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***CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE ALGERIAN SOCIETY:***

***INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN WEST AFRICAN STUDENTS  
AND ALGERIAN STUDENTS AT MOSTAGANEM UNIVERSITY.***

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of master degree in English

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## Dedication

I dedicate this memoir to:

My father Mamadou DARA and my mother Thérèse DARA, for their education, love and their blessings which have always accompanied me and made me grow, may Allah reward them with pennies. To my brothers and sisters, who have always encouraged and supported me. Especially Yacouba DARA my elder brother whose efforts, determination and willingness to see me succeed have motivated and animated all my choices and without forgetting my twin brother. They all have to know that they are my sources of motivation.

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*CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE ALGERIAN SOCIETY:  
INTERACTION BETWEEN WEST AFRICAN STUDENTS AND ALGERIAN  
STUDENTS AT MOSTAGANEM*

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### Abstract

Nowadays it is indispensable to be equipped with various interactional skills because globalization involves increasing contacts between individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds. The necessity to undertake this study came from multiple experiences (interactions, communication, education...) as a West African foreign student at Abdllhamid Ibn Badis Mostaganen University since 2014. So this current study aims to show the importance of an effective communication skills that the students from different cultural backgrounds use to interact with each other and understand how teachers can help them improve their intercultural communication competencies.

The result from the data have also shown that the West African students are more aware about interculturality than their Algerian classmates; even though both groups of students seemed to be culturally well equipped. The teachers also have positive attitudes towards the target cultures from the interviews and the classrooms observations.

Moreover, the goal of this study is also to underline some cross-cultural communication issues that may be behind the communication and interaction difficulties between those two group of students.

**Key words:** culture, interculturality, intercultural communication and competence, cross-cultural communication, interaction

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

## **General Introduction**

The modern world is a heterogeneous set of multiple societies which are becoming more and more globalized with people who are developing the need to engage in cross-cultural relationships. Globalization involves increasing contacts between individuals coming from different cultural backgrounds. In fact, intercultural experience is the fact that an individual walk into an unknown world where people's behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, views and customs differ from his/her country of origin.

Culture is all socially transmitted behaviors, arts, architectures, languages, signs, symbols, ideas, beliefs, norms, traditions, rituals, etc...which are learnt and shared in a particular social group of the same nationality, ethnicity, religion, etc. The Intercultural communication deals with communication across different cultures, and social groups, or how culture affects communication. Intercultural communication is used to raise the problems of the processes that naturally appear within a social context like in education where we can find individuals from different religious, social and ethnic groups. It seeks to understand how people from different cultures and countries act, exchange and perceive the world around them. For this reason, intercultural communication plays a great role in social sciences where identity and culture are also studied to find out how globalization affects the people ways of thinking, beliefs, and values

The continent of Africa is one of the seven continents that make the earth; and the Second Largest one after Asia, consisting of 54 countries and has a multiple set of differences in terms of cultures, tribes, ethnics, languages, traditions and customs., But Africa remains a continent which history, heritages, cultures, and customs have been distorted. The continent of Africa is commonly divided into five regions or sub-regions: Northern Africa, Easter Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa. Algeria is the biggest country of Africa and is situated in its north. Each year, Algeria welcomes students from all Africa who come to study in its different universities; among them the most important and numerous ones are West African students.

Living or walking into an unknown world where people's behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, views and customs differ from his/her country of origin becomes more and more complex. This complexity emerges from the complex relationship and culture of the unknown world and nowadays, this fact is seen as a necessity in this globalized world, which comes to be known as a cross-cultural communication or the intercultural awareness. Nevertheless, based on my experience as a foreign student at Abdelhamid Badis University of Mostaganem in Algeria, I noticed that the West African students face some difficulties (understanding, the use of gestures, idioms...) while interacting and communicating with their Algerian colleagues. Through the multiples experiences of both West African students and Algerian ones, it has been noticed that in addition to some linguistics issues, the awareness of the cultural differences plays an important role for a successful and effective communication.

Interacting with a foreigner might seem interesting; however, communicating with them effectively might be a complex task. Thus the objectives of this study were firstly to highlight effective communication skills where students from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other at Mostaganem University. The second objective is to determine how a little cultural misunderstanding can cause a cross-cultural shock or clash within a society in order to improve their intercultural communication skills and the last one is to make them able and look for possible solutions in cross-cultural communication.

The following main questions aim at highlighting the objectives of this study:

- What are some causes of cross- cultural communication with West African students in the Algerian society?
- What are the main differences between the West African and Algerian culture?
- How to better overcome and to look for possible solutions for cross- cultural communication?

Despite the fact that cross-cultural communication is a relatively new field of study, the Western Universities give much attention to it. However, in Algeria in general and at Mostaganem University in particular, the field is not given much attention even though it is an

issue faced by learners and teachers, mainly when it comes to interact and communicate with each other (especially the West African students and the Algerian students).

Among the causes of cross-cultural communication with these two groups of students, beyond the difference of languages it can be cited the lack of awareness of their cultures, lack of curiosity and open minded. And also the main differences between the two culture is in language finally; some possible solutions for a better cross-cultural communication are the mastering of interculturality concept, the tolerance, and the acceptance of others cultures and the valorization of one's own cultures. In addition to that the travel or making relationship with foreigners can be a solution.

This work is both qualitative and quantitative research. As such, it combines both the analytical and descriptive methods to fulfill the final objectives of this research. In order to answer the research question mentioned above, the ethchno-methodological research was adopted to explore the participants' views, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values through a distinct questionnaires for both participants West African students and the Algerian ones to have a better and separate responses rate, the interviews were conducted only from teachers in order to collected their different strategies to raise students' interculturality, to avoid or overcome the cross-cultural communication clashes in their classroom and then the classroom observation is to analyze both teachers and students attitude toward the clashes in the classroom and how they deals with them.

In order to provide answers to the different questions raised by the topic, the research paper is divided into three chapters: the first one is devoted to the general overview which aims at addressing some theoretical studies done previously in this field of research; then the second is based on the methodological part which includes the research design, the research instruments and the population of the study carried and the last one concerned with the analysis and the interpretation of the findings from the instruments used for data collection, a general discussion of the results, as well as, the limitations and the recommendations of the research.

**CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

## Chapter I: Theoretical Background

### Introduction

The intercultural interactions have become the norm among the population; individuals must develop new effective communication in this area of globalization where people need to communicate and interact with each other. To have an efficient communication skill, the best way is to link culture and communication together; this is the main reason behind the criticism of Chomsky's view of communication by Dell Hymes, who introduced the term *communication competence* and later on Michael Byram redirected this competence to the *intercultural communication competence*.

In the same vein, the act of communication happens not only through the use of words but also through non-verbal communication: gestures, facial expressions, body movement, the way we dress, etc. This leads to cross cultural communication.

The present chapter provides the notion of intercultural competence, communicative competence and intercultural communicative competence, cross cultural communication, cultural dimensions of communication, and the barriers of communication. The purpose is also to see how the latter can be overcoming. Finally, some possible solutions for cross cultural communication will be tackled.

### 1- Intercultural Competence

The notion of intercultural competence is a complex one to discuss, so; let define the notion of culture first.

#### 1.1.The Notion of Culture

Defining and understanding what means by 'culture' helps us to realize how broad this term is. From its etymology, the word "culture", originated from French, which was itself derived from the Latin word "colere", meaning to tend to the earth and growth, or cultivation and nurture.

The complexity of culture can be seen through its definitions by many researchers. Adaskou et al. (1990), identify four meanings of culture namely, aesthetic sense, the sociological sense, the semantic sense and the pragmatic (or sociolinguistic) sense.

- The aesthetic sense is culture with a “Big C”; this includes the media, the cinema, music and literature;
- Sociological sense is culture with a “small c” which comprises the organization and nature of family, home life, interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions.
- Semantic sense is the areas culturally distinctive such as food, clothes, and institutions due to the fact that they are relevant to a particular way of life.
- Pragmatic sense is related to the basic knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that make possible successful communication.

