of common identification and facilitates the effective communication of complicated concepts.

Language

Language is a fundamental element of culture. It affects how people view the world around them and goes beyond simple communication. Language is a reflection of cultural values and beliefs, and thought processes are influenced even by the form of grammar. Deep understanding requires knowledge of the language used in that culture.

Values and beliefs

These are the core principles that guide a culture's behavior. Values are the ideals that a culture considers important, while beliefs are the convictions that people hold to be true. These values and beliefs influence everything, from decision-making to social interactions.

Norms

Humans live by norms, which are standards established to distinguish between right and wrong. Cultural norms are distinct from beliefs because they are particular rules that have been passed down from parents and elders, whereas beliefs tend to be more philosophical worldviews. Furthermore, norms are present, even in small communities.

Rituals

A culture's norms and belief systems are reflected in its established rituals and ceremonies. There is a profound and celebratory quality to these events. They consist of a sequence of acts carried out in a specific order according to inherited traditions and customs passed down from one generation to the next.

Artifacts

Artifacts are material objects that are unique to a particular culture. These are a culture's tangible artifacts and possessions, such as clothing, tools, buildings, and artwork. Artifacts give this group a physical connection to the past and reveal information about the history,

values, and way of life of a culture. Some examples of artifacts specific to a particular culture are chopsticks in East Asia and sombrero hats in Mexico and Spain.

Dynamics of culture

The dynamics of culture are the intriguing mechanisms through which cultures evolve, exchange knowledge, and engage with one another.

Cultural transmission

In cultural transmission, knowledge, traditions, and practices are conveyed across generations to ensure the continuity of a culture (Shweder, 1990). Such continuity is protected through vertical as well as horizontal transmissions. Vertically, parents hand over information and customs to their kids, thus creating a common ancestry consciousness. "Cultures assure their survival by passing on values and practices from one generation to another," says Shweder (1990).

Schools play a vital role in this process of formal education, where they act as storehouses for historical events, literary works, and traditional beliefs relevant within the context of given societies before passing them onto the next wave of learners (Seymour, 2018). Nevertheless, learning does not stop at the school level; it also extends further into other spheres; family rituals, which are symbolic acts having cultural significance, serve as powerful media through which different values can be transmitted from one person or group to another, especially between parents and children (Gonzalez et al., 2010).

Celebration events, storytelling practices, etcetera serve as routes along which beliefs about what ought to be done in life move seamlessly from adults down to youngsters within communities living together on a daily basis. According to Atran (2001), individuals

subconsciously learn cultural norms and behaviors by playing games, saying hello, and watching people interact.

Also, media and technology are becoming increasingly globalized, so they should be considered when discussing cultural transmission. Books, films, songs, and even social networking sites spread ideas about culture, which can change how we act no matter where we live (Nguyen, 2022). This means that the education system must find a way to teach formal knowledge while still allowing for creativity so that it can meet its goal of preserving tradition throughout time.

Enculturation and socialization

Shweder (1990) defines enculturation as the process of internalizing one's culture's values, beliefs, and behaviors, and this is closely related to socialization, which acts as a basis for becoming a competent member of society.

Despite being used interchangeably sometimes, there are subtle differences between them. The emphasis in enculturation is on absorbing 'ways of doing things' that are considered basic by a given person so that they can fit into their social setting (Ogbu 1990). Conversely, socialization involves learning specific behaviors or acquiring particular roles expected in different social situations (Cole, 1996). Childhood represents a crucial stage in both of these processes since individuals start exploring their environment and understanding cultural demands that will guide their lives (Harris 2009).

This cultural journey of learning is not done alone. We are exposed to many enculturating and socializing agents throughout our lives, both formal and informal. For instance, the family, as the most basic unit in society, transmits cultural values and beliefs through day-to-day communication, rituals, and traditions (Gonzalez et al., 2010). Schools, on the other

hand, are structured environments of learning where specific cultural knowledge about history, literature, or the social norms of a given community is taught (Banks, 1994). Equally important are peer groups; through play, talk, and shared events, people acquire tacit rules about relating to others within their cultural setting, thus forming the necessary bonds for living together (Corsaro, 2011).

Still more significant is media reflection. Books, movies, songs, social networks, etc. bombard us with messages about different cultures, thereby shaping our global view while at the same time influencing behavior change (Livingstone, 2009). It can therefore be said that these processes never end but continue changing as people interact with various institutions around them based on their own experiences.

Cultural Change

Cultures, instead of being static, are thriving dynamic systems in continuous change. They keep moving forward because their internal innovations work like sparks that ignite new ideas, arts, and technologies, thereby creating this kind of environment that is always altering (Smith, 2017). This dynamism also knows no bounds, as suggested by Ulf Hannerz (2009), who said that other societies may have an impact on them too. According to him, contact with different cultures can result in taking up or modifying entirely new aspects brought about by trade, migration, or even pervasive media influence.

In addition, globalization serves as a superhighway for sharing thoughts and practices, thus creating more diverse cultural fabrications (Appadurai, 1996). Through migration, fresh habits are introduced into host communities, which leads to a wider understanding among people from different backgrounds about themselves and others (Levitt, 2003).

Also, historical occurrences leave behind their traces; wars, revolutions, earthquakes, etcetera could be powerful agents causing massive transformations in culture, signifying a complete overhaul in the social life form or expression used by a given community at any particular time (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2018). Essentially, what happens is that these groups are always changing by responding to externalities while trying not to lose themselves internally within the process of development.

The importance of culture

Culture is the intricate tapestry woven from a society's beliefs, values, customs, and practices (Hall, 1959). It is a powerful instrument that shapes belonging and identity. Common customs create a sense of inclusivity. Engaging in these customs helps us establish a stronger connection to our heritage and develop a more profound comprehension of our identity and origins. Clothes, food, religious practices, and idiomatic expressions, among other cultural symbols and norms, function as invisible threads that weave a social fabric. These characteristics not only set a culture apart but also give people a sense of security because of common understanding and expectations. When people embrace many cultures or create whole new traditions, this exchange can result in even richer identities.

> "Culture... is the fabric of meaning in the human world. It is through culture that we make sense of our experiences, relate to others, and create a sense of belonging. Culture is not just about the arts, although it includes them. It is about the whole way of life we share with others." (Hall, 1997, p. 2)

Moreover, culture influences how we express ourselves, interpret messages, and even perceive silence (Lustig & Koester, 2006). Understanding cultural norms allows us to navigate communication nuances with greater confidence (Chen & Starosta, 2009). For example, cultures with a direct communication style may value blunt honesty, whereas others

may prioritize indirectness (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Recognizing these distinctions enables us to avoid misinterpretations. Imagine directly criticizing a colleague's work in a culture that values face-saving. It could be perceived as aggressive, whereas in another culture, it could be viewed as constructive feedback.

Culture also shapes the way people process information, solve problems, and communicate with each other (Hofstede, 1980), meaning that cultural awareness enables us to tailor our communication style, ensuring that our message is received effectively and building stronger relationships across cultures.

In addition to culture being the secret sauce for effective communication, according to Triandis (1994), our cultural background serves as a lens through which we perceive the world. It influences how we perceive situations, what we value, and, ultimately, how we act. As Lustig and Koester (2009, p. 11) aptly point out, "Culture is the lens through which we see the world. It shapes our values, our beliefs, and our behaviors. Understanding culture is critical for effective communication, building relationships, and navigating the complexities of a globalized world". For example, cultures with a strong emphasis on collectivism may prioritize group harmony and cooperation, resulting in different communication styles or approaches to problem solving than individualistic cultures. Understanding these cultural influences helps us gain a broader perspective. We can appreciate the enormous variety of human experiences and approach interactions with greater empathy and understanding.

Furthermore, culture acts as a bond that holds a society together and encourages social cohesion. Shared values, traditions, and customs provide a foundation for social interaction. Cultural norms create a sense of order while encouraging cooperation and trust. This does not imply that everyone will agree on everything, but a unified cultural structure provides a foundation for navigating differences and achieving common goals.

Additionally, culture is more than just heritage, it is a rich source of emotional and mental well-being. "Cultural identity serves as a psychological anchor, providing a sense of belonging and continuity" (Phinney et al., 2007). Proving that participating in traditions such as customary family gatherings or religious ceremonies promotes comfort and belonging. These shared experiences connect us to something bigger than ourselves and give us a sense of stability, especially during difficult times. Not only that, cultural values can also serve as a strong internal compass, guiding our actions while also providing a sense of purpose and motivation. Williams (2009) argues that participation in cultural activities can foster a sense of social support and belonging, which in turn can buffer the negative effects of stress. This sense of cultural identity enables us to face life's challenges with greater resilience and optimism.

Culture is more than just a set of traditions; it is also a toolbox for problem solving. Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (2021) stated that cultural values provide the foundation for how individuals interpret the world around them, solve problems, and make decisions. Different cultures approach challenges from distinct perspectives that are influenced by their values and experiences. Understanding these various approaches makes it possible to address issues with a broader set of tools. Think about pairing one culture's meticulous planning with another's innovative thinking; cross-cultural interaction can result in more effective and creative solutions to complex problems.

 Last but not least, culture also has the potential to improve creativity and innovation. Traditions, with their rich symbolism and history, might stimulate new ideas and inspire new perspectives. Music, movies, and the visual arts are examples of artistic expressions that allow people to experiment with new forms and push boundaries. Hannerz, in his book Cultural Complexity, Studies in Social Process and Structure (2009), argues that cultures are

not isolated monads; they are constantly interacting, influencing, and borrowing from one another. This cross-fertilization is a vital source of cultural creativity and dynamism. Meaning that it is through cultural exchange that new ideas, technologies, and practices are disseminated, leading to progress and innovation.

The presence of different perspectives and ways of thinking in a culture promotes innovation. When people from different backgrounds work together, they can challenge existing assumptions and combine their unique knowledge, resulting in breakthroughs in a variety of fields. Cultural diversity serves as a powerful engine for progress, from scientific discoveries inspired by cross-cultural collaboration to artistic movements that combine traditional styles with contemporary influences.

English around the World: Cultural Influences

Global English, Local Twists

Culture acts as a sculptor, continuously molding and shaping the ever-evolving form of the English language. Languages show the people who speak them social life, as linguist Leonard Bloomfield rightly remarked in 1933 (p. 1). All levels of culture influence our communication, from everyday slang to regional grammar peculiarities.

