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Exploring Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): a focus on Indian English and culture in intercultural encounters

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INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, migration, travel, business and international education are facilitating face-to-face interactions. More than this, advances in technology (i.e. the internet, social networks, television, etc.) are making it easier to link people virtually in different parts of the world. As we are becoming increasingly interconnected, it seems more a requirement rather than an urge for people to acquire adequate competence in intercultural communication, in order to deal effectively and appropriately with dissimilar people in any intercultural or international encounter.

The area of intercultural communication has become ever more important in the last decades, and it has captured the attention of many researchers such as Byram, Holliday, Fantini, Ting-Toomey, Kramersch, and so forth. Moreover, it is also considered a great field of interests by several disciplines such as anthropology, education, language, sociology, applied linguistics and communication studies.

Among all disciplines, intercultural communication has turned out to be a central issue in the area of communicative language teaching (CLT). In recent years, language teaching has been viewed from a different perspective: if earlier views focused on the mastery of grammar competence, and encouraged students of a second language (SL) to produce correct sentences without making mistakes, nowadays the focus has shifted to the negotiation of meanings between dissimilar interlocutors. In fact, it seemed that many students did not pay much attention to the intercultural dimension in second language communication, and this may have caused problems of misunderstanding in intercultural encounters. Therefore, what was needed in order to use language communicatively was communicative competence: according to Richards (2006: 9), it included what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and their roles and intentions. Therefore, it has been widely recognised that knowledge and appropriate skills in the grammar are not enough to deal appropriately and effectively with people from different backgrounds, but also the ability to use the learned language in socially and culturally

ways is required as an essential basis for successful communication. It follows that the innovation of current approaches to language teaching has put the intercultural dimension into its aim. The main focus of communicative language teaching is now on real communication: that is to say, in providing opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know about another culture, and to be tolerant when they deal with unfamiliar people they encounter.

With the advent of accelerating globalisation and increasing intercultural contact, it seems necessary for learners to understand the nature and impact of intercultural communication. First and foremost, it is considered extremely important to gain knowledge on the current change of the concept of culture and on the process of communication. Therefore, this study aims to provide an introduction and a guide to the field of language and intercultural communication, and to explore the process which may lead people to acquire a competence in communication with others from different backgrounds.

The organisation of this study moves from theory to practice, as it offers a concrete example: in fact, the focus will be on Indian English and culture in intercultural encounters. This means that Indian English is taken into consideration as a variety of English used as a 'contact language' (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7) in intercultural communication. Moreover, some cultural aspects of Indian culture which constitute a basis to develop an appropriate approach and competence when dealing with Indian people will be analysed.

Therefore, Chapter 1 serves as a basis to build a clear idea of the current changes in intercultural communication today. In fact, the ever-growing interconnection has created a huge demand for a shared code that can be used in intercultural encounters. Among all Lingua Francas, English has become of paramount concern since the beginning of the 21th century, and is chosen more and more frequently as "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7). In essence, the process of globalisation has gone hand-in-hand with the globalisation of English as well, and given

its overwhelming importance, nowadays more and more people wish to master it to a high level of accuracy and fluency.

It is important to point out that the 21st century is known as a period of great change in every aspect of life; in fact, the process of globalisation is changing the way we imagine the world and is constantly eliminating the borders between nations and cultures. In other words, it is considered a homogenising process that will lead to the end of cultural diversity: in fact, the equation country/nation, along with culture/identity are no longer valid to describe the current world. These changes call for a revision of some concepts, like that of culture, and increase interest in how communication works in the current global world. Therefore, the concepts of communication and culture are both taken into account in this chapter.

It is emphasised that communication requires, according to Jakobson model (Fiske, 1991: 35), the presence of a sender who is responsible for the content of the information he or she is elaborating; a receiver who has to pay attention and understand the message conveyed; a message, which contains the core content of the whole communication; a context, that is the setting in which the communication is taking place; a contact, that can be physical, face-to-face, by phone, by social network, by mail, and so on; a shared code, otherwise communication will be not possible (i.e. speaking the same language). This obviously concerns the verbal communication system. However, communication does not only involve verbal language, but also non-verbal language. According to Ting-Toomey (1999: 114), "nonverbal messages serve multiple functions in intercultural interaction. While verbal messages convey content meaning, non-verbal messages carry strong identity and relational meanings". They generally include facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, touch, distance/proximity, posture, and so forth, but also involve aspects such as skin colour, sex, age, hair, clothing or body shape. This means that communication is everywhere: in our language, in our attitude, in our appearance. Everything we do and show tell other people something about our identity.