In its broadest meaning, it covers and touches all aspects of human life because of its complexity; this complexity makes the concept “culture” an intricate term to define and one single definition may not enclose all the aspects culture entails. It is the socially transmitted behavior, religion, cuisine (food), music and arts, traditions, rituals, language, signs, symbols, ideas, norms, etc., which are learnt and are shared by a particular social group of the same nationality, ethnicity, religion, etc.

It will be quiet difficult to discuss about culture without pointing out the notion of interculturality because they are highly interrelated.

### 1.2.The Definition of Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is defined as the ability to experience the culture of another person and to be open minded, interested, and curious about that person and that culture. It is the ability of interacting with different people, understanding them regarding to their attitude, beliefs, values, and interpersonal skills and communicate with them by taking into consideration their cultural backgrounds.

So having a successful communication, especially, the foreigners who study abroad like the West African students within the Algerian society is highly important. Indeed, they must be able to relate appropriately to their audience; they should be able to react and respond appropriately to their own personal feeling, attitudes, and perceptions of those of people belonging to a different cultural background. For example, they must know what to say to whom and when, because cultural knowledge and intercultural competence are different. the

Intercultural experiences provide the most meaningful opportunities for developing capacity in language use and interaction.

To illustrate this definition, it is frequent to see businessmen who fail to communicate because they lack cultural understanding or knowledge. It might be the case for a businessman who speaks Thai fluently, and then goes to Thailand to close a deal and organize the schedule of the trip according to the American protocol. The deal may not take place simply because the Thai expectation is that business partners establish a relationship with the Person before doing business, normally 21h before.

## 2. Communication Competence

Before highlighting the notion of communication competence let focus on how this notion has emerged

### 2.1.The Emergence of Communication Competence

The concept of communicative competence was introduced into second and foreign language teaching in the early 1970's.

The laborious works of the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes contribute to the development of this concept and its dimension in today's society. Hymes proposed the concept of "*communicative competence*" as an alternative to the concept of "*Linguistic competence*", as first proposed by the great linguistic Noam Chomsky. (Hall, 2002)

So far, Hymes explains his new theory by criticizing the following quote of Chomsky about the Linguistic theory.

*“Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker hearer, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristics) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.”* Chomsky, 1965:3 quoted in Hymes, 1987:6.

Therefore, Chomsky called his theory “*linguistic competence*”; it enables native speakers to form and to interpret an infinite number of words, phrases and statements in their native language.

Hymes criticized this view of language as too restrictive in that it could not satisfy the needs of learners, because it does not include the knowledge and the skills that an individual must have

to understand and produce utterances appropriately in particular cultural contexts. As a result, he used the term “communicative competence” to refer to:

*“both the knowledge and ability that individuals need to understand and use linguistic resources in ways that are structurally well formed, socially and contextually appropriate, and culturally feasible in communicative contexts constitutive of the different groups and communities of which the individuals are members,” (Hall,2002:105).*

## 2.2. Definition of Communicative Competence

Richards & Schmidt in the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied linguistics (2002:90) define Communicative competence as: *“knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also the knowledge of whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community.”* Communicative competence can be defined as the appropriateness of knowing how to negotiate meaning with different people and in different situations. Additionally, Saville Troike (1996:363) discussed what communicative competence involves in the following terms,

*“Communicative competence entails knowing not only the language code or the form of language, but also what to say and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. It deals with the social and cultural knowledge that speakers are presumed to have which enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms .It also includes knowledge of who may speak or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, how to talk to persons in different statuses and roles ,what nonverbal behaviors are appropriate in various contexts ,what the routines for turn taking in conversation, how to ask for and give information ,how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands and the like. ”*

Richards (2003:4) classifies communicative competence in the following aspects of language knowledge:

- 1- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions.
- 2- Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the participants (e.g. knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication.

3- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g. narrative, reports, interviews, conversation).

4- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g. through using different kinds of communication strategies).

Dubin and Olshtain (2000) came to the conclusion that communicative competence is the knowledge of what to say, when, how, where, and to whom.

### 2.3.Components of Communicative Competence

Richards & Schmidt (2002:90) in their definition of communicative competence mentioned earlier stated that communicative competence is made up of four major components: *Grammatical competence, sociolinguistic/sociocultural competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.*

Many applied linguists had examined Hymes' (1972) notion of communicative competence, notably Canale and Swain (1980) who were among the first to use Hymes' notion to design a framework for second and foreign language curriculum, which was later refined by Canale (1983).

Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence consists of four competences:

1. *Grammatical competence* which includes knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology.
2. *Sociolinguistic competence* which includes knowledge and ability to use the language appropriately in social contexts.
3. *Strategic competence* which includes knowledge of both verbal and nonverbal strategies that are used to compensate for breakdown in communication or enhance the effectiveness of communication.
4. *Discourse competence* which includes knowledge of combining grammatical forms and meanings in order to obtain a coherent spoken or written text.

In addition to this model Savignon (1997) has investigated and written extensively on communicative competence, not far from Canale and Swain's framework. He proposes a new model made up of four interrelated components:

- *Grammatical competence* refers to the sentence level grammatical forms, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactical, and phonological features of a language and to make use of those features to interpret and form words and sentences.

- *Discourse competence* concerns the interconnectedness of a series of utterances or written words or phrases to form a text, a meaningful whole. The text might be a poem, an e-mail message, a sports cast, a telephone conversation, or a novel.
- *Sociocultural competence* is a broader view of what Canale and Swain (1980) identified as "*sociolinguistic competence*". It extends well beyond the linguistic forms to the social rules of language use. Savignon (1997) argues that it is a social convention such as turn taking, appropriateness of context, nonverbal language, and tone influence communication and their interpretation depends on the cultural knowledge that requires general empathy and openness towards other cultures. She mentions further that, "*sociocultural competence includes a willingness to engage in the active negotiations of meaning along with a willingness to suspend judgment and take into consideration the possibility of cultural differences in conventions of use. These features might be subsumed under the term of "cultural flexibility" or "cultural awareness"*" (ibid).
- *Strategic competence* refers to the coping strategies used in unfamiliar contexts, with constraints arising from imperfect knowledge of rules "(ibid).

Savignon(2002) mentioned that the importance of strategic competence decreases along with practice since we gain competence in grammar, discourse, and sociocultural adaptability. We can say that the "ideal native speaker» exists only in theory because it is the one who knows the language perfectly and uses it appropriately in all social interactions.

As it can be seen, Canale and Swain's model has undergone some modifications and the model established by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) gave us a more comprehensive framework of communicative competence and highlight five interrelated areas of competence: Discourse, linguistic, actional or rhetorical, sociocultural and strategic competence. The authors put "*discourse competence*" as the core of communicative competence and it has three additional components: First, "*linguistic competence*" which is the basic element of the linguistic system such as: syntax, morphology, phonology, vocabulary and orthography that are used to construct grammatically accurate utterances and texts. Second, *actional or rhetorical competence* is the ability of combining individual acts into larger sets of actions to create an appropriate communicative activity. Third, *Sociocultural competence* which comprises the non-linguistic contextual knowledge that communicators rely on to understand and contribute to a given communicative activity. The final component of Celce –Murcia et al's model is *strategic competence*, which includes the ability to resolve communicative difficulties and enhance Communicative effectiveness.

### 3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

#### 3.1. The emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The origins of the communicative approach or communicative language teaching (CLT) has to be found in the changes in the English language teaching tradition, dating from the late 1960s. It was developed as a reaction to grammar based approaches such as the grammar- translation and the audio-lingual methods. (Richards et al., 2003). At that time, there was a growing dissatisfaction with these predominant approaches. The problem was that the students who have been taught for many years formal English remain deficient at using the language. Then, applied linguists decided that it was time for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching to be changed, i.e. to focus on the communicative ability rather than on the mastery of structures. The new approach led to a re-examination of language learning and teaching goals, syllabuses, materials, and classroom activities and has been a major cause of the change in language teaching worldwide (Richards et al., 2003:90). Thus, Communicative Language Teaching becomes a generalized 'umbrella ' term to describe learning sequences which aim to improve the students' ability to communicate in contrast to learning language structures without focusing on their use in communication. (Harmer, 2001: 86).