Likewise, cultural values and beliefs affect language use too. In Asian societies, for example, where social harmony is highly regarded, people tend to be indirect when expressing themselves and use politeness markers frequently (Holmes, 2013). Similarly, in Western cultures, individualism is emphasized; hence, directness and assertiveness prevail as communication styles adopted by many individuals. Thus, through language, we see that it acts like a looking glass, reflecting deeper-seated cultural assumptions that underpin our ways of relating to other people around us and even ourselves sometimes.

It should be noted that there is no one-way traffic between language and culture; both can influence each other. Language not only communicates ideas but also shapes them into cultural norms, thereby reinforcing those very same norms in society again. The tools we use to talk about gender roles, social hierarchies, or even our relationship with nature are all influenced by the words we have at our disposal (Lakoff, 1990). By providing certain concepts through which these ideas may find expression, it is therefore possible for one idea or another to be expressed easily while others remain unexpressed altogether, thus keeping alive established structures within a given community, otherwise referred to as shared ways of doing things.

English: A Language on the Move

Like a sponge, the English language absorbs everything around it. Mario Pei, a linguist, said it well: languages adopt "words as well as turns of phrase, syntactic constructions, and methods of pronunciation" (1967, p. 21). This is most visible in vocabulary; words such as sushi (Japanese), chai (Hindi), and burrito (Spanish) are now part of English-speaking countries' everyday lexicons. The world is getting more interconnected by the day; ideas and customs travel easily between different societies (McWhorter, 2020).

However, cultural influence does not stop at vocabulary alone. For example, 'get cold feet' comes from German, while 'take a rain check' is an American idiom; both show how subtly but powerfully experiences and expressions shape themselves into our language use (Crystal, 2011). Even grammar can be affected by contact with other cultures. In bilingual societies where people often switch codes mid-sentence without breaking stride, there may be some impact on local varieties of spoken English too (Gumperz, 1982). English remains a dynamic language that changes constantly because many cultures impact it. When different societies interact with each other, they create new phrases, terms, and even sentence

structures that add to the fabric of the English language. This process is continuous and guarantees that English will remain an important means of communication and reflection on various global cultures.

The Inseparable Dance: Culture and the English Language

The complex relationship between culture and English is reciprocal: culture shapes the language, and English reflects and perpetuates cultural values and practices.

The influence of culture on English

Borrowed Words: A well-known fact about the English language is that it borrows words from other languages easily when they need new concepts or cultural practices represented by them (Trask, 2000). These words not only make the vocabulary richer but also serve as gateways into their respective cultures. For example, English has embraced terms like "robot" (Czech) and "algorithm" (Arabic) to reflect the influence of cultures at the forefront of scientific exploration.

Expressions and Idioms: Frequently, the values and beliefs of a particular society get enshrined within its idiomatic expressions, as seen with British English, where 'keep a stiff upper lip' means do not show emotions even in hard times (McBee, 2005). And also with American English, where 'go the extra mile' means to put in exceptional effort reflecting the American value of hard work and dedication. Such phrases cannot be fully understood without considering them from within their cultural background.

The Influence of English on Culture

Worldwide Communication: English is spoken everywhere, which promotes cross-cultural integration. People with different backgrounds can work together and share their

experiences through common words and rules of grammar (Crystal, 2008). Such a process encourages the feeling of being a global citizen.

Cultural spread: As one of the most powerful languages in the media and technology sectors, English may affect various aspects of life. For example, when music or movies are produced in English, they bring along new concepts, trends, and standards within societies that have never encountered them before (Gronbeck, 2000).

Adopting a new culture by learning its language

Learning a language is an undeniably powerful tool for cultural adoption. However, according to anthropologist Sarah Hernandez, it is only the first step (Hernandez, 2023). This statement implies that adopting another culture is not as easy as it seems, even if you learn their native language. For instance, you have to be open-minded and ready to immerse yourself in order to fully integrate into a foreign society.

The initial stage of adopting another culture is cultivating an open mind. It is important to approach the new culture with curiosity and a desire to learn (Kim, 2018). Comparing everything with what you are used to should be avoided at all costs. Rather than shunning them off because they seem strange or unfamiliar at first glance, embrace these differences. What may appear weird or silly might have significant implications within the context of the origin where you come from. Therefore, when we suspend our judgments and approach such things with wide open minds, only then do they become windows through which light can enter, thus illuminating us more about what it means to be human in different parts of the globe.

Next, immerse yourself in the language and culture. Surround yourself with everything that relates to your new place of stay. You can watch movies or TV shows

produced locally not just for fun but to understand the colloquialisms, jokes, and everyday interactions of people too. Listen to music sung by local musicians and look for chances to talk with those who speak the language as their mother tongue. Conversation exchange programs or language meetups also work well in this area (Beltrán, 2022). Make sure you expose yourself more often to using the language as well as cultural practices during your ordinary days because it will help you become confident and blend better with others.

Additionally, do not forget that gaining fluency in a foreign dialect takes time. Take failures positively; they are part of the learning process too. According to David Steinberg, who is a linguist, "Errors should not be punished; instead, take them as opportunities for improvement" (Steinberg, 2019). Therefore, along with being open-minded while studying any given communication system, ensure total involvement in it till such a point where one gets enlightened about another society, which does not just stop at understanding but also appreciating its finer points through making friends with people from different cultures.

Conclusion

In short, adding culture to EFL education is just more than an auxiliary activity; it is the very basis of developing all-rounded language learners. This means that by merging cultural competence and language proficiency, EFL teachers empower their students not only to be good speakers but also adaptive global communicators. This adventure in cultural adaptation, however, offers various opportunities as well as challenges. Interpreting these challenges helps in developing critical thinking and communication skills by avoiding possible misconceptions and valuing different viewpoints. Furthermore, while understanding the culture can help one know what grammatical rules are right or what vocabulary should be used in a sentence, it can also give life to language by making grammar into tools rather than abstractions for meaningful interactions. This process also encourages more engagement

when exploring language nuances among learners, thus turning English foreign language (EFL) learning from being a mechanical and unrelated drudgery into a dynamic and relevant experience. Therefore, this procedure continually enables EFL pupils to not just speak English but also have an understanding of the world they live in. The knowledge gained here leads to empathy, respect, and confidence while dealing with intercultural dialogue's intricacies.

Chapter Two: Cultural Understanding through Facebook

Chapter Two: Cultural Understanding through Facebook

Introduction

For an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student, fluency is not just the matter of making correct sentences. Rather, it is an opening towards blossoming cultural topography, traditions, beliefs, and social mores. To be able to navigate successfully this new world, however, one must go beyond mastering the language. This chapter will involve unraveling the concept of cultural understanding. looking beneath the surface level of greetings and customs into some deeper aspects like understanding beliefs and social normative or even humoristic elements upon which communication takes place between people. It will also explore how Facebook has been used as a tool for intercultural communication through its interactive nature and exposure to authentic content. It looks at how EFL learners use Facebook to bridge that cultural gap where they can connect with different communities in a digital village by discussing the concept of cultural understanding. That will help them transform from being merely knowledgeable users to culturally sensitive speakers who communicate effectively.

Cultural Understanding

Definition

Also known as cultural awareness, which means the knowledge of some cultural components of a certain group of people who speak the language in question. The word culture in itself has a wide range of meanings that include aspects such as practices, values, norms, etc.

According to Hall (1976), cultural understanding is a complex idea that refers to the capacity of an individual to decode and move through the symbols, practices, and values of a given culture. It surpasses acquaintance with customs and traditions by digging into the foundational ideas that prompt such actions. In the words of Clifford Geertz (1973), "culture

is not a decoration but an essential tool for living" (p. 89). This knowledge enables us to appreciate behaviors, signs, and communication within a specific cultural setting. This comprehension builds on awareness about social norms such as manners, religious belief systems, and history stories told through art, among others, but it does not stop at rote learning them. It necessitates being able to look at things from other cultures' points of view so that we can understand their feelings too; this also helps in identifying our own biases shaped by cultures different from ours (Bennett, 2004). Through these means, people become more patient with others who are not like themselves, thus fostering peace between communities worldwide while enhancing communication skills across borders.

The improvement of cultural understanding is a continuous learning and reflecting process that requires getting to know other people's way of life, conversing with them, and removing stereotypes against them. In this light, we can learn to be sensitive enough to acknowledge and value different cultures, thereby broadening our knowledge about humankind worldwide (Byram, 1997).

Cultural understanding and EFL learning

EFL students often regard cultural understanding as a crucial part of successful communication and adapting to an English-speaking society. Many learners know that they need more than just language proficiency for effective interactions; they must also understand other cultures to avoid misunderstandings and negotiate different social situations. EFL students do not need to embrace the target culture completely. Instead, they should be able to recognize these differences and deal with them appropriately. Consequently, the better versed a student is in his target culture, the more like a native speaker he becomes. Fluency for EFL learners can only be possible when there is cultural comprehension leading to true communicative competence. Ultimately, however, it is cultural understanding that enables

EFL students not just to use but also to interpret the language in its wider sense as well as society's perspective on it.

Cultural competence allows students to understand context because language is interconnected with culture. Cultural knowledge among EFL students assists them in discerning the sense of humour, references, and idiomatic expressions made by native speakers. It also helps in promoting the right use of language. By helping to navigate social situations, learners learn about formalities, politeness levels, and how to change their communication, depending on the audience. Moreover, knowing a culture builds student confidence levels. It offers protection against misreading behaviors or social cues and may give learners the impetus to participate much more actively in conversations so that they will be less frustrated and talk with greater assurance, consequently feeling freer.

The role of culture in EFL acquisition

Culture is the key factor for successful communication and making true relationships among EFL students; this understanding goes beyond vocabulary and grammar. According to Edward T. Hall (1976), culture is communication, and communication is culture, thereby showing that language cannot be separated from its cultural context. Proficiency in EFL reaches deeper levels when learners establish these connections. Consider a situation where an individual who does not speak English as his or her first language comes across the greeting "good morning." While it might seem obvious what this phrase means word-for-word, cultural awareness exposes its shades of meaning. In some societies, saying "good morning" could be taken as a casual salutation throughout the day, whereas in others it may only be used during particular early hours (Ward, 2001). Misunderstanding such social signals can result in unintentional embarrassment. Similarly, being aware of polite norms across cultures vis-à-vis directness helps one know how best to respond (Lustig & Koester,

2006). For example, what seems like an impolite statement in one society might come off as refreshingly frank in another.