This is why it is important to pay attention to all those aspects in intercultural communication: in fact, each individual is influenced by his or her culture. However,

the concept of culture is not easy to define: it is considered a shared system that is learned by human beings who live in a specific territory. They adapt to the environment in which they live, and develop specific language, symbols, knowledge, values, norms, beliefs, traditions, and other capabilities and habits. This means that each culture has developed its own forms of socialisation and acculturation that distinguishes it from the others. However, as we are witnessing rapid changes thanks to globalisation and the interconnected nature of international encounters, it is difficult nowadays to identify a clear borderline between cultures as it was in the past. This means that culture turns out to be an enigma, as all the meanings, values, rules, beliefs are constantly reviewed and subject to rapid changes in the current era of globalisation.

Moreover, this chapter includes an introduction to what is analysed in the following chapters. In fact, not only is the intercultural communicative process explored, but concrete examples are also employed. As I was interested in exploring Indian culture and language, I prepared a survey with open-ended questions concerning the challenging areas which are explained afterwards in chapter 3. I delivered it by email to a small group of young Indian people who live in Indore, which is the largest city of Indian state of Madhya Pradesh by population. Therefore, I offer a deeper focus on the specific culture of a particular area, and it includes the points of view of a restricted population. Those young people serve both as a model to achieve a specific perspective, and as a current example to assure an up-to-date vision about communication and culture in today's Indian reality. The data were analysed and taken into account as an indication of current changes in Indian society, and constitute an overview of Indian culture: therefore, the answers mirror recent Indian's beliefs, values, communication strategies, norms, attitudes, and so forth, of the young generation.

Chapter 2 covers the core topic of this paper, that is the intercultural communicative dimension. Ting-Toomey (1999: 16-17) defines intercultural communication as a "symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meaning in an interactive

situation". Following this definition, the chapter emphasises the importance of negotiation of cultural identities, meanings and attitudes in any interaction. In fact, cultural encounters require tolerance to diversity, willingness to suspend judgments and flexibility: people may master the shared code at a different level of proficiency, and may utter sentences or do things that can undermine the interaction. Therefore, it is necessary to respect other identities, and behave according to the situational context: in other words, intercultural encounters require full negotiation, and a creation of a 'third space', " [...] which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity", according to Bhabha (1994 in Feng. 2009).

Moreover, I highlight the importance of acquiring intercultural communication competence in today's increasingly interconnected world. Knowledge and attitude factors are preconditions to develop appropriate skills to interpret, relate, discover and interact, as well as to achieve critical cultural awareness. According to Byram (1997: 34), those are the essential factors in order to achieve Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and its criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction in communication. In essence, this chapter explores the components of ICC (knowledge, attitude, skills of interpret and relate, skills of discover and interact, critical cultural awareness) which are required in order to achieve a successful outcome in communication, as well as the criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction. Finally, it is explained how intercultural competence results from linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse factors.

Chapter 3 introduces the challenging areas in intercultural communication with reference to a concrete example. In fact, Indian English (IndE) and culture serve to offer a practical example in the intercultural communication dimension. Particular attention is paid to the interplay between cultural diversity and language practice; therefore, the areas of language, politeness, non-verbal communication, behavioural habits, conversational topics and concepts (i.e. space, time, etc.) are analysed. As already stated in the previous chapter, knowledge about the language and culture of one's interlocutor seems to be an essential element in order to be considered an

intercultural communicator. Therefore, it is explained how Indian English has developed in India, how it may influence the communication in intercultural encounters, how politeness works in India, which are the topics that should be avoided, what are the typical habits in India, as well as how Indian people perceive space, time, and social relationships. However, one should be aware that talking about Indian culture is an oversimplification. Things may change according to the geographical area, religion or social status. This is why I chose to focus on a specific area and on a specific age: in fact, this chapter includes some examples taken from the answers I have collected from the survey. My aim is to report not only what is written in books about Indian language and culture, but to offer real examples about those challenging areas. However, all the examples of this study - both those taken from general knowledge and those of the survey - may serve to build a general idea of India, its language and customs. The goal of this chapter is to offer appropriate knowledge in order to let people think how they may develop a competence when dealing with another culture. Moreover, it serves to present a basis to raise questions about people's ethnocentric beliefs and attitudes, and to think how to communicate with people of this area of India appropriately and effectively. That is to say, knowledge about those challenging areas may help people to be more tolerant towards otherness, and to acquire a competence in any intercultural encounters with an Indian.