#### 3.2. Definition of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2003:90) in the dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics as “*an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language teaching is communicative competence and which seeks to make meaningful " communication and language use a focus of all classroom activities*”. Through this definition the one can grasp that the main aim of CLT is to focus on developing communicative competence among learners.

Savignon (2002:04) explains that, “*CLT derives from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes at least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology and educational research. The focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learners' participation in communicative events*”.

#### 4. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Intercultural communicative competence can be broadly defined as one's ability to ensure and share understanding by people of different identities. According to Byram M et al. (2009: 5), intercultural communicative competence means being able to interact and communicate with others, to accept others' views of the world, to tolerate, to mediate between different cultures, perspectives, and to be aware of the evaluation of their judgments of differences. He adds that the concept of ICC in foreign language teaching consists of partial competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and intercultural competence that are of relevant importance for each (p.49). At the end Byram illustrates his theory by giving a model composed of five (5) savors.

##### 4.1. The Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Michael Byram (1997) came up with a model of ICC including five (5) Savoirs and the model involves in the notion of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

- Intercultural attitudes (*savoir être*): curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
- Knowledge (*savoirs*): of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.
- Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): The ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.
- Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*): The ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.
- Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*): The ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

## **5. Cross cultural Communication:**

### **5.1. Communication**

The meaning of the word “communication” is quite difficult to define as culture is. It is also defined as “a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding in which participants not only exchange information but also create and share meaning” (businessdictionary.com, 2010)

### **5.2. Cross Cultural**

The term cross cultural implies interaction with individuals of different culture, ethnic, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and class background (mainweb.hgo.se, 2010). In the Merriam Webster dictionary, the term culture is defined as: “dealing with or offering comparison between two or more different cultures or cultural areas”

### **5.3. Definition of Cross Cultural Communication**

Cross cultural communication has been defined as the comparison of communication across cultures and intercultural communication which is the ability to communicate between people from different cultural backgrounds.

In addition, the term cross cultural communication is seen as a process of exchanging, negotiating, and mediating cultural differences through language, non-verbal gestures and space relations. It can be seen as a process by which people express their openness to an intercultural experience. This openness is the key aspect or one of the most important one in cross cultural communication.

Nowadays, with the demand of the globalization, the interactions with different cultural background become evident and necessary. For instance, the students of broad like the West African students who live in the Algerian society, the ongoing immigration process, the internationalization of markets and the growing tourism sector. This is one reason why cross cultural communication is crucial and vital because it has become more and more necessary and it is demanded for a large number of quotidian interactions among people.

## **6. Cultural Dimension of Communication**

Knowing about the dimensions of communication is fundamental, because one essential feature of cross cultural communication is at least one partner using foreign language. There are several famous scientists to be mentioned in this domain of research:

- ❖ Edward Hall (anthropologist) who is particularly famous for his research on low and high context cultures and different concepts of time.
- ❖ Kluchhohn and Strodbeck (both anthropologists) identified five key orientations of basic importance to human beings: human nature, man-nature relationship, time sense, activity, social relations.
- ❖ Hofstede (social psychologist) identified five dimensions of cultural communication: individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity/femininity, long-term orientation.

## 7. Barriers to Cross Cultural Communication

The cross-cultural communication barriers are highly known by *Language difference* and the *Serotypes*. Positive and negative Stereotypes are judgments held by some individuals on the basis of their group membership Fred E. Janet (2013: 87). The negative stereotypes are seen as issues because they impede intercultural communication. *Ethnocentrism* is the belief that one's own culture is superior to other cultures, whereas *cultural relativism* is the belief that one culture has no absolute criteria for judging the activities of another culture. But there are others barriers that must be highlighted.

### 7.1. Verbal Communication

The way of expressing oneself differs from one culture to another as well from a person to another within the same culture. The principle of linguistic relativity known as "the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis" states that the way people think is strongly affected by their native languages. Certain thoughts of an individual in one language or culture cannot be understood by those who have another language or culture. The language we use shapes the way we perceive the world and our culture too. People who speak different languages have different views of the world. W.B. Gudykunst and S. Ting-Toomey (1988) identified four "verbal communication styles" across cultures: (1) direct versus indirect, (2) elaborate versus succinct, (3) personal versus contextual, and (4) instrumental versus affective. It is necessary to remember that no communication style is better than any other.

## 7.2. Non-verbal communication

It has been scientifically proved that nonverbal communication plays an important role in communication. J. O'Connor and J. Seymour (1996) proved that 55% of the message meaning is in nonverbal communication such as posture, gesture or eye contact. 38% of the message meaning is in the vocal variety such as tone, modulation, timbre or paralinguistics and only 7% is in verbal communication. These research results have been criticized; on the other hand, some scientists believe that it is more probable that 65% of the message meaning is nonverbal communication, while 35% is verbal communication. Nonverbal communication describes the process of communicating through sending and receiving wordless messages. Such messages can be communicated through gestures, body languages or posture, facial expressions and eye contact, object communication such as clothing, hairstyles or even architecture, or symbols and info graphics.

### 7.2.1. Body Language (Kinesics) and The (Haptic) Touch

Body language (kinesics) and the Touch (Haptic) are nonverbal communication; these are unspoken elements of communication used by people to reveal their true feelings and emotions. It includes body movements, postures, facial expressions etc. Being aware of body language helps avoid cultural shocks in society while interacting, especially for the foreigners, who study abroad. For example, it can help us to understand the complete message of what someone intends to say to us, and to enhance the awareness of people's reaction to what we say and not. For both the West African students and the Algerian ones, they use different body languages to express themselves.

### 7.2.2. Proxemics or Physical Distance

*Proxemics* refers to different perception people have regarding to space in many situations, such as personal body space, space in the office, parking space, space at home. Some cultures need more space in all areas. Therefore, there can be observed unintentional reactions to sensory shifts (changes in the sound and pitch of a person's voice). Some people need bigger homes, bigger cars or bigger offices. This may be driven by cultural factors.

Four distances can be observed in communication such as: (1) *intimate distance* used for embracing, touching or whispering, (2) *personal distance* used for interactions among good friends or family, (3) *social distance* for interactions among acquaintances, and (4) *public distance* used for public speaking.

### 7.2.3. Eye contact

Eye contact or ooculistics is an instrument in social interaction; it is interpreted differently in different cultures. Eye contact has shown to play a fundamental and important role in the cultural and social norms placed around societies.

In Algeria, only a sporadic moment of contact would be permitted between men and women. The other forms of contact between sexes must be avoided because of the religious laws, whereas in the West Africa countries eye contact can be taken as an affront or a challenge of authority. It is often politer to have sporadic or brief eye contact especially between people of different social registers (like a student with a teacher, or a child with elder relatives).

### 7.2.4. Paralanguage or Vocalic

Our speaking rate, pause, pitch, volume, tone of voice, vocal quality, laugh, scream, silence as well as sigh, also known as paralanguage, vary widely during the act of communication and also in different cultures.

There are three groups of vocalic such as (1) vocal characterizers (laugh, cry, yell, moan, whine, belch, and yawn), (2) vocal qualifiers (volume, pitch, rhythm, tempo, and tone), (3) vocal segregates (un huh, shh, uh, ooh, mmmh, humm, eh, mah, lah). They can mean different things in different countries. The functions of paralanguage are the following: repetition, complementing, accenting, substituting, regulating, and contradicting.

### 7.2.5. Turn Talking

The roles of silence differ from cultures. Interruption is acceptable or even requested in some cultures, while in other cultures it is normal to wait for the partner to finish speaking before making one's point. Besides in some cultures a period of silence between the contributions is the norm (Gibson, 2008).