Moreover, cultural awareness also enables EFL learners to navigate humour, idioms, and metaphors effectively. Jokes frequently depend on shared cultural knowledge; without it, the comedy falls flat (Byram, 1997). Similarly, idiomatic expressions and metaphors may appear meaningless unless their symbolic significance grounded in cultural experience is understood (Moran, S. 2000). For instance, if an EFL student encounters the phrase "kick the bucket," the literal interpretation alone will not reveal that this means dying.

However, there are more benefits than just avoiding misunderstandings because, through understanding cultures, one can learn how varied and exciting human societies are. It gives them wider views of life, which helps in breaking down ethnocentrism among people from different parts of the world who study English as a Second Language (ESL) or any other foreign language for that matter (Chen & Starosta, 2006). This leads to sympathy between individuals from various backgrounds, thus enabling pupils to establish deeper connections with native speakers during their communication sessions. Suppose an individual living in a community where everyone thinks about themselves suddenly finds themselves surrounded by people who value collective efforts above individual achievements. Knowing what such societies expect concerning teamwork would enable them to fit well into social gatherings, hence making more friends easily.

In addition, EFL students can themselves become more efficient learners if they have cultural knowledge. Cultural understanding provides a strong foundation for learning a new language and retaining words as well as grammar, according to Kim's research in 1998. This is because such people can relate the language to the culture in which it is used, thereby making learning meaningful and easy to remember.

At the end of the day, comprehension of culture enables students studying English as a foreign language to move beyond memorization towards authentic communication. It enables them to close cultural distances, establish genuine links, confidently navigate complex intercultural situations while showing respect for all parties involved, and also gain skills that will help them become better learners too. It serves as a catalyst for unlocking language learning capabilities, which turn it into an organic process leading towards establishing relationships and promoting understanding.

The Hidden Challenges of Learning English as a Foreign Language

EFL students who lack cultural understanding encounter many challenges that can hinder their journey toward acquiring the language. Among the difficulties are humor, sarcasm, and idioms. Most of these expressions are based on cultural references or common experiences that are beyond what the words literally mean. For example, for a student learning English as a second language, it may seem like raining cats and dogs is just another way of talking about heavy downpours (Lee, 2011). This leads to misunderstandings, confusion, and sometimes even embarrassment.

Additionally, social interaction may be hampered by cultural misinterpretations. In different societies, non-verbal communication such as body language, silence, or even gestures can imply various things. A direct request from an American person might appear offensive to someone who does not understand English well, while an individual from a collectivist society may find difficulty expressing personal opinions assertively (Kim, 2017). Such limited insight into other people's ways of life breeds unnecessary strain among them, thereby blocking authentic relationships. The challenge also lies in the interpretation of nonverbal cues. In some cultures, eye contact can be seen as a sign of respect or attentiveness, while in others, it may be considered disrespectful or even too familiar. This

could make an EFL student appear shy or conceited, depending on the cultural context (Chen & Starosta, 2014). Apart from these immediate difficulties, a lack of acquaintance with culture can prevent EFL students from appreciating fine points and delicate shades of meaning in the target language. When learners are able to understand cultural context, they become capable of comprehending jokes, references, and allusions that are taken for granted by native speakers. Works of literature, films, or even everyday conversations gain depth and significance when looked at through the eyes of someone who has knowledge about the different ways people live their lives (Byram, 1997). Without this awareness, EFL learners may find it hard to establish deeper relationships with native speakers, thus missing out on the full richness that language offers.

Moreover, it may cause one to feel alone and dissatisfied. Figuring out what is being referenced culturally can be difficult for English as a Foreign Language students; thus, they might find themselves left out during conversations or socializing events. This will have an adverse effect on their motivation levels as well as their overall learning experiences (Ward, 2008).

In summary, not understanding cultures creates various problems for EFL learners. They cannot communicate efficiently, which means that they fail to pick up language subtleties or connect deeply with native speakers. Therefore, by adding cultural awareness to their journey of learning languages, students are able to have more enjoyable and fulfilling times that will lead to fluency in the end being fully integrated into the target community language use.

Cultural awareness through language

Language is not just a means of communicating; it also serves as a key to understanding different cultures. Words are cultural objects that represent the ideals, views, and experiences of a community (Carranza, 2018). According to Sapir (1929), "We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." When we learn another language, it gives us an alternate way to look at things or interpret the world. Figurative expressions such as idioms, proverbs, and metaphors provide insight into cultural norms and values. For instance, the American saying "time is money" reflects Western efficiency, while the Japanese "wabi-sabi" embraces imperfection and transience as part of beauty (Hofstede, 1980).

However, the process of acquiring a language is much more than just learning vocabulary and grammar. It involves becoming familiar with the practices and traditions that are intertwined with everyday idioms. A society's set of behaviors can be seen in greetings, politeness indicators, or even jokes (Byram, 1997). When we study another language, it is not only about memorizing verb forms; it is also about gaining the ability to empathize with different points of view. In other words, through learning how to express ourselves in new ways, we gain a wider understanding of what it means to be human. The finer shades found in these words lead us into contact with life's greater depths while helping create an all-inclusive society for people everywhere on earth.

Moreover, personal development may be triggered by language acquisition too. We challenge our own assumptions as well as thought patterns when we encounter unfamiliar sentence structures or cultural references during this cognitive dissonance phase, which eventually enhances self-awareness and critical thinking abilities (Carranza, 2018).

Ultimately, communication acts not only as a way for people to communicate but also serves as a medium through which individuals can learn about one another's cultures, leading to personal growth and interconnectedness around the globe.

Learning English, Understanding Culture

While learning EFL, students discover the world beyond the language and gain knowledge about various societies. Words, phrases, and grammar form the essence of English, with its long history, tradition, and social significance (Carranza, 2018). It was Benjamin Lee Whorf who said, "We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages." (p. 213) Therefore, when one starts to study English deeply, he or she begins seeing things from different cultural angles, which in turn enables them to become more effective communicators while promoting global understanding. This can be achieved in different ways: One way is to evaluate sayings from other cultures, such as by analyzing proverbs, idioms, and metaphors. This helps learners understand what people believe in and prioritize within their communities. For example, 'a penny saved is a penny earned' shows that they value thriftiness; on the other hand, the Mexican proverb 'para gustos, colores' means for tastes colors, which implies cultural relativism, i.e., acknowledging that individuals have different preferences based on where they come from or what has influenced them (Hofstede 1980). When students critically think about these expressions, it forces them to challenge their own assumptions about life.

The journey goes far beyond the rote memorization of words and grammar. Those who learn English as a second language and actively involve themselves with cultural materials, such as movies, books, and music, gain a fuller view of the many different types of lives that can be lived within this language (Carranza, 2018). For instance, in the works of William Shakespeare, social hierarchy is often portrayed; characters must navigate through

class structures in order to maintain their honor. By studying such ideas, students also learn about what was happening at that time period or how people thought about themselves then. Likewise, if one were to watch contemporary films or listen to pop songs, they would realize more about what kind of jokes are funny now or which slangs have become part of everyday speech among native speakers today. This exposure alone increases knowledge but also helps them appreciate other cultures better.

Moreover, EFL learners should look at non-verbal aspects when studying communication styles used by English-speaking societies. Greetings, body language, and humor etiquette all give insights into what is considered "normal" behavior in different situations (Byram, 1997).

Essentially, when the cultural dimension of language learning is taken into account by EFL learners, what happens is that they stop being passive learners who only consume grammar rules and become active players in global communication. They become better at expressing themselves, closing the gap between different cultures, and making the world a more connected place for everyone. Cultural awareness building among students of English as a Foreign Language does not only enable them to acquire fluency but also helps them to recognize how diverse human experiences can be around the globe, thus fostering a deeper understanding of life itself.

Facebook

About Facebook

Since being established in 2004, Facebook has rapidly grown to become the most popular social networking site worldwide, with over 2.9 billion monthly active users as of this year (Meta Platforms Inc., 2023). By allowing individuals and organizations alike to

create profiles, connect with friends and family members, share updates or pictures, and join groups based on common interests, among other features, it promotes connection and the sharing of information. Although its primary function is still centered around connecting people together, this platform has also evolved into a powerful marketing tool for businesses looking forward to reaching out to new audiences or building communities (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2020).

Facebook altered communication by providing a platform where people could communicate despite being miles apart or having different social backgrounds. It allows users to send instant messages back and forth with their friends, family members, and even colleagues, thus mimicking real-life conversations (Entrepreneur, 2014). Apart from chat services, Facebook also has video and voice call options, which make interactions more personal when words alone cannot express feelings adequately. This multi-faceted ability to connect through different mediums makes it flexible enough for any kind of communication need or preference one may have. Additionally, the establishment of Facebook groups has created communities that share knowledge, opinions, and emotional sustenance among individuals who are physically far away from each other (National Communication Association, 2020).

Accessibility to Facebook

EFL students' access to Facebook for language learning purposes can vary depending on several factors. While Facebook offers a generally accessible platform for EFL students, factors like internet connectivity, socioeconomic background, and technological literacy can create disparities in access.

Basically, EFL students with internet access can access Facebook without much difficulty. The site has interfaces that are user-friendly and mobile applications in many languages (Facebook, 2023). This means it is easy to navigate and create an account, even for low-English-proficient learners. According to Maslow (2015), "user friendliness is an important factor that affects technology adoption," hence the multiple-user design of Facebook.

Regional Restrictions

Although regional restrictions may limit accessibility, some countries might completely block Facebook due to political or social reasons (BBC News, 2018). In such cases, virtual private networks (VPNs) would be needed by EFL students to be able to access the platform. Nevertheless, VPNs have security risks, and they reduce internet connection speeds as well (TechJury, 2021).

Individual Factors

The conditions of individuals also matter here. Underprivileged EFL students may lack reliable internet connections or personal devices, hence being unable to utilize Facebook (Warschauer, 2003). Additionally, some educational institutions might restrict social media access on their networks, requiring students to use Facebook outside of school hours.

The Potential of Facebook for Cultivating Cultural Awareness for EFL Learners

Mastering grammar and vocabulary is not enough for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The trouble is they have to learn cultural themes within the English language itself because it counts for much in effective communication where social cues, jokes, and references can easily be misread or missed without this knowledge. However, Facebook, among other social media sites, can help bridge this gap between cultures, which has been

shown through different studies into its teaching possibilities. Facebook may become a helpful means of raising cultural awareness when used to share experiences, traditions, and views, among others. This can bridge cultural gaps by enabling us to understand one another better.