Chapter 4 includes a double perspective: on the one hand, it describes a personal narrative that witnesses my experience in India, as I volunteered for around two months in a school in the city of Indore (Madhya Pradesh); on the other hand, it reports the point of view of two young Indian people who are taken into consideration as case studies in this study. Therefore, thanks to my experience of an Indian reality, I had the opportunity to delve into the topic of intercultural communication much more deeply: I have reported what I personally perceived as different and how I felt during my Indian sojourn. I have explored the challenging areas more in detail, including my impressions about language, clothing, food and dining etiquette, public spaces and cleanliness, driving, symbols, experience at school. This information serves to build a clearer idea of how communication works across cultures and to think about the fact

that what are generally labelled as problems may prove to be a source of enrichment in one's personal cultural background. In other words, an experience out of our comfort zone can be a worthy learning starting point to broaden one's horizon and to discover other means of communication.

As regards the case studies, I decided to choose two interviewees among those of the survey. Therefore, I submitted to them the same questions that I used for the Indian group, but I added some more ones to go into greater depth in this topic. The aim was to obtain even more information about the challenging areas, and to compare their answers in order to capture any similarities or differences. Moreover, I also analysed their replies focusing on the attitude they displayed when answering. In fact, the lexicon and the grammar used refer to their system of beliefs, to their emotions, to their system of judging and evaluating the world; that is to say, to their culture. In other words, I wished to compare the behaviours of these two young Indian people, analysing not only the content of their replies, but also how they replied. The aim of these case studies is to understand the richness, complexity and multiple perspectives of ICC.

All things considered, this study aims to raise interest in the ever-growing importance of intercultural communication in today's interconnected, globalised world. As more and more people are involved in communication through different mediums (i.e. travel, business, the internet, social networks, etc.), the cultural dimension has become of central interest in language learning. In fact, intercultural encounters call for the need of a shared code, and the number of English as Lingua Franca (ELF) users continues to increase with accelerating globalisation. It is a matter of fact that English serves as the most widespread means of international and intercultural communication that the world has ever seen. Given the strong relationship between identity, language and culture, it is nowadays believed that speakers should develop Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), which involves linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. This means that in order to achieve successful communication, it is important to have appropriate knowledge about both the target culture and English as a means of communication, as well as to

have an appropriate attitude towards diversity. In other words, intercultural communicators should be open-minded and ready to negotiate identities, meanings and behaviours, and should develop appropriate skills and critical cultural awareness. They should be aware that in intercultural encounters the creation of a neutral space is needed, because no cultural feature may be considered more appropriate, more polite or better in one culture rather than the other. Every culture has its own system of values, beliefs, norms, which may be dissimilar from those of another culture. In conclusion, to achieve this goal and experience appropriateness, effectiveness plus satisfaction in any intercultural encounter, people should take advantage of travelling, internet, books, and so forth to acquire appropriate knowledge about the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the target community. To conclude, I hope that this study may open a window on different ways of conceptualizing, researching, and facilitating intercultural interaction, especially with reference to Indian English and culture.

CHAPTER 1

*COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES
AND LANGUAGES IN THE CURRENT
ERA OF GLOBALISATION*

1.1. GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The 21st century is known as the era of global connection. It is a period of great change in every aspect of life, starting from the way we imagine the world. According to the famous American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1999: 14), the world in which we lived before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, made up of rival blocks and powerful alliances, does not exist anymore: a more pluralistic model has been established, but its shape is irregular, variable and confused. The previous century was marked by nationalistic feelings, and the equation country/nation, along with culture/identity were considered the basic elements of a structured world, divided in well-defined political unities. However, the fall of the political world revealed an ever-growing plurality. As Hannerz (2004) states, nowadays we are witnessing an important change: on one hand there are still some parts of the world with precise boundaries, on the other hand there are some other parts - actually, the majority of them - that are mixing and rapidly changing. The current era is referred to as the era of post-modernity (Brighton, 2013: 17), and globalisation is considered the core process that is influencing all current change.