## 8. High- Context vs. Low- Context Cultures

The terms high culture and low culture were introduced first by the Anthropologist Edward.T.Hall in his book on titled "Beyond Culture". These terms are used to differentiate the way of communicating in different cultures and it is mentioned that no culture is completely high or low context since all societies contain at least some parts that are both high and low.

Edward.T.Hall (1976) in his book said that in a high-context culture, "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded,

explicit, transmitted part of the message”. In contrast, in a low-context culture, “the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code”. The high context culture is those in which the rules of communication are primarily transmitted through the use of contextual elements (body language, tone of voice, a person’s status etc.) and are not clearly stated, whereas the Low context cultures consist of transmitting information through language and rules that are explicitly spelled out.

**Conclusion:**

Communication in this globalized era has become more complex and it is very important to master the aspects of communication in order to interact, to understand, to negotiate and to live peacefully and without any prejudice with people of different cultural backgrounds.

To have successful communication competence in this generation, it is crucial and undeniable to take into consideration some cultural aspects of communication. The knowledge of some concepts is necessary like intercultural communication competence (the ability to interact and communicate with people of different identities and to accept their different views of the others), and the cross cultural communication (the ability that people have to express their openness to an intercultural experience), its barriers, and also the concepts of high and low context cultures.

HAPTER II: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## Chapter two: Research Design and Methodology

### Introduction

The previous chapter was fully dedicated to some overview related to the present research. Hence this second chapter will give a detailed description of the research design and method selection process through which the practical side of the research has been conducted. The main purpose of this study was to highlight some effective communication skills in this globalization, where students from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other at Mostaganem University in order to improve their intercultural communication skills and make them able to overcome and look for possible solutions for cross cultural communication as mentioned earlier. Also, in this second chapter, the research questions will be answered by the adoption of an ethno-methodological research design. The data will be interpreted qualitatively as collected through a questionnaire administered to students and a semi-structured interview conducted with their teachers.

#### 1. Research design

This study aims at highlighting some effective communication skills in this globalization through different cultural backgrounds and interactions of students at Mostaganem University. Therefore, the ethno-methodological research design will be used in this study because it mainly corresponds to the aim of the topic under study.

Ethno-methodology referred to as the ways and methods we employ to make sense of our surrounding world. Knorr C. K. et al. (2001: 141), the literal meaning of ethno-methodology is “folk investigation of the principles or procedures of a practice”. In addition to that literally definition, Ethno-methodology is the study of the ways in which ordinary people use a commonsense knowledge, procedure, and considerations to gain an understanding in everyday situation Kuper (2004: 266).

The use of the ethnographic design will allow the researchers to explore and observe the interaction and the communication strategies at the Mostaganem University among the West African students and the Algerian ones with qualitative data and interpretative analysis. In addition to that, this study tends to provide a better guidance to find out what strategies can be used by students in order to develop their intercultural communicative competence while

interacting and communicating. The qualitative approach is often meant to be an objective assessment of behaviors, attitudes and opinions of the participants. According to Erearut (2007), qualitative research is all about exploring issues, understanding phenomena and answering questions. It is used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviors, value, systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, and culture or lifestyles. Likewise, interviews were chosen as a method to collect data in this study because they allow the interviewer to control, direct, and shape the verbal interchange between the two protagonists.

The main purpose of a research design according to Kothari (2004: 31) is to describe how the investigation takes place. Accordingly, it includes how data is collected, what instruments are employed and how the research questions are going to be answered.

### 1.1. Data Collection

Data collection has the same importance as the selection of research strategies and research design. In this research, data is collected from three sources: questionnaires for students, interviews for teachers and then classroom observation about students' interactions. The use of the three sources is generally known as the triangulation of the research. According to Lewis-Beck et al. (2004:1142), triangulation means the use of more than one approach to investigate a research question so as to enhance the credence of the ensuing results.

Interviews and questionnaires are used as primary sources in this research, as the secondary sources classroom Observation, documents and related book are useful in collecting data.

#### 1.1.1. Primary data

In this research , two primary data have been used :

##### 1.1.1.1. Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions employed to gather information from participants. According to McNabb D. (2010: 147), a questionnaire is used in 85 percent or more in both qualitative and quantitative researches and it is the most widespread way to collect data. Besides, its flexibility and easiness to administer, the questionnaire can be used to collect data from various topics such as knowledge, personal behaviors, attitudes and beliefs Gómez-Galan (2016: 32).In this study, the aims of designing and administrating the questionnaire is firstly to check the students' knowledge, perceptions of culture, their beliefs and attitudes toward interculturality and then to prevent them from

communicating effectively and interacting efficiently with each other belonging to different cultural contexts.

### ***1.1.1.2 Teachers' Interviews***

In qualitative research, interviews are regarded as a commonly applied and relevant method in data collection. Among many major types of interviews, the *focused interview* is used to ask predominantly open questions about specific situations or reflection based on their experiences (Fiske & Kendall, 1956). The specificity area and sampling about the topic lead the researcher to choose a focused interview for this study method. The interviewees of this research are only the teachers of the West African students and the Algerian ones at the University of Mostaganem.

#### **1.1.2. Secondary source**

The two following secondary were conducted into this research

##### **1.1.2.1. The classroom observation**

The classroom observation was employed in order to observe the teachers' strategies while teaching students from different cultural backgrounds and interactions in the same classroom and how students respond, how are their different attitudes to a certain passage and image while reading and their different attitude, perception, way of interacting to the same act of communication. This observation will find out if there were any apparent intercultural or linguistic issues that the teachers had observed during their class.

##### **1.1.2.2. Documents and related books**

The secondary sources in this research are all peer reviewed and published articles in academic journals or published related books. Google academic has also been used for this purpose of clarifying some issues and highlighting a new and effective communication skills at Mostaganem University.

The key words being used in searching articles are: intercultural communication, cross-culture, cross-cultural communication, culture, interaction etc.

## **2-The description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire in this research was used as a qualitative research instrument. It is composed of 14 items displayed in various formats for each category of participants (West African Students and Algerian ones). First, there are four (3) general questions that are related to the

identity of the participants; four (4) close-ended questions answerable by “yes” or “no”; then two (2) proposition questions and four (4) open-ended questions that can be answered spontaneously. The tables below illustrate the questions of the questionnaire with their aims and are addressed alternatively to both the West African and Algerian students.

Table1: Types of Questions and Aims.

❖ General Information

Questions	Aim of the questions
1) The gender	The purpose is to know how old the students are.
2) The department	The aim of this item is to check in which department they belong.
3) Level of study	The aims of this question is to know their level at Mostaganem university.

❖ Yes / No Questions

4) Have you once communicated with a West African student /Algerian student	This item aims at discovering if they are intercultural speaker and to know how open minded they are about West African/ Algerian culture.
5) Have you once undergone a cultural shock during your first contact with an Algerian student?	The aim of this question is to gather information about their first experience of communication with West African students / Algerian students.
6) Do you avoid some topics/subject when discussing with West African students / Algerian students?	This item aims at knowing if everything is allowed when discussing.

## *CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY*

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7) Is the awareness of cultural differences important when interacting?	This question aims at knowing if the knowledge of cultural difference is beneficial for a positive interaction.
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### ❖ Propositions Questions

8) According to you what are the causes of communicative misunderstandings with the West African students / Algerian students?	This item aims at collecting the causes behind that communicative misunderstanding at Mostaganem University.
9) What are the communication barriers that West African students / Algerian students use mostly?	This question collects the barriers of communication from West African students / Algerian students at university.

### ❖ Open Questions

10) How would you define the notion of culture?	The aim of this question is to gather information about students' perceptions of culture.
11) How would you define interculturality?	The aim of this question is to gather information about students' perceptions of interculturality.
12) What are the stereotypes that you know about West African students / Algerian Students?	The purpose of this question is to discover the students' perception and background on their interpretation of West African/ Algerian culture before meeting each other.