Content creation and sharing are two of the ways in which Facebook promotes cultural consciousness. Users are able to post pictures, videos, and articles that represent their culture, everyday life, or even unique customs (Smith, 2020). Facebook is a good source of genuine cultural content. For example, learners can subscribe to pages that are dedicated to different cultures and learn more about their practices through news, images, and videos, among others. Bawaneh & Smadi (2017) found that students who study English as a foreign language gain a better understanding of cultural context if they interact with such learning materials. In this manner, people get a chance to virtually interact with different societies, besides acquiring knowledge beyond stereotypes. "Exposure to various contents on Facebook challenges existing beliefs while promoting sympathy towards people from other backgrounds" (Lee, 2023).

Nevertheless, it is imperative to recognize that Facebook can also obstruct cultural awareness. Sharing false information and creating echo chambers hinder genuine cultural understanding (Nguyen, 2021). Thus, critical thinking skills are important in dealing with what one sees on Facebook. Also, one should not assume that just having an account on Facebook will solve everything. Teachers need to be actively involved in ensuring safe and meaningful internet interactions among their students. According to Kern (2012), educators ought to select useful groups or pages on Facebook that can be incorporated into the curriculum, thus making it more structured while exploiting the strengths offered by this platform.

There is no doubt that Facebook has the ability to enhance cultural consciousness. Sharing different kinds of content, building online communities, and promoting critical thought are some ways through which this can be achieved using Facebook as a platform, thus making the world more connected.

The Role of Facebook Chats in Expanding Cultural Horizons for EFL Learners

The rise of social media platforms like Facebook has revolutionized how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners experience and engage with the language. Among other things, chatting on Facebook provides an opportunity for EFL learners to enhance their cultural awareness and acquire intercultural skills in a manner not commonly available elsewhere. The internet serves as a link that connects individuals who have dissimilar native languages or cultures but are studying the same foreign tongue.

The Facebook chats' cultural impact on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students is wide-ranging and involves cultural exchange, negotiating identity, and intercultural competence development. As Li and Hegelheimer (2013) assert, "synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC), such as Facebook chats, can enhance intercultural competence by providing EFL students with opportunities to engage in authentic interactions with speakers of English from diverse cultural backgrounds" (p. 20). Facebook chats provide a virtual platform for EFL learners to engage in cross-cultural communication with classmates from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which helps them widen their understanding of the world. "Facebook chat enables learners of English as an international language to interact with English speakers who come from various cultures, thus exposing them to different ways of thinking and communicating," says Liaw (2006). That is to say that besides learning a language through interactions like this one where people speak it not as their native tongue but among themselves, so many other things are learned, even

those related only contextually within culture—for example, idiomatic expressions or pragmatic conventions used within a particular community. According to Thorne (2003), "online interaction allows students to explore and experiment with different aspects of their cultural identities, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural awareness" (p. 96).

Additionally, groups created based on specific cultures or regions serve as platforms for more concentrated exchanges about those places' ways of life. Those who join such groups can share information, ask questions, and engage themselves in discussions, thereby creating a community feeling where members begin appreciating each other's cultures (Chen, 2022). Thorne (2003) argues that this collaborative learning atmosphere enables students to not only acquire information but also think critically when comparing different cultural outlooks. For example, a group about traditional Chinese cooking can be used by individuals who want to learn about dishes from various parts of China and the methods used during cooking them, among other things related to food culture.

As mentioned by Yildiz (2014), one of the main benefits of Facebook is that it connects EFL learners with native speakers worldwide. These groups allow students from various countries to communicate with each other, thus contributing to their intercultural communication. Students also get chances to argue about different topics while using English as a second language (ESL). Everyday talks reveal insights into such things as common behaviors; idiomatic expressions and slangs commonly used by people living in places different from our own were discovered when some college-goers' were interviewed after having conversations through Facebook (Liu, 2018).

Through these engagements, students learn how to manage cultural differences, identify cultural commonalities, and appreciate worldwide perspectives. In the words of Barsaoui and El-Okbi (2018), "Facebook groups... can offer learners a chance to explore and

discuss cultural topics related to the target language and culture" (p. 42). Such conversations enable learners to understand the relationship between languages and cultures by providing them with an understanding of how communication is shaped by its setting within a given socio-cultural context.

When English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students communicate with peers from different cultural backgrounds, they get exposed to various language use patterns, idiomatic expressions, and contextual rules of behaviour, thereby increasing their knowledge about other cultures and widening their capacity for communication.

Conclusion

In summary, Facebook chats serve as a transformative force in the realm of EFL learning, nurturing the vital skill of intercultural competence. Such communities go beyond the borders of a physical classroom and link learners with speakers of native languages around the world. This contact between different cultures that use various communication methods revives classic EFL approaches, thus making them more dynamic.

Facebook exchanges are not just static pages in textbooks; they provide a mechanism for using language in the real world. By getting involved in interactive debates that deal with sensitive cultural issues, students can be able to understand each other's cultures and even have experiences that would change the way they look at people from other parts of the globe. Facebook has empowered students because now they know how to emerge through this difficult terrain of multilayered intercultural communication, giving them a holistic understanding of the language beyond its grammar and vocabulary. This understanding includes everything about human language's social and cultural environment, enabling cross-culturally confident communication.

Nonetheless, one should recognize that there may be difficulties that come with online conversations. Educators must equip learners with strategies to identify reliable sources and navigate the complexities of online etiquette. Moreover, the Facebook group should be safe and inclusive for all its members. When these measures are followed, it is possible to use Facebook chats as an instrument for empowering EFL students to be competent speakers and responsible global citizens who appreciate the values of intercultural conversations and interactions.

Chapter Three: Interpretation and Analyses of data

Chapter Three: Interpretation and Analyses of data

Introduction

This chapter plays a crucial role in our research regarding the improvement of cultural awareness among EFL students through Facebook interaction. It gives full details of our methodology and also outlines the reasons for choosing this, hence being open and allowing others to do the same study if they wish. We strive to deliver solid and applicable insights by providing comprehensive explanations of how we collect information and also implement rigorous analytic procedures. Additionally, we have developed a roadmap that explains the research design as well as how meaningful our findings can be in broader educational contexts. For example, we speculate about possible patterns based on our data interpretation while answering possible questions likely to follow. In so doing, we anticipate giving readers an intimate knowledge of the complex dynamics at work within e-learning involving culture.

Research approach

The primary aim of the dissertation was to investigate the potential advantages of Facebook conversations among EFL students in enhancing their cultural understanding levels. To effectively address this research objective, we chose a quantitative research approach due to its applicability and alignment with our goals. As noted by Smith (2020), quantitative analysis offers the precision of measurement and the capacity to extrapolate findings to broader populations. By employing statistical methods, researchers can evaluate hypotheses, establish causal relationships, and forecast outcomes with considerable confidence.

Our selected research methodology involved administering a questionnaire to 30 students. This data collection instrument was specifically chosen to ensure the comprehensive

gathering of opinions and experiences related to the impact of Facebook conversations on cultural understanding levels among EFL students.

Research Design

The research's aim is to explore the opinions and experiences of students with learning through social media platforms, in particular Facebook. It investigated the challenges students face when trying to adopt the English language. What hinders students' attempts to understand the different cultural aspects of the language when talking with peers, friends from different regions, or even native English speakers, as well as the difficulties they face in trying to create a more dynamic cultural experience? All was set through the reliance on the descriptive method to guarantee proper collection of results to answer the current research questions. Along with the use of the quantitative method approach since it fits the objective of the dissertation. The research aims to shed light on this complex relationship and inform future strategies for student success.

Population and Sample

The target population of the dissertation is third-year students at the English Department of Mohamed Kheider in Biskra during the academic year 2023-2024. The questionnaire was distributed randomly to 30 students. The selection of this particular population was not arbitrary but was influenced by various factors. Firstly, third-year students have a degree of cultural experience with higher education as they take 'culture and civilization' a module as part of their curriculum. This ensured that not all but most of the students were exposed to different cultural viewpoints. That, in particular, guaranteed possible awareness of the concept of cultural understanding. Additionally, by the time EFL learners reach their third year, they will have had plenty of Facebook conversations using the

English language, possibly with natives. That makes them more likely to understand the idea and purpose behind this research.

30 students were each presented with a questionnaire. The student questionnaire facilitated gathering clear insights on the students' levels of cultural awareness as well as their engagement in cross-cultural Facebook conversations. The questionnaire started with a description of the dissertation. It then delved into the Facebook platform to see the engagement of the target sample with Facebook conversations and the level of cultural diversity in their chats. The questionnaire ended with a series of questions aimed at discovering their opinions about the relationship between cultural awareness and Facebook messaging.

Data collection tools

This dissertation utilizes a questionnaire to gather data from students, aiming to achieve several objectives. These include testing the research hypotheses, answering the research questions, and capturing diverse perspectives on cross-cultural communication through social media platforms. A questionnaire was chosen as the primary data collection tool due to its suitability for gathering information on participants' ideas, attitudes, and experiences related to the research topic.

Students' Questionnaire

The nature of this questionnaire is semi-structured. It contained twelve questions; seven out of those twelve questions were closed-ended, consisting of multiple-choice questions. Four questions were open-ended. The last question was a linear-scale question. The questionnaire was designed with clear, concise questions to ensure student participants could easily understand and respond. This approach prioritized both data collection and

participant comprehension, ensuring culturally appropriate questions that yielded valuable information.

Validity of the Questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire on "Unraveling cultural understanding through language in Facebook dialogues" was ensured through validation by an expert researcher. This validation process is crucial for establishing the reliability and accuracy of the collected data. Highlighting the importance of having a validated instrument to ensure the results are both credible and relevant to the research objectives. The expert's input helps to refine the questionnaire, ensuring that it accurately captures the intended constructs and provides meaningful insights into the impact of game-based learning on student engagement.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The official version of the questionnaire is edited and designed using Google Forms; after that, the survey is published online to the target sample, which is Masters One students. Participants are asked to complete the survey, which includes both closed and open-ended questions, to provide insights into their engagement, motivation, and perceptions of cross-cultural interactions through chats on Facebook. This method ensures a diverse range of responses, enhancing the reliability and comprehensiveness of the collected data.