Interconnectivity has always existed: from close interconnections between neighbouring villages, to the Age of Discoveries and the voyages to the New World that started in the early 15th century, to the era of colonialism. However, in modern times globalisation has led to an increase in these global connections, thanks to the invention of new technologies that allow people to move very fast, taking advantage of low cost means of transportation, and also ideas to spread rapidly throughout the world. At no other time in the history of the world has information been so easily available to so many. Television, the radio, Internet, emails and social networks allow people to know what is happening in other nations, to be updated on every event, to participate in environmental, political, economic, ecological issues, to communicate and maintain long-lasting relationships with other groups in different nations. Moreover, people can travel easily: they do so out of curiosity, to discover new places, for business, tourist or political purposes, to study abroad or to find a better place to

live. Innovation in transportation is, therefore, a crucial factor, so nowadays we find ourselves in increased contact with people who are culturally different from ourselves.

All this has led to a further interdependence, both of economic and cultural activities. The creation of a global economy, where goods and services are produced and distributed all around the world, means that we are becoming more and more similar: we all drink Coca Cola, eat McDonald's and play with Barbie dolls.

It might be believed that this process will lead to the elimination of cultural diversity. However, this is not totally correct. As people and ideas circulate, we are more aware of what is happening in our world; we are endlessly in contact with diversity and our knowledge is widening. Even though the process of homogenising is going on and developing, the existence of some forces that are trying to defend what is different have to be taken into account. As stated by Hannerz (2004: 89-103), cultural diversity should be safeguarded for many reasons. Firstly, it is considered to be a monument to human creativity. Secondly, it is believed that each community has the right to choose a culture, according to everyone's beliefs and wishes. That is to say, we have the right to self-determination and equity in opting for one culture instead of another one. Thirdly, diversity is considered a benefit, as people adapt to their surrounding environment and exploit its resources, safeguarding in this way the ecological equilibrium. Moreover, difference is viewed as a form of mitigating economic and political contrasts between the centre and periphery. In other words, developing and developed countries collaborate to find a socio-economic and political equilibrium. Furthermore, people can develop different aesthetic tastes, so they can understand, manage and master other cultures. It is a matter of cultural acceptance of diversity, which means perceiving these "as valid alternative interpretations of the cultural phenomena that one experiences" (Shaules, 2007: 166). Yet this does not involve the adoption of someone else's ethical and aesthetical standards, but implies understanding, openness, and curiosity toward what is dissimilar. More than that, diversity may help to expand our views: people who are in contact with different traditions are able to generate new points of view, as cultural diversity "provides the opportunities to reflect upon one's own worldview, as well as to experience a shift of

perspectives" (Cucchiara, Vigo, 2006: 46). Lastly, cultural difference can be considered a tank of knowledge, a sort of stock of ideas that allow people to have a wider view of options when facing problems.

Unfortunately, it should also be accepted that some cultures are disappearing and those which still exist may be contained. However, it is also important to underline that what is happening nowadays is a endless cultural reconstruction (Hannerz, 2004) and, therefore, cultural variety is a fundamental component of studies. While the last two decades of globalisation have brought nationalities and cultures into closer contact, cultural differences have been promoted and valued rather than indicating that one nation is superior to another (Brighton: 2013). It is argued that the idea of ethnocentrism should be abandoned - even though as cultural human beings, we are all ethnocentric to some degree - and cultural variety should be embraced.

All things considered, in the current era of globalisation the idea of interculturalism has become a central field of research in communication, but even in fields of research where communication is not a central factor. The interconnected nature of present global communication makes the necessity of understanding cultural phenomena a requirement rather than an advantage. As Ting-Toomey (1999: 3) states:

As we enter the 21th century, there is a growing sense of urgency that we need to increase our understanding of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. From interpersonal understandings to intercultural conflicts, frictions exist within and between cultures. With rapid changes in global economy, technology, transportation, and immigration policies, the world is becoming a small, intersecting community.

The result of all this in the modern academic environment is the theory of *Intercultural Communicative Competence* (ICC) and its application has become a core component of study. As stated above, since there is an increasing need to deal with cultural diversity, people also need to acquire intercultural competence in order to deal effectively and appropriately with the otherness (Làzar, 2008: 5). As this study aims to explore how the process of communication works with different

interconnected people around the world, the concept of ICC will be considered the key area of research, and therefore, it will be analysed in detail. Here this concept will be introduced briefly, and later explained in detail in the second chapter.