<p>13) According to you, what are the most crucial cultural differences between West African students and Algerian students?</p>	<p>This item enumerates the crucial cultural differences from both West African students and Algerian students at university.</p>
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### 2.1. Students questionnaires administration

Firstly, the students were told that the questionnaire is part of a master research project undertaken in order to highlight new and effective communication skills, where students from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other at Mostaganem University. The questionnaire was administered from the 11 from 20 of April 2019 to a group of West African students and Algerian ones at Abdlhamid Ibn Badis University. Moreover, it was important to explain to the participants the objectives, and how to answer the questions. The objective was to have a better responses rate due to the complexity and importance of the topic. The questionnaire was administrated in a pleasant atmosphere. Yet, in this study, the questionnaire is not the only research instrument used to gather information; the interview was also used as a collection tool.

### 3- Teachers Interview

A small group of teachers from different departments at Abdlhamid Ibn Badis University were selected to take part in the interview; so the questions were conducted according to their availability. In the following table the interview questions and the aim of each item are explained.

- Table 2: Teachers' Interview Questions and Aims

Questions	Aim of the questions
<p>1) In your class do you have students of different cultural backgrounds composed of West African and Algerian?</p>	<p>The aim of this question is to know if the teacher has an intercultural class of West African and Algerian.</p>

2) What strategies do you use to raise the students' intercultural awareness?	The purpose of this question is to know the strategies that teachers use to raise the students' intercultural awareness.
3) As Algerian teachers, what do you think of the major communication obstacles with West African / Algerian students in classroom? Give examples	This question has been asked in order to discover the major communication obstacles that the teachers had noticed from their students in class.
4) What kind of miss-interpretation caused by cross-cultural communication in your classroom?	The purpose of this question is to know if there is some miss-interpretation caused by cross-cultural effect in class by the teacher
5) Have you developed any communication strategy adjustment during the class and in communication with West African students?	The aim of this question is to see if teachers have ever adjust or develop any particular strategy in order to communicate with your students in class
6) As a teacher, what are the most crucial cultural differences you have noticed between West African and Algerian students?	This question has an objective of enumerating the differences between west African and Algerian students.

7) As a teacher, are there some topics or themes you avoid in class due to cultural shock?	This item tends to know if the teachers during the class pay attention to the selection of the topics due to cultural shock.
8) Is the knowledge of cultural differences 'effect important in interaction in your classroom with your students?	The question aims at knowing if the knowledge of the cultural differences is helpful and important for the teacher in their interaction with their students.

#### 4-The Sampling Techniques:

The current research is about cross-cultural communication in the Algerian society: between the West African Students and the Algerian students at Mostaganem University. The sample includes both students and teachers of the university.

##### 4.1. Students

Obviously, this study requires a large sample; this is why a total of thirty (30) West African students and twenty-one (21) Algerian students were randomly selected from different ages, genders, departments, and different levels at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem during the academic year of 2018-2019. This group of students was asked about their perceptions, values, opinions, beliefs towards something very specific (idea, experience etc...). They all have different cultural backgrounds and study at the same university.

The main reason behind the selection of the West African students and the Algerian students is that the majority of the foreign students in the Algerian society are the West African ones and that they are always facing this problem of cross- cultural communication with their Algerian classmates at university while interacting.

##### 4.2. Teachers

In this research, a total of eleven (11) teachers were randomly selected and interviewed from different departments at Mostaganem University according to their availability during this period. All the selected teachers are from Algeria and having a group of West African students and Algerian ones in their classroom.

In addition to that, they declared having a particular interest for the current research and hoped that the findings would help them improve their teaching strategies, and overcome existing cross-cultural clashes at Mostaganem University between their students.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the emphasis is put on the methodological aspect. The students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and classroom observations were used as research tools in order to answer the main questions and the sub-questions. The main question is: how to highlight new and effective communication skills, where students from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other at Mostaganem University, especially the West African students and the Algerian ones. And also what are the barriers of communication between the two groups of students at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem? How cross-cultural communication clashes can be avoided?

The collected data will be interpreted and discussed in the following chapter.

**CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

## Chapter three: Results and Analysis

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented a detailed description of the participants and the research instruments as well. The data collected aim at highlighting effective communication skills in this globalization era where students from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other at Mostaganem University. Indeed, the purpose of this work is to help improving their intercultural communication skills and make them able to overcome and look for possible solutions for cross cultural communication. The data gathered also aim at showing the importance of intercultural classroom for teachers and tackle some strategies to help learners (the West African students and the Algerian students) for better communication when interacting with each other.

The purpose of the current chapter is to present the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results. It is important to remember that the students' questionnaire was administered in order to gather information about the students' knowledge, perceptions of culture, their beliefs and attitudes toward interculturality and then, what prevents them from communicating effectively and interacting efficiently with each other having different cultures. Regarding the teachers' interview, it was conducted in order to explore the strategies they used to solve cross-cultural communication issues faced by students while being asked to interact in the classroom. Finally, some classes have been attended by to observe students' problems while interacting with each other and with their teacher.

### 1. Data Analysis and Discussion

Firstly, the researcher proceeded with a careful analysis of the students' questionnaire, follow by the teachers' interview and then the classroom observation that have already been mentioned in the previous chapter.

#### 1.1.The Students' Questionnaires, results and Analysis

##### 1.1.1. The West African Students Questionnaire

###### ➤ General information.

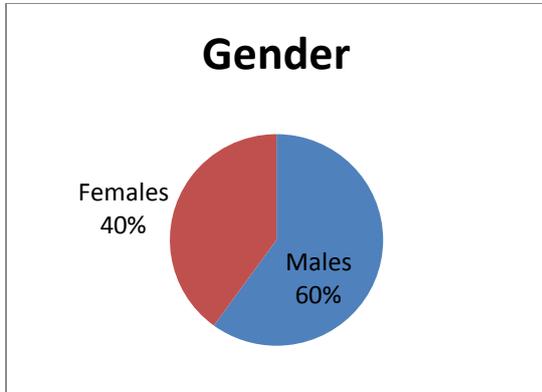


Figure1: Gender of West African students.

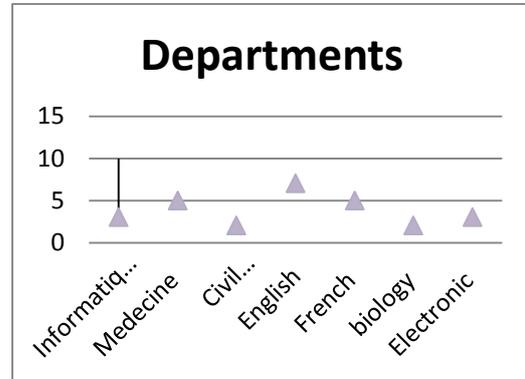


Figure2: Department of West African students

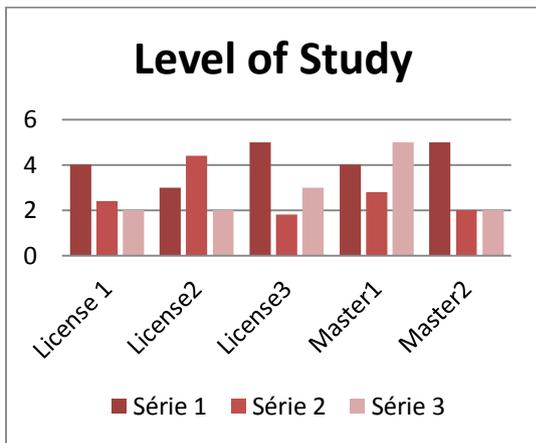


Figure3: Level of Study of West African students.

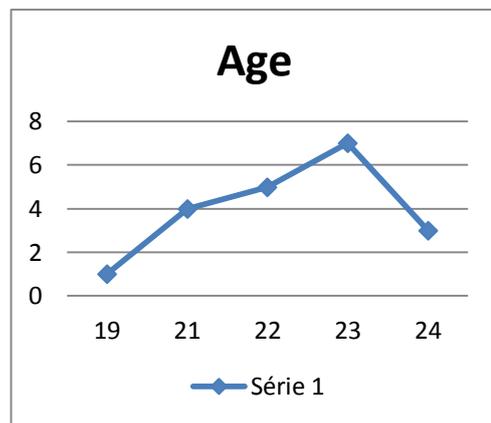


figure4: Age of West African students.