The analysis of the questionnaire

Section 01: Facebook usage
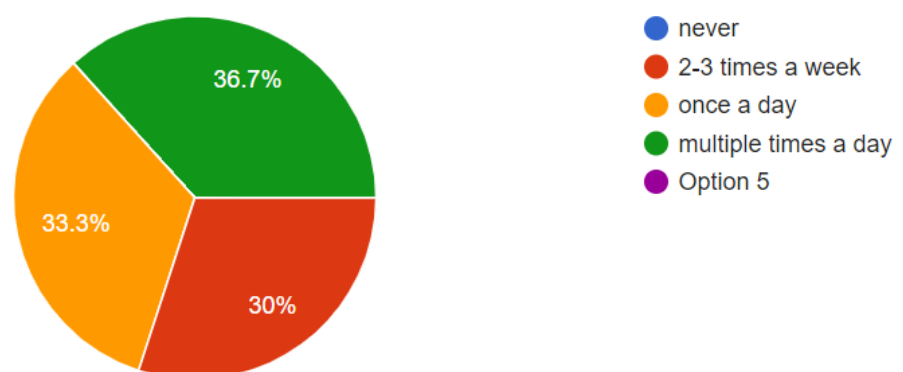
   Item 01: How frequently do you use Facebook?

Option	Participants	Percentage %
Never	0	0

2-3 times a week	9	30
Once a day	10	33.3
Multiple times a day	11	36.7
Total	30	**100 %**

Table 1: Facebook usage frequency

How frequently do you use Facebook?

30 responses

Figure 1: Facebook usage frequency

As results show, the Facebook usage frequency levels vary from 2-3 times a week to multiple times with the latter taking the highest percentage proving the popularity of the mega platform. Over 36 percent of the 30 students use facebook multiple times a day compared to the percentage of students who do not which is at 0 percent.

Item 02: On average, how many friends do you have on Facebook?

| Option	Participants	Percentage %
Less than 100	13	43.3
100-500	11	36.7
More than 500	6	20
Total	30	**100 %**

Table 2: Number of friends
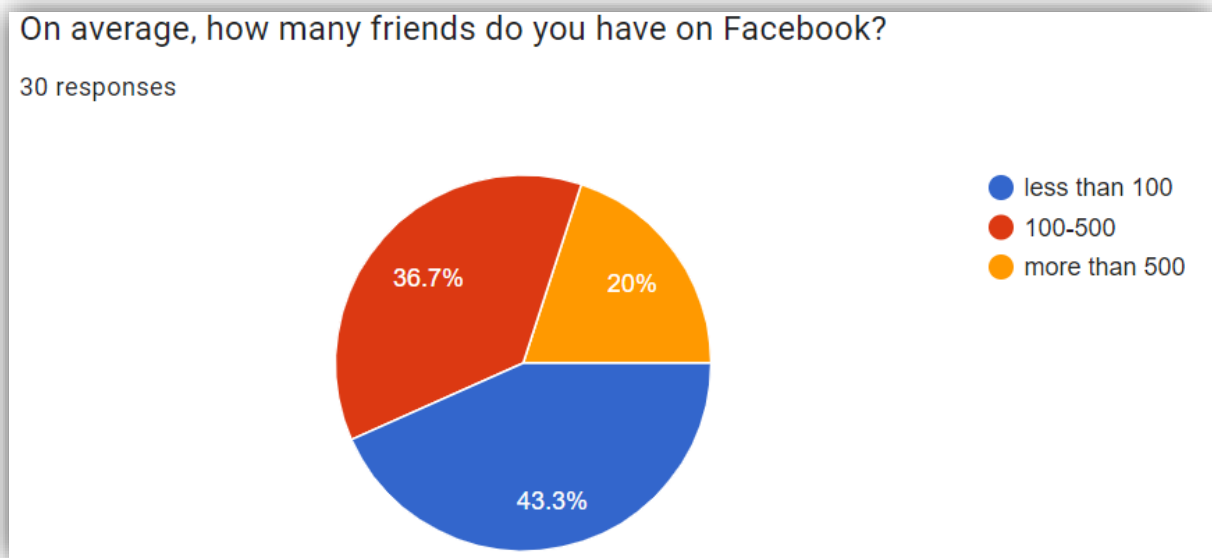
Figure 2: Number of friends

The data shows a higher percentage of students having less than 100 friends on Facebook with a number of 13 students out of 30. Only 6 out of the 30 participants have more than 500 friends. Keep in mind that this question was asked to determine the quantity rather than the quality, meaning that the students who have more than 500 friends do not necessarily have a more culturally diverse friends list than the students who have less than 100 friends.

Item 03: How diverse is your Facebook friends list in terms of cultural backgrounds?

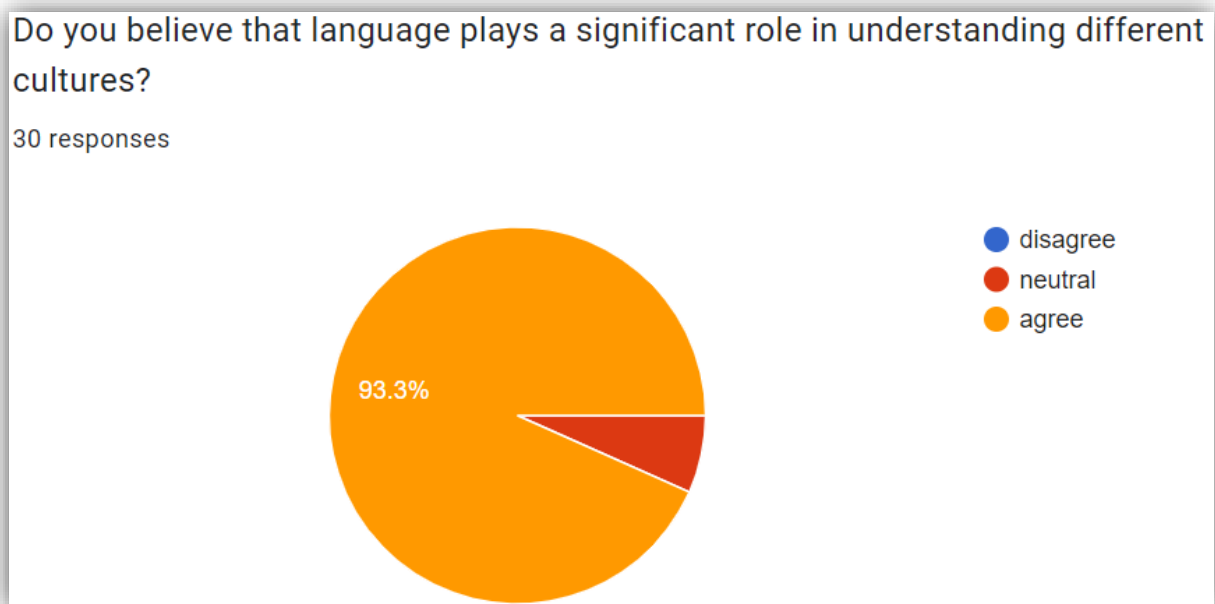| Option	Participants	Percentage %
Not diverse at all	7	23.3
Slightly diverse	12	40
Moderately diverse	7	23.3
Very divers	4	13.3
Total	30	**100 %**

Table 3: Level of friend's cultural diversity
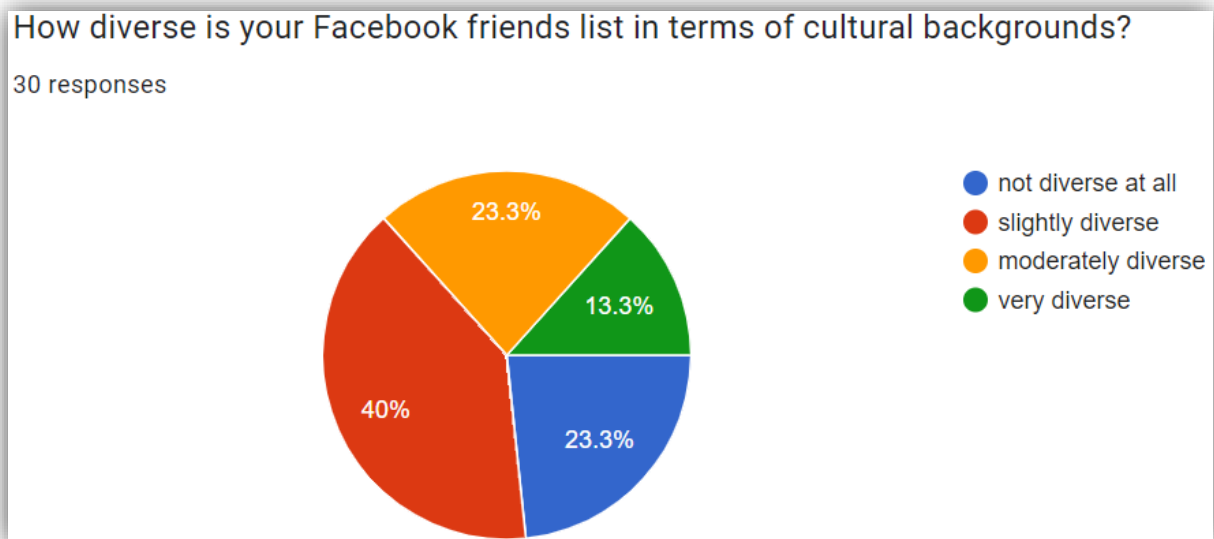
Figure 3: Level of friend's cultural diversity

As noticed from the data, only 4 of the 30 participants, calculated at 13.3 percent, believe to have a very diverse friends list, while 7 of the students have a friends list completely missing the diversity element. Yet, 12 students categorized their friends list as slightly diverse making 40 percent of the target sample.

Section 02: Cultural Understanding

Item 04: Do you believe that language plays a significant role in understanding different cultures?

Option	Participants	Percentage %
disagree	0	0
neutral	2	6.7
agree	28	93.3
Total	30	**100 %**

Table 4: The significance of language in cultural understanding

**Figure 4: the significance of language in cultural understandig**

The data reveals the significance of the language in understanding different cultures. 28 of the 30 participants calculated at 93.3 percent agreed that it is vital to be competent in the language in order to achieve cultural understanding. Only 2 students chose to be neutral while absolutely no students disagreed with the statement in question.

Item 05: Have you ever had a conversation on Facebook with someone from a different cultural background than your own?