1.2. WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (ICC)?

No one doubt to the importance of language in our lives. In fact, it would be hard to imagine life without the ability to communicate. However, even though communication seems a naturally acquired ability which everyone possesses, it does require a competence, especially when that communication takes place among people who are dissimilar in culture and with different first languages.

Intercultural communication (IC)¹ is defined by Ting-Toomey (1998: 16-17) as a "symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meaning in an interactive situation". As stated before, I will just provide a brief summary of what will be analysed in this study. ICC is a social phenomenon and a fairly new field of academic activity that involves at least two communicators of different linguacultural backgrounds. This means that negotiation of meanings is not only required, but it is the main goal of any interaction. In fact, the new communication challenge lies in the ability to negotiate values and identities, learn foreign languages and suspend stereotypes, in a world that is involved in continual communication and exchange of ideas across cultures. All this encourages us to adapt to the world around us, where boundaries between different cultures are irregular and continuously changing. Speaking English or another language to talk with dissimilar others may not be enough to communicate successfully in the current era of globalisation.

This is why possessing a competence in communication with people who are different has become of overwhelming importance. Fantini (2005: 1) defines ICC as

¹ IC stands for Intercultural Communication, while ICC is the abbreviation used for Intercultural Communication Competence. Throughout this study, I will refer to ICC.

"the complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself." That is to say, it is about possessing adequate skills in order to communicate effectively with other people in any intercultural encounter. In fact, in order to achieve appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction, an intercultural speaker should develop appropriate knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical awareness. According to Byram (1997: 12), "the more desirable outcome is a learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings".

However, before analysing the concept of ICC in greater depth, as it is the key aspect and the reason why this study has been elaborated, it seems of great importance to take into consideration the two essential concepts involved in the study of intercultural communication competence. Therefore, I will first analyse the process of communication; how it normally operates and which are the areas it involves. Then, I will explore the concept of culture, and its current meaning(s) in modern times. In fact, as we are witnessing rapid changes thanks to globalisation and the interconnected nature of international encounters, it is ever more difficult to identify a clear borderline between cultures. In sum, communication and culture are strictly interconnected when dealing with ICC.

1.2.1 What is communication?

Communication is a universal characteristic that all human beings possess. It allows us to spread our ideas using language, and this is what basically differentiates us from animals. This does not mean that animals do not communicate: however, it is language which makes the difference. In fact, "language is exclusively the privilege of humans", as Maturana and Varela state (2010: 9). Therefore, language is a tool for interaction between individuals and groups, and a "sensitive indicator of the relationship between an individual and a given social group" (Kramsch, 2001: 77).

It seems, thus, that communication depends strictly on our culture: this means that as we grow up, we observe people around us, their attitudes and the way they say things, starting from our family and then looking around at our neighbourhood, relatives and people we meet in everyday situations. In other words, it is a process we acquire while growing up in a specific environment, but it is not a static system. We can learn new things or change our behaviour continually when interacting with people, and this also depends on our personal experiences. As mentioned above, the rapid changes in technology and transportation are fostering an increased number of intercultural encounters. Consequently, people may meet other cultures easily, they may face difference and learn more about other ways of thinking and living. Each community has developed different ways of interacting, but common features may occur.

In essence, *Matera (2008: 10)* affirms that we engage in communication each time information is shared between a sender and a receiver. The addresser uses some signs or signals to send a message, and those can be made up of sounds, words, sentences, gestures, and dress code. At the same time, the addressee needs to be ready to receive the message. One of the most important models of communication was studied and elaborated by the Russian-American linguist Roman Jakobson in the 1960s (*Fiske, 1991: 35*). He described six basic elements of communication. As discussed above, in order to achieve communication one requires the presence of: a sender, who is responsible for the content of the information he or she is elaborating; a receiver, who has to pay attention and understand the message conveyed; a message, which contains the core content of the whole communication; a context, that is the setting in which the communication is taking place; contact, which can be physical, face-to-face, by phone, by social network, by mail, and so on; a shared code, otherwise communication will be not possible (i.e. speaking the same language).