The informants are from West Africa; they are all about nineteen to twenty-five-year-old, they are both males and females and from different departments of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostagamen as mentioned in the figures ( 1;2;3;4). The number of students is twenty-one (21).

- ❖ Yes / no questions.
- ❖ Have you once communicated with an Algerian student?

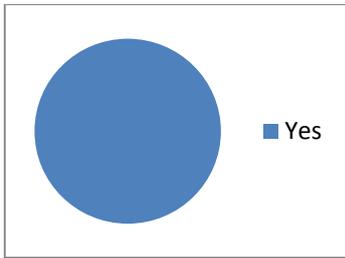


Figure5: The West African students' intercultural awareness.

In their answers, all of them have once communicated with West African students and this was face to face communication. So the west African students are interculturally aware.

- ❖ Have you once undergone a cultural shock during your first contact with an Algerian student?

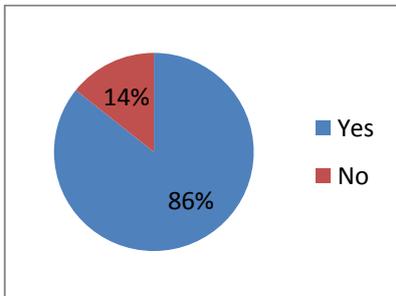


Figure6: Cultural shock faced by West African students.

Eighteen students have experienced a cultural shock (misunderstanding, interaction ...) and the explanations provided are that the Algerian students always ask about the religion which may create clashes or view as an affront about those who do not belong to the same religion; whenever the rest did not face this kind of shock.

- ❖ Have you ever faced difficulties when communicating with Algerian students?

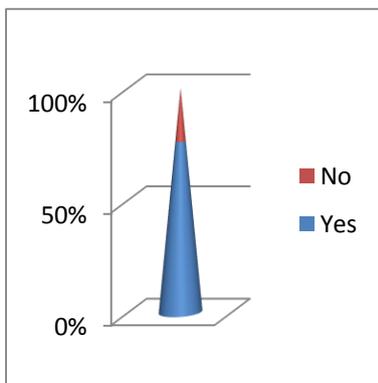


Figure7: Difficulties of communication with Algerian students

the great majority of them have encountered difficulties while communicating because of the

language and some gestures (hug, hands gestures...), they used while interacting. Five (5) of them did not encounter these difficulties.

- ❖ Do you avoid some topics/subjects when discussing to a West African student / Algerian student?

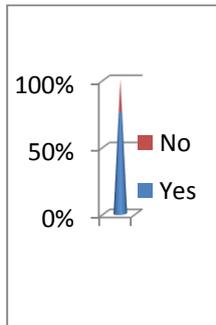


Figure8: The Avoided subjects/ Topics in discussion with Algerian students.

The researcher has noticed that the West African students in their great majority avoid some topics/ subjects in their discussion with their colleagues Algerians. Among those topics there are the political system of Algerian because Algerians don't like to talk about it and also about sex because it seen as taboo in West Africa society.

- ❖ Proposition Questions

- ❖ According to you what are the causes of communicative misunderstandings with the Algerian students?

The students have chosen the oral misunderstanding (they don't understand the Arabic) as the main causes of the misunderstanding while communicating with their Algerian friends.

- ❖ What are the communication barriers that the Algerian students use mostly?

The students in their totality have chosen the proxemics and the body language as the barriers used mostly by their Algerian classmates because the majority of Algerian student use lot of body language (hug, movements ....)

- ❖ Open-ended Questions

- ❖ How would you define the notion of culture?

The data collected reveal that all of them have a good perception of culture because of the given definitions; even though, they differ somehow. As an illustration, their answers can be

summarized as follows: *culture is a set of habits and traditions practiced by a specific group of people. Whereas the remaining students do not have a clear perception about the notion of culture as they were not able to provide an acceptable definition. They have defined culture “as the thing and the general knowledge about humanity”.*

❖ How would you define interculturality?

As responses to the question, only five (5) students provided a clear and good definition of interculturality. The summary of their definition can be as the following: *“Interculturality is the fact of mixing different cultures in the same area and the respect of others culture by interacting with each other.”* whereas the other students do not know what interculturality is because they think it is synonymous with multiculturalism.

❖ What are the stereotypes that you know about Algerian students?

The majority of the students answered this question by the lack of knowledge about the West African culture and Africa in general and also, because of racism. For some West African students, the Algerian students are good and kind with them.

❖ According to you, what are the most crucial cultural differences between the West African students and the Algerian students?

For four (4) students there is no cultural differences between Algerian and West African students or they don't have a clear idea about those differences; and the seventeen (17) remaining stated that the crucial differences between them is from their different languages, religions for a few, the place of girls or women in general in the public places and their way of collaborating.

❖ Is the awareness of cultural differences important when in interacting?

The students have assumed that the knowledge of difference is beneficial positively in their interaction and for better comprehension. In addition, the students have clearly said that the understanding of cross-cultural differences is important and they provide some interesting explanations that can be summarized in these following lines *“knowing and understanding this*

*cross-cultural differences will allow us to adapt ourselves easily in Algerian society and also to interact with them by avoiding some cultural misunderstandings”.*

**The Questionnaire for Algerian Students**

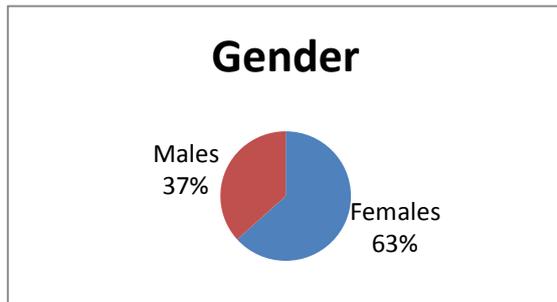


Figure9: Gender of Algerian students.

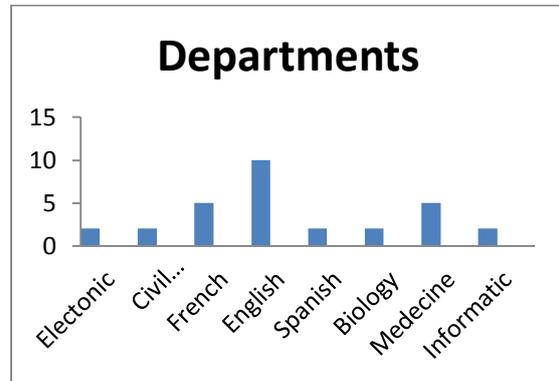


Figure10: Departments of Algerian students.

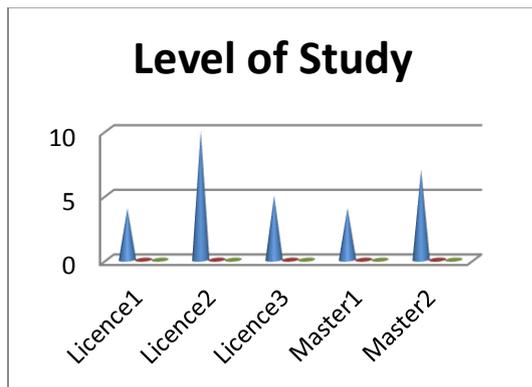


Figure11: Level of study of Algerian students.

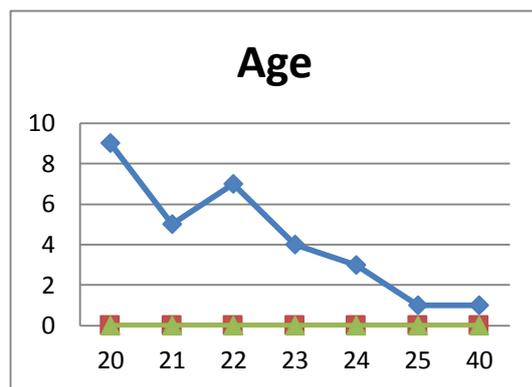


Figure12: Age of Algerian students.