Option	Participants	Percentage %
Never	3	10
Rarely	8	26.7
Occasionally	12	40
Often	6	20

Very often	1	3.3
Total	30	**100 %**

Table 5: Cross-cultural Facebook communication frequency
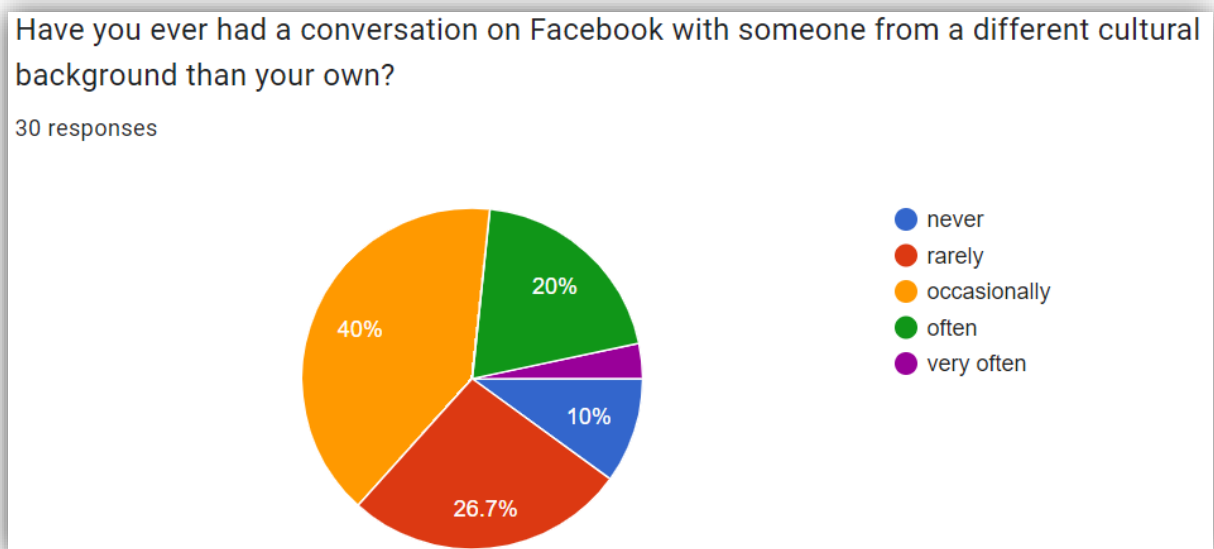
**Figure 5: Cross-cultural Facebook communication frequency**

The data suggests that a majority of respondents have engaged in cross-cultural conversations on Facebook, with "Occasionally" being the most common response at 40%, followed by "Rarely" at 26.7%. Only a small percentage, 3.3%, reported having such conversations "Very often." This indicates a degree of openness to interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds on social media platforms.

Item 06: Have you ever encountered misunderstandings or misinterpretations due to cultural differences in Facebook conversations?

Option	Participants	Percentage %
Never	4	13.3

Rarely	8	26.7
Occasionally	11	36.7
Often	5	16.7
Very Often	2	6.7
Total	30	**100 %**

Table 6: Misinterpretations frequency
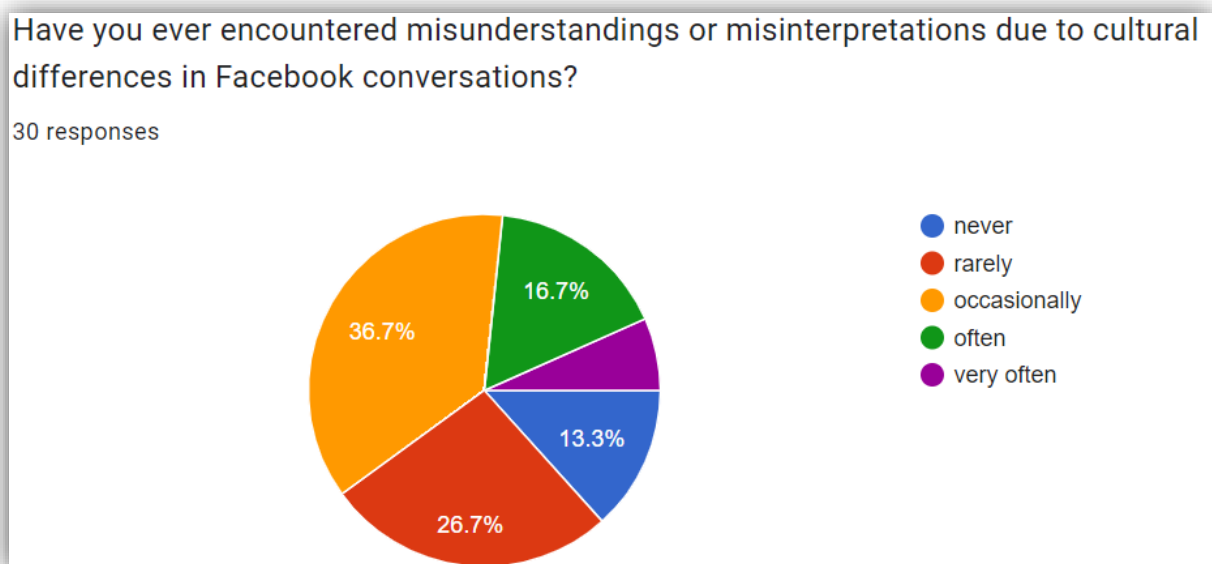
**Figure 6: Misinterpretations frequency**

The survey data shows a significant portion of respondents have encountered misunderstandings or misinterpretations due to cultural differences in Facebook conversations. The majority of respondents reported experiencing this issue either "Occasionally" (36.7%) or "Rarely" (26.7%). A smaller percentage reported experiencing it "Often" (16.7%) or "Very Often" (6.7%). Only 13.3% of respondents reported never

encountering misunderstandings or misinterpretations due to cultural differences in their

Facebook conversations.

Item 07: Do you use more formal or informal language when communicating on

Facebook?

Option	Participants	Percentage %
More formal	24	80
More informal	6	20
Total	30	**100 %**

**Table 7: Formality and Informality frequencies**
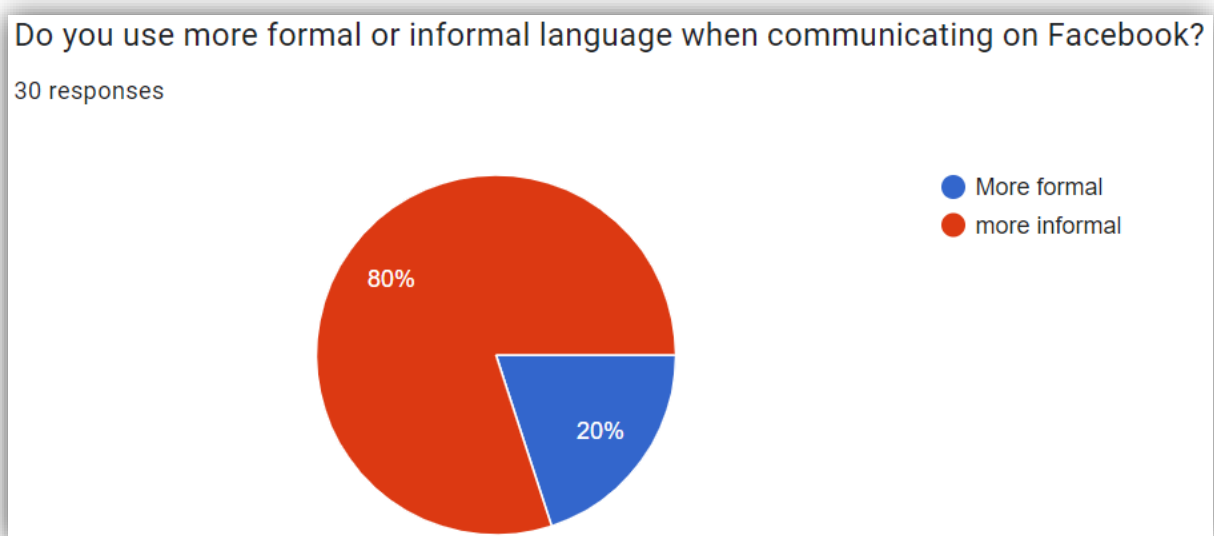
Figure 7: Formality and Informality frequencies

The data indicates that a majority of respondents, 80%, reported using more formal

language when communicating on Facebook. In contrast, 20% of respondents stated that they

use more informal language. This suggests that a significant portion of Facebook users tend to adopt a formal tone in their written communication on the platform.

Item 08: Do you use idiomatic expressions or slang in your Facebook conversations? If yes, can you provide any examples?
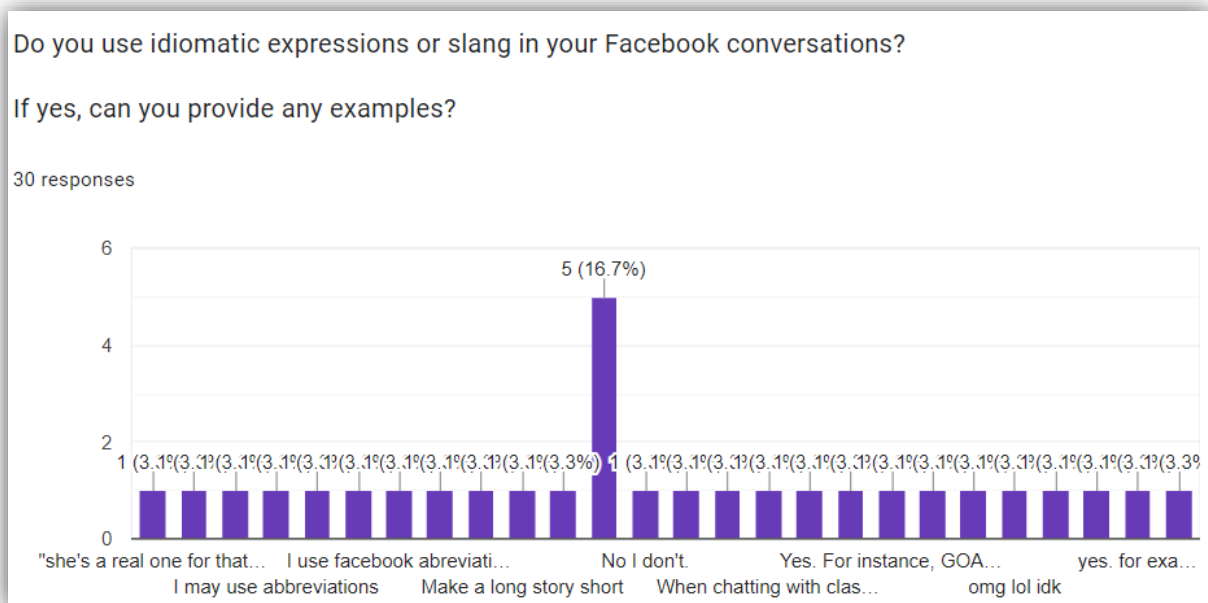

Figure 8: The use of idiomatic expressions and slang in Facebook

This open ended question provides various insights into the aspect of using idiomatic expressions or slang in Facebook dialogues. 7 out of 30 participants (1/5/6/11/14/19/26) said that they do not use idioms or slang in their chats, while the remaining 23 participants chose to provide some idiomatic expressions and slang as examples which they use, the examples they provided were like the following:

"she's a real one for that" "I'm not buying it" "whatever floats your boat "... etc) / GOAT, lowkey, stan, no cap … / cringy / wsup, little did i kno, say less, bigup / Make a long story short / wdym and ttyl / Dude, Crushy, easy peasy lemon squeezy ... etc / "LOL", "TBH" / Aight / omg lol idk / "I'll hit you up later" / long story short, btw.../ Goat, flex, no cap, slay /

piece of cake, steer the ship, break a leg, better late than never / It's not my cup of tea . Break a leg.... / "what's up? What's popping?" This showcases students' adaptability with the English slang and their openness to use the informal language in their conversations.