Thirteen years after Jakobson, *Halliday (1973: 37-42)* included the Russian-American linguist's basic elements of communication in his model, but with a slightly different perspective. In fact, he wanted to explore the functional view of language, and established three linguistic (macro-)functions: the ideational, interpersonal and

textual function. The former refers to the ability to create ideas and transmit messages. It is an element always present in language use:

"no matter what [the adult] is doing with language, he will find himself exploiting its ideational resources, its potential for expressing a content in terms of the speaker's experience and that of the speech community. [...] This no doubt is why the adult tends to think of language primarily in terms of its capacity to inform" (1973: 37).

This means that both the interpretational and the informational element are required in that function. The interpersonal function "embodies all the use of language to express social and personal relations, including all forms of the speaker's intrusion into the speech situation and the speech act" (1973: 41). This means that the speaker utters sentences which are appropriate to his or her social role in the given situation; therefore, he or she controls his or her behaviour, and expresses judgments and predictions according to the role and relationship conveyed. The latter function is the textual one: it means that "language should be operational relevant - that it should have a texture, in real contexts of situation that distinguishes a living message from a mere entry in a grammar or dictionary" (1973: 43). In other words, the context gives a specific meaning to the message.

As the considerations above suggest, it appears that the process of communication concerns just the verbal language, either spoken or written. However, people share various messages using other means of communication that go beyond words: we can share our ideas, emotions or other things according to our behaviour, our dress code, body language, tattoos, accessories or make-up. In fact, "communication is talking to one other, it is television, it is spreading information, it is our hairstyle, it is literary criticism: the list is endless" (Fiske, 1991: 1). More than that, communication depends on our linguistic and cultural background, and reflects our personality and origins: Halliday affirmed that (1989: 4):

There are many other models of meaning, in any culture, which are out the realm of language. These will include both art forms such as painting, sculpture, music,

the dance, and so forth, and other models of cultural behaviour that are not classified under the heading of forms of art, such as models of exchange, modes of dress, structure of the family, and so forth. These are all bearers of meaning in the culture. Indeed, we can define a culture as a set of semiotic system, a set of systems of meaning, all of which interrelate.

That is to say, both language and culture constitute fundamental elements in communication. Each community has its own verbal and non-verbal systems of meaning that, all taken together, constitute human culture.

In sum, various sophisticated methods to communicate exist, and more than this, one should also take into account the importance that the five senses may have. It seems that the most powerful sense in communication is hearing and, consequently, understanding the message. However, this is linked to verbal language: sight should also be considered of paramount concern (e.g. what you want to communicate by wearing a short skirt), the way you touch someone or something (e.g. when you shake hands, or hug someone), what you can smell (e.g. a good flavour, a seductive perfume), and what you can taste (e.g. tasty food).

In general, communication is made up of signs and rules to use them. A sign is something that stands for something else; it is everything that can carry a meaning. As Kramsch (2001: 15) states, "a sign is neither the word itself nor the object it refers to but the relation between the two". Therefore, it can be a word used to designate something, such as an object (e.g. a cross as a symbol for Christian religion), a sound (e.g. the telephone ringing when someone is calling you), a colour (e.g. the different colours of the flags), a move (e.g. standing up when the headmaster enters the classroom), a gesture (e.g. nodding), a perfume (e.g. a specific brand according to the conveyed meaning used to advertise it), etc. However, a sign should be clear and mutually understood in a particular speech community in order to cover its principal function, otherwise misunderstandings will take place. This means that speakers and writers usually use those signs without generally questioning them, as "socialisation into a given discourse community includes making its signifying practices seem totally natural", as affirmed by Kramsch (2001: 20).

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that communication, language and culture are all strictly connected. In fact, in interactions people do not communicate just with words but also with their gestures, tone of voice, body posture, facial expressions, distance from the interlocutor or the dress code. All these patterns may change from one culture to another, depending on different beliefs, rules, habits, styles and values. Therefore, when interlocutors of a different cultural background engage in an intercultural interaction, they should pay attention to those differences, and try to accept and tolerate others' ways of communicating.

1.2.2. What is culture?

The concept of "culture" is originally based on an agricultural metaphor: it originates from the Latin verb "*colere*" - that means to cultivate - , and it refers to what has been grown and groomed (Kramersch, 2001: 4). The metaphor is linked to soils which without human workforce cannot produce anything. According to Cicerone's statement in *Tusculanae disputationes*, "*cultura animi philosophia est*". This means that philosophy changes radically the human soul, and it is the same process as how soil becomes transformed into a state of being cultivated