The informants are from Algeria; through these different figures(9;10;11;12), it can be noticed that the students all about twenty to forty-year-old and they are males and females and different departments at Abdelhamid Badis University of Mostagamen. The total of students is about 30.

Yes / no questions

- ❖ Have you once communicated with a West African student?

### CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

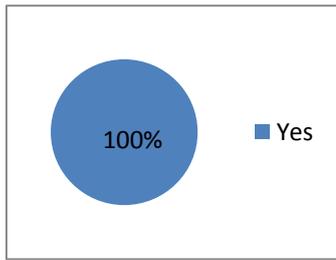


Figure13: The Algerian students’ interculturality awareness.

Since they are studying with the West African students, they all have answered yes by choosing the face to face communication.

- ❖ Have you once undergone a cultural shock during your first contact with an Algerian student?

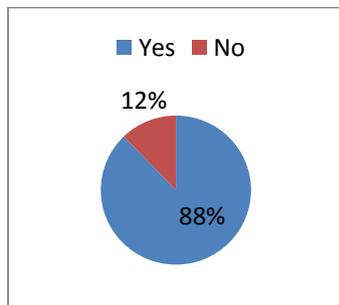


Figure14: Cultural shock faced by Algerian students.

Fifteen (15) Algerian students have already undergone a cultural shock with their West African friends because for them the West African students don’t know about Islam or are not Muslims; so they tried to explain to their friend but at the end they were astonished to remark that the West African students knew Islam sometimes better than them. Eight (8) of them explain their cultural shock by the differences of language, culture and the way of living especially with boys and girls. The remaining seven (7) informants have not undergone the cultural shock with their West African friends.

- ❖ Have you ever faced difficulties when communicating with West African students?

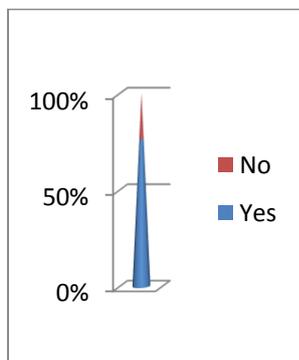


Figure15: Difficulties of communication with West African students.

The researcher has remarked that the majority of Algerian students had faced the difficulties while communicating with their West African friends. So the main difficulties encountered were the language barriers because their friends did not speak Arabic and moreover their different accent when they speak French or English.

- ❖ Do you avoid some topics/subjects when discussing to a West African student?

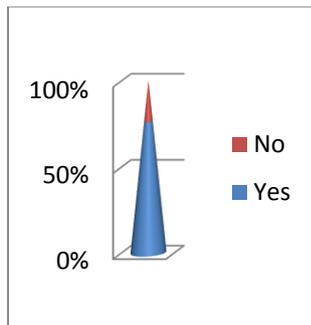


Figure16: The avoided topics/subjects in discussion with a West African student.

The researcher had noticed that the great majority of the answers were “yes” from the Algerian students as it can be seen in that figure (16). The subject they had avoided mainly was political because they are more reserved about that one.

- ❖ Proposition Questions

- ❖ According to you what are the causes of communicative misunderstandings with the West African students?

All the Algerian students have chosen as the causes of their misunderstanding the oral and the vocal misunderstandings because they don't sometimes grasp easily the tone of the voice and the accent of their colleagues West African when they speak mainly English or French.

- ❖ What are the communication barriers that the West African students use mostly?

From that question, the researcher came to the conclusion that the barriers used mostly by the West African students in their interaction are: the body language and the paralinguistic vocalic.

- ❖ Open-ended Questions

- ❖ How would you define the notion of culture?

## CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher has concluded that the students from the first till the third year of license have no knowledge about the notion of culture because they did not answer the question. Only the master students have given some acceptable answers.

❖ How would you define interculturality?

The Algerian students have no knowledge about interculturality because only three (3) of the master students tried to answer. Their answers can be summarized in the following sentence: *Interculturality is the coexistence between different cultures, it is the modernity and it is the interaction between two or more people having different cultural backgrounds.*

❖ What are the stereotypes did you know about West African students?

It seen that the majority did not understand the question because they did not answer the question and the ones who have answered said that they used to think the West Africans are not Muslims.

❖ According to you, what are the most crucial cultural differences between the West African students and the Algerian students?

Beyond, the language, the crucial cultural differences between these two categories of students according to Algerian ones are: The West African students are more serious in their studies and open minded; they have a different mentality as compared to the Algerians, and in addition to that the traditions and the customs are also to take into consideration.

❖ Is the awareness of cultural differences important when interacting?

The majority of students had agreed that the knowledge of cultural differences is important and necessary when interacting and they explained their choice as follows: understanding the cross-cultural helps to avoid prejudices; it help to interact and communicate better with West African students and above all it makes us understand better the life style of the West African students. Only two (2) Algerian students have answered no to the question.

### 1.2. Analysis of Teachers' Interview and Results

The researcher interviewed 11 teachers (both males and females), from different departments (English; French; biology; medicine; informatics; electronic...) of Abdelhamid Badis University of Mostagamen. The objective is to gather information of the teachers' strategies used to highlight effective communication skills in classroom and help students to improve their

intercultural awareness. The researcher took time to ask their permission before interviewing them.

1) In your classroom are there students of different cultural backgrounds?

The interviewees declared having in their different class some students of different cultural backgrounds. So the researcher concluded that they all have an intercultural classroom.

2) What strategies do you use to raise student's intercultural awareness?

Among the interviewees those of the language department advised students to infer meanings by encouraging critical thinking. In addition to that, they agreed that the main strategy they used to raise students' intercultural awareness was to make comparison between the native culture and the target culture. The reason behind this comparison is to make students aware that even though cultures differ, they also have some similarities. The interviewees of other departments argued that one single strategy is not sufficient to raise the students' intercultural awareness that is why they encouraged them to make research about the target cultures.

2- As Algerian teachers, what do you think of the major communication obstacles with West African / Algerian students in classroom? Give examples

The majority of the teachers have stated that language is the main obstacle, because the West African students speak French a lot and better than the Algerian students. Sometimes they all talk in English; the lack of understanding occurs when the students don't master this medium. One of the interviewee declared "I would speak in terms, of "former" student having myself West African friends. I think that a majority of them are afraid of not being accepted by the Algerian community".

4) What kind of miss-interpretation is caused by cross-cultural communication in your classroom?

During the interview, nine (9) teachers have answered that there wasn't any kind of miss-interpretation caused by cross-cultural communication, and some teachers argued by saying that it is because the West African students are not really talkative in the classroom. While interviewing the remaining two, they stated that they have faced this miss-interpretation caused by the use of some idioms during the class.

- 5) Have you developed any communication strategies adjustment during the class and in communication with West African students?

The strategies used by four teachers among the interviewees were to let the Algerian students re-explain what has not been understood to their West African friends; whereas three other interviewees tried to re-explain by themselves to the West African students in order to make sure that their students got the message. The remaining four interviewees just avoided speaking in Arabic, in case they did, they translate systematically for better understanding.

- 5) As a teacher, what are the most crucial cultural differences you have noticed between West African and Algerian students?

According to the point of view of two teachers, they did not notice differences; for them both groups are identical in their classes. But for five teachers, the differences exist between them and for those teachers, the West African students live in a separate community. They don't get mixed with their classmates Algerian in the classroom and it's very rare to see them developing good relationship with their classmates. Then, for the rest, they have observed that generally the West African students are calm, polite, and respectful and most of the time introverted.

- 6) As a teacher, are there some topics or themes you avoid in class due to cultural shock?

The majority of the teachers who were being interviewed declared to avoid speaking about politics and religion during their class; in case they come to do it by necessity or obligation due to the program of the teacher provided by the department, they are careful. Whereas three interviewed teachers do not avoid any topic because they stated that the cultural shock exist everywhere even between Algerians from different regions.

- 7) Is the knowledge of cultural differences 'effect important in interaction in your classroom with your students?