Item 09: Have you ever modified your language or communication style when interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds on Facebook? If yes, elaborate.
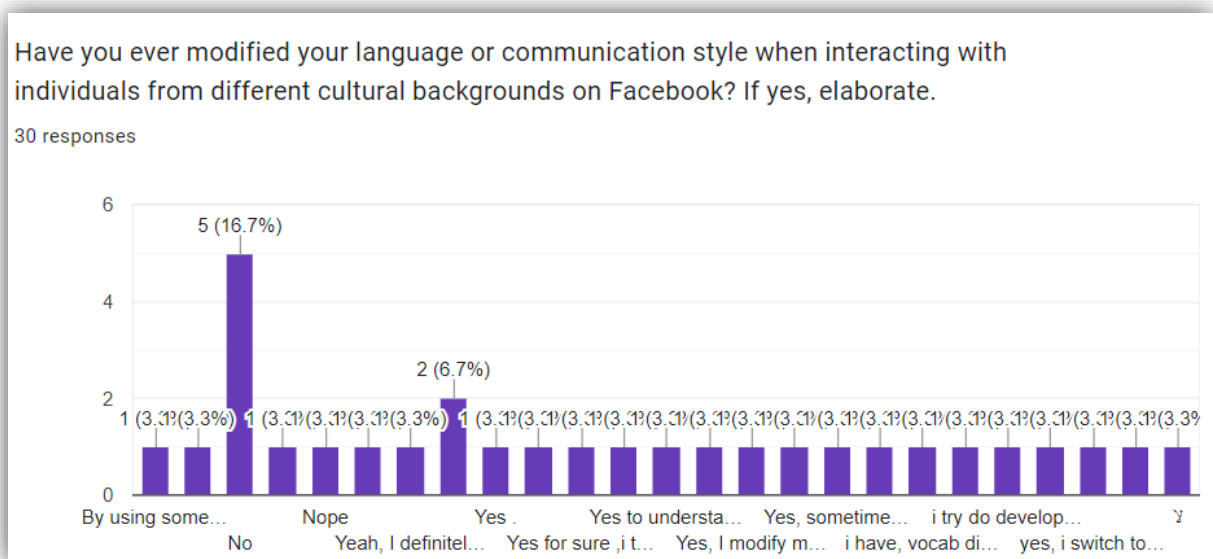

Figure 9: Communication style modification

This question seeks to unravel students' flexibility and their willingness to go beyond the comfort of their communication style to achieve better communication by adopting different styles when interacting with people from different cultural background than their own. The results show 10 participants (4/6/7/12/13/14/15/19/26/29) which make one third of the population, answered "no, nope, never ..." without justification. However, the remaining two thirds of target population answered yes. Some participants justified their answers as the following:

"Sometimes I use "cute" language when I talk to Koreans, and K-pop fans from other countries" (participant 24). "i switch to simpler lge for better understanding" (participant 22). "By using some of their terms and expressions" (participant 10). "I definitely adjust how I communicate based on cultural backgrounds. It's all about being respectful and understanding different perspectives" (participant 18). "I modify my language and communication style to be more inclusive and considerate of different cultural norms" (participant 1). "i think it's necessary to do that in order to make the other person witha different culture understand you well" (participant 25). "Yes i did to appear more friendly and understanding" (participant 8). "I did. To sound friendly and approachable. To put me and the other party on the same plate so we can have a more comprehensive conversation" (participant 9). "depending on the person's native language isn't English, status, and perhaps age, i modify my communication style accordingly. For example, if the person im talking to is older, i use less abbreviations and slang to avoid confusion" (participant 17).

This shows a large portion of the population believes that in order to achieve successful communication and raise cultural sensitivity, the participants in the interaction should adopting different styles when interacting with people from different cultural background than their own.

Item 10: How important do you think it is to be culturally sensitive when communicating with others on social media platforms like Facebook?
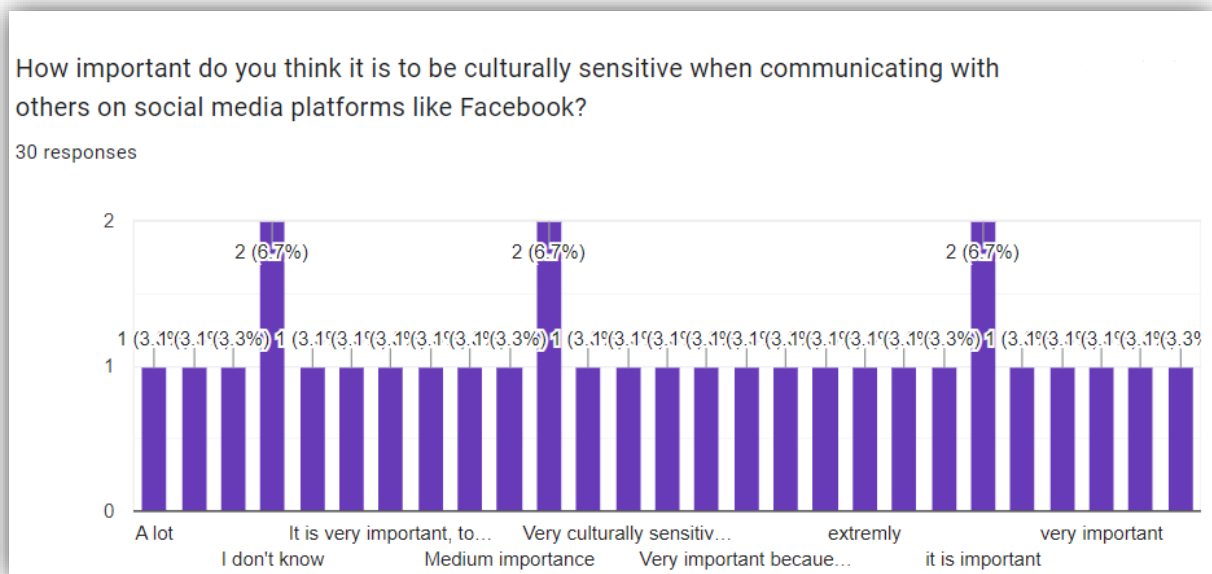
Figure 10: The importance of cultural sensitivity on social media

This question investigates the importance of cultural sensitivity during social media interactions. Data shows 3 participants (11/13/19) said they do not know. Participants 7 and 14 said "not that important". However, 23 participants agree that cultural sensitivity is crucial to enhance communications and build connections. Here are some of the remarkable answers:

"Very important to get on their good side" (participant 8). "Very important becaue we need to cooperative developp our selfes" (participant 3). "Very important as cultural awareness improves interpersonal skills allowing effective and respectful communication experiences" (participant 17). "It is very important to make sure that I don't cross any limitations or create any misunderstanding" (participant 1). "it is for mutual respect and positive interactions" (participant 2). "Micro-aggression is a thing that many people should be aware of in order to not offend other people" (participant 18). "we have to understand our differences and respect others even if we don't agree with them" (participant 24). The majority of the students think that cultural sensitivity and awareness are of major importance in order to have respectful relations and conversations.

Item 12: Do you believe that Facebook can be a platform for promoting cross-cultural understanding? If yes, how?

Do you believe that Facebook can be a platform for promoting cross-cultural understanding? If yes how?

30 responses

Yes, Facebook can help people from different cultures understand each other better by allowing them to connect, share their experiences, and talk about their traditions and viewpoints

Yes, by connecting people from diverse backgrounds and providing a space about different traditions, values, and viewpoints.

Yes because it is most use in world

Yes because you can have friends all around the world

Yes , sharing cultures make it more understandable

Yes by sharing your culture with others with posts

Yes. Because you could interact with different cultures

Yes, Facebook can promote cross-cultural understanding by facilitating diverse communities, content sharing, global events, language learning, personal storytelling, and collaborative projects.

Yes, very much. Because people tend to express themselves openly on facebook, this expression of feelings and insights is very crucial when it comes to promoting cross-cultural understanding.

By connecting people from different countries and cultures and allowing them to share their cultures and traditions with posts photos or stories

Yes it can be

It helps people from different cultures to interact and share their traditions and experiences, It can also rais awareness about global issues like the Palestinian Cause... Etc

No, because these days most people use Instagram or TikTok instead because it can be more fun

Not really

Yes i think so but i don't have any idea about how

I don't know really..

Yes, since Facebook provides exposure to different cultures, it can play a crucial role in spreading cultural awarenesss amongst people.

Being aware of different cultures helps us communicate respectfully and avoid unintentional misunderstandings.

عند تعرف عليهم يسهل عليك ان تعرف ثقفاتهم و عادتهم

yes, through cross-cultural interaction

Yes, Facebook connects people from diverse backgrounds, allowing them to share experiences, exchange ideas, and learn from each other, thus promoting cross-cultural understanding.

yes, facilitates connections between people from different backgrounds

yes, it provides grounds for multi-cultural communication

---

yes, it provides grounds for multi-cultural communication

Yes, Ido. Especially when there's a global event going on (like world cup) , people from all over the world talk about it and they discover other cultures and their pov's. Same with shared interests like Gaming, Drawing, Anime... etc.

Yes it could be if it's wisely used to share and discuss different cultural understandings

No

Facebook can help promote cross cultural understanding

yes it helps

yes

yes by conversating with people from different cultures

Figure 11: Cross cultural promotion on Facebook

The data gathered from this question enables us to whether Facebook, the massive social media platform, can be a place where people gain cultural sensitivity. 3 out of 30 participants (13/14/26) said they do not believe the statement is true, one of them justified his

answer as follows: "because these days most people use Instagram or TikTok instead because it can be more fun" (participant 13). The remaining 27 students believe the question statement to be true. Many of them supported their claims with justifications, here are some:

"Facebook can help people from different cultures understand each other better by allowing them to connect, share their experiences, and talk about their traditions and viewpoints" (participant 1). "it provides grounds for multi-cultural communication" (participant 23). "Because people tend to express themselves openly on facebook, this expression of feelings and insights is very crucial when it comes to promoting cross-cultural understanding" (participant 9). "Especially when there's a global event going on (like world cup) , people from all over the world talk about it and they discover other cultures and their pov's. Same with shared interests like Gaming, Drawing, Anime... etc." (participant 24). "since Facebook provides exposure to different cultures, it can play a crucial role in spreading cultural awarenesss amongst people" (participant 17). "because you can have friends all around the world" (participant 4).

Item 12: In your opinion, how effective is Facebook in facilitating meaningful intercultural communication?

Option	Participants	Percentage %
1 (very uneffective)	1	3.3
2 (slightly uneffective)	1	3.3
3 (effective)	11	36.7
4 (slightly effective)	10	33.3
5 (very effective)	7	23.3
Total	30	**100 %**

Table 8: Facebook effectiveness in intercultural communication
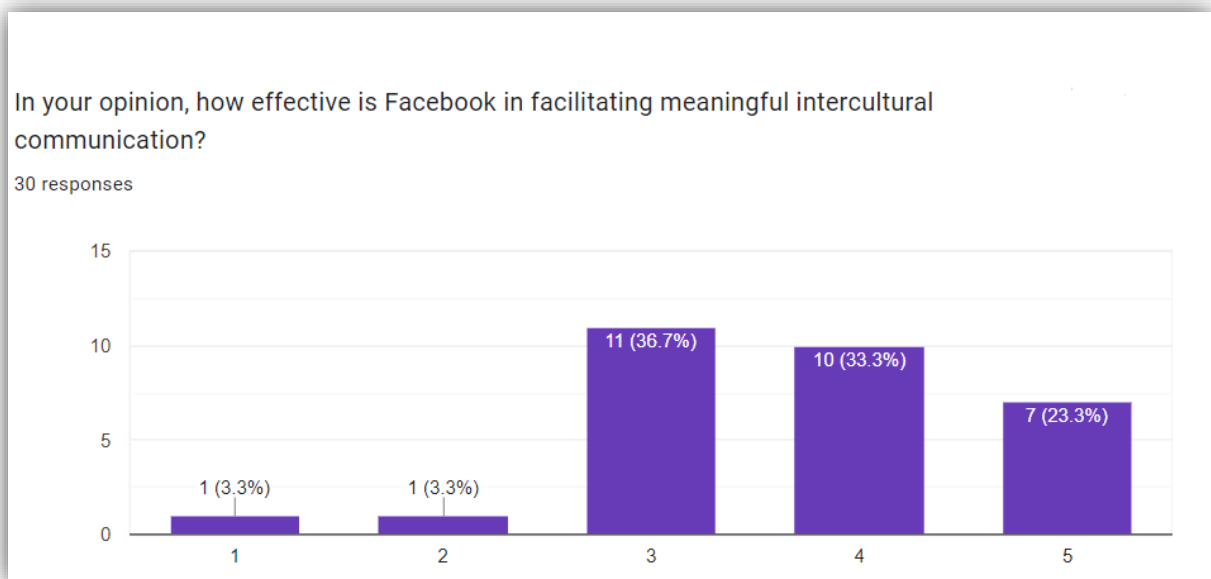
Figure 12: Facebook effectiveness in intercultural communication

The aim of this question is to investigate the effectiveness of Facebook in facilitating successful cross-cultural communication. 30 participants were presented with a linear scale from 1 to 5. 1 being very uneffective and 5 being very effective.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has examined and dissected Facebook conversations to decode cultural nuances through the use of language. The participants in the research used Facebook as a platform for understanding how cultures are connected with languages. The aim was to shine light on how people tend to understand other cultures while doing online communication by examining the data collected from these dialogues in a systematic manner especially focusing on language nuance and cultural references. The dissertation concentrated on finding out patterns, themes and constraints experienced when using the language for crossing culture differences on Facebook. A questionnaire was given to third-year students of English department at University of Mohamed Khider of Biskra with a need to have their

views concerning how language molds intercultural perceptions and furthers intercultural communication through social media platforms. These findings give us more insight into how language operates as a way of exchanging culture in today's digital world which leads us to advocate for cross-cultural awareness and effective communication skills for an online environment.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The title "Unraveling Cultural Understanding through Language in Facebook Dialogues" reveals that Facebook and other social media platforms are significant contributors to students' cultural awareness and language. This dissertation has shown how important it is to investigate the effectiveness of such chats on EFL learners' cultural sensibility and sensitivity on digital methods within educational surroundings.

We submitted a questionnaire to gather opinion and insights based on their experience with using the platform into the educational setting. The population of this research comprises thirty students (N=30) as a sample from Third year at the department of English at the University Mohammed Kheider of Biskra. As results, this research helped confirm the hypothesis of this research. The findings of this dissertation showed the significance of integrating social media, like Facebook, in learning process for the purpose of fostering intercultural dialogue and promoting cultural understanding. Most students say that they have better understood the English language as well as its elements of culture such as values, traditions and norms. It therefore stands out that students have a chance to get into different diverse cultural settings through communicative tools in a digital world thus enhancing their learning experiences.

Additionally, the research identifies the need for instructors to understand the instructional value of social media in building participative learning and improving academic results. By asking students to participate in meaningful discussions between different cultures on platforms like Facebook, educators can create teaching environments that are vibrant enough to support cross-cultural idea sharing.

In summary, "Unraveling Cultural Understanding through Language in Facebook Dialogues" is part of a growing body of literature about technology, language learning and cultural awareness. Through social media's influence, instructors can facilitate their students becoming more culturally aware individuals who are able to adapt to an ever changing globalized world.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the dissertation, several recommendations can be made

- Educators should actively encourage students to engage in intercultural conversations

- Schools and universities should actively promote cultural sensitivity and awareness among students, both online and offline.

- Teachers can facilitate cross-cultural collaborative projects on Facebook (or other platforms) where students from different cultural backgrounds work together on shared assignments or activities.

- Educational institutions can establish virtual cultural exchange programs on Facebook, where students from different countries or regions connect and interact with each other in a structured online environment.

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Appendix

Students' questionnaire

On average, how many friends do you have on Facebook? *

○ less than 100

○ 100-500

○ more than 500

How diverse is your Facebook friends list in terms of cultural backgrounds? *

○ not diverse at all

○ slightly diverse

○ moderately diverse

○ very diverse

Cultural understanding

Description (optional)

Do you believe that language plays a significant role in understanding different cultures? *

○ disagree

○ neutral

○ agree

Have you ever had a conversation on Facebook with someone from a different cultural background than your own?   *

○ never

○ rarely

○ occasionally

○ often

○ very often

Have you ever encountered misunderstandings or misinterpretations due to cultural differences in Facebook conversations?   *

○ never

○ rarely

○ occasionally

○ often

○ very often

Title

Based on your previous experiences, please answer the following questions

Do you use more formal or informal language when communicating on Facebook? *

○ More formal

○ more informal

Do you use idiomatic expressions or slang in your Facebook conversations?   *

If yes, can you provide any examples?

Short answer text

Have you ever modified your language or communication style when interacting with *
individuals from different cultural backgrounds on Facebook? If yes, elaborate.

Short answer text

How important do you think it is to be culturally sensitive when communicating with others on *
social media platforms like Facebook?

Short answer text

Do you believe that Facebook can be a platform for promoting cross-cultural understanding? If *
yes, how?

Short answer text

In your opinion, how effective is Facebook in facilitating meaningful intercultural *
communication?

	1	2	3	4	5	
very uneffective	○	○	○	○	○	very effective

ملخص

هدف هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف فعالية وتأثير محادثات الفايسبوك على الوعي الثقافي لدى الطلاب. كما تسعى أيضًا إلى توفير فهم أعمق للمواقف الطلابية تجاه مصطلح الوعي الثقافي، وعلاقته بالمنصة الضخمة وكذلك الاستراتيجيات الأمثل لتحقيقه وكذا تطبيقه. الأهداف الأساسية لهذه الدراسة تتمثل في توفير معلومات خلفية حول الجوانب الثقافية للغة وكذلك قدرة محادثات فايسبوك على اظهار شتى أنواع المحتوى حول تلك الجوانب. خلال هذه الدراسة، يتم شرح المفهوم واستعراضه في سياقات مختلفة للتخصصات الأكاديمية. الهدف هو تحسين حساسية الطلاب الثقافية من خلال تشجيعهم على المشاركة في المزيد من المحادثات بين الثقافات، ودمجها في عملية التعلم.

تنص فرضيتنا أن المحادثات على فايسبوك يمكن أن تكون أداة قيمة لتعزيز فهم الطلاب للثقافة، وبالتالي فهم أفضل للغة وهو يحسن نتائج التعلم بذاته. لتحقيق الأهداف المقصودة من دراستنا، تم اعتماد نهج وصفي يشمل استخدام استبيان كأسلوب كيفي لجمع البيانات. تم توزيع الاستبيان على الطلاب، العينة المستهدفة خلال هذه الدراسة هم طلاب السنة الثالثة في جامعة محمد خيضر ببسكرة. العينة تتكون من 30 طالب تم اختيارهم عشوائيا.

تشير النتائج إلى أن الطلاب يدركون إمكانيات المحادثات عبر منصة فايسبوك كأداة مساعدة لاكتساب مختلف الثقافات منها الإنجليزية كما أبلغ الطلاب من خلال الاستبيان عن زيادة فهمهم للغة الإنجليزية بسبب فهم القيم والتقاليد والأعراف وراء اللغة الإنجليزية. تظهر النتائج أن محادثات فايسبوك يمكن أن تعزز بشكل كبير تجربة التعلم العامة من خلال نشر المزيد من الحساسية الثقافية، مما يدعم فرضيتنا بأنها أداة فعالة لتعزيز التعلم النشط وتحسين النتائج التعليمية.