All the interviewees agreed about the importance of the cultural differences' effect in the classroom while interacting. They argued that being aware of cultural differences enables teachers to adjust their information according to various learners' backgrounds from different origins and various cultural horizons. One of the teachers stated in these terms: "showing awareness toward something is the first step to mutual understanding and better interaction".

### 1.3. Classroom observations Analysis and results.

During the observation phase of five classes, it was noticed that some teachers had difficulties to understand the West African when they answer to question or read some passages either in French or English because of their accent and their paralinguistic vocalic.

In some classes, teachers asked students to prepare and present some presentations in their own culture and explain them to the other students in order to show the similarities between their distinct cultures through images, videos. In case the students misinterpreted the passages, the teachers would intervene and give more explanations for the whole group (only if the teachers had knowledge about it). In addition, motivation and the willingness of students to know about each different culture were observed during the presentations.

It was also common to hear teachers using Arabic in order to explain the target language but at the same time he/she translated systematically in French or in English to allow the West African students to understand.

After the classroom observations the researcher came with some remarks: researcher noticed that teachers had problems when the West African were asked to read or speak. This show that the teachers' difficulties to understand the West African students were due mainly to their accent. Therefore, the main problems of Algerian students observed by the researcher are: linguistic and cultural difficulties. But the motivations from students to interact with each other were evident.

### 2.4. General discussion of the results.

This research aimed at highlighting effective communication skills in this globalization era where students from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other at Mostaganem University. Indeed, the purpose of this research was to help them improving their intercultural communication skills and make them able to overcome and look for possible solutions for cross cultural communication. First, on the basis of data gathered from questionnaires, the researcher discovered that: students know exactly what culture is and what interculturality implies. Both groups of students seemed to be culturally well equipped because they were apt to accept that

their behaviors and others' behaviors were culturally determined, they value their own culture and other cultures; they will be able to carry intercultural interactions. Even though students have a positive attitude towards foreign cultures, the results from the data have also shown that the West African students are more aware about interculturality than their Algerians classmates. The West African students are more open to intercultural communication.

Just like the students, teachers also have positive attitudes towards the target cultures. The interviews have revealed that teachers are aware of some barriers that prevent students from understanding and communicate effectively in the classroom due to their culture differences.

Accordingly, they have mentioned some strategies to raise their students' intercultural awareness, to improve their intercultural communicative competence while interacting with each other. Among those strategies, there are the various presentations which expose students to different cultures in order to make students aware of the differences and similarities between the two cultures, developing students' critical thinking skills. These strategies used by teachers can help learners connect to the target culture, raise their awareness of cultural differences and improve their intercultural communicative competence.

#### 4. Limitations and Recommendations:

##### 4.1. Limitations:

The current study was limited by some factors which are as follows: the unavailability of both teachers and students due to strives in the universities. This research was also limited by the complexity of the questionnaires and interviews that were conducted. Finally, the research hampered by the lack of sources, indeed there were mostly articles and books dealing only with intercultural communication in the speaking context, but not in the context of interaction between West African students and Algerian ones.

Definitely, the current research has some limitations, but it provided useful findings that help to generate some recommendations that both teachers and students may benefit from.

##### 4.2. Recommendations

In order to eliminate cross-cultural difficulties in interacting between West African students and the Algerian ones, some possible strategies can be included. First, students need to be

trained in critical thinking in order to improve their critical reading skills. Second, teachers should encourage classroom discussion on interculturality and speak about the different cultures of their students. This comparison can help them to be aware of their friends' culture. Third, teachers can create a collaborative environment between students that will give opportunity to interact and communicate, and that would help eliminate these cultural barriers by having some knowledge from each other. Fourth, to enhance students' intercultural competence, teachers should evaluate the six (6) types of 'savoirs' or capacities identified by Byram, M. and Zarate, G. (1996: 240), which are: 'Savoirs' (knowledge of self and other), 'savoir apprendre / faire' (skills to discover and interact), 'savoir comprendre' (skills to interpret and to relate), 'savoir s'engager' (critical cultural awareness), 'savoir être' (attitudes: self-relativity and valuing others) and finally, 'savoir devenir' (ability to adapt to new social and cultural contexts).

From the results obtained, the study recommends to raise the awareness of teachers, materials and syllabus designers about the importance of integrating intercultural communication either within oral communication skills module or as an autonomous module. Teachers should raise students' awareness of the differences between their culture and the target culture and find ways to improve students' intercultural communicative competence. Finally, further studies could be conducted in the same context by using other strategies that may raise students' intercultural awareness in order to improve their intercultural communicative competence.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, the results obtained from the students' questionnaire, teachers' interviews and classroom observations have been presented and discussed. In addition to that, the research ended up by stating the study's limitations and by making some possible recommendations.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

### General conclusion

The necessity to undertake this study came out first from the researcher experience as a foreign West African student especially a West African at Abdhamid Ibn Badis Mostaganem University. It is worth to mention that the lack of intercultural awareness affects negatively students' intercultural communicative competence while communicating and interacting with each other. Furthermore, some Algerian teachers and students, as well as the West African students do not give much attention to the importance of intercultural communication while interacting.

The purpose of the current research was to highlight effective communication skills where students from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other at Mostaganem University, and help them improve their intercultural communication skills so that they can communicate effectively while interacting.

Language should not be based only on linguistic competence, but also on discourse competence, intercultural competence, and sociolinguistic competence, because these competences need more attention when interaction occurs in an unfamiliar society. University need to encourage teachers and students, and support them by increasing their motivation and their positive attitudes towards the target culture they face.

Accordingly, it is necessary to shift attention to a more innovative teaching method which could raise students' intercultural awareness in order to develop their intercultural communicative competence between students in classrooms.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1

#### Questionnaire for West African students

I am a Master II student of language and communication in the department of English at Mostaganem University, and I am conducting a research about **Cross-Cultural Communication in Algerian Society between West African students and Algerian ones during their various interactions.**

You are kindly requested fill in the questionnaire below. The fundamental aim of my research is to identify the causes behind the existing misunderstandings and the importance of intercultural communication among students.

I guarantee you that your personal information will be kept secretly and your answers will be used only for the research purpose.

1) Gender:      2) Age:                      3) Department:                                      4)

Level of study.

4) How would you define the notion of culture?

6) How would you define interculturality?

7) Have you ever communicated with someone that has an Algerian student/ West African students' cultural background?

Never /                      yes online                                      /                      Yes, face to face

8) What are the stereotypes you know about Algerian students/ West African students?

9) Did you feel a culture shock when you first interacted with Algerian students/ West African students?

Yes/ No If yes, explain

9) Have you ever faced difficulties when communicating with Algerian students/ West African students?

Yes /No If yes, what kind of difficulties?

10) According to you what are the causes of misunderstanding while communicating with Algerian students/ West African students?

1-Verbal misunderstanding (you don't understand the language) /2-Vocal misunderstanding (you don't grasp the tone of the voice)

3-Non-verbal (you don't understand the body language and gestures) /4-Others

11) Is there some topics/subject that you avoid when talking to an Algerian student/ West African students?

12) What are the communication barriers that Algerian students/ West African students use the most?

Body language/ Eyes contact /Touch /Paralanguage vocalic / Turn Talking

13) According to you, what are the most crucial cultural differences between West African and Algerian students?

14) The awareness of cultural differences' effect is it important in interaction?

## Appendix2

### Teachers' Interview

- 1) In your class do you have students of different cultural backgrounds composed of West African and Algerian one?
- 2) What strategies do you use to raise students' intercultural awareness?
- 3) As an Algerian teacher, what do you think of the major communication obstacles with West African / Algerian students in classroom? Give examples
- 4) What kind of miss-interpretation happened in your classroom caused by cross-cultural communication?
- 5) Have you developed any communication strategy adjustment during the class and in communication with West African students?
- 6) As a teacher, what are the most crucial cultural differences you have noticed between West African and Algerian students?
- 7) As a teacher, are there some topics or themes you avoid in class due to cultural shock?
- 8) The awareness of cultural differences 'effect is it important in interaction in your classroom with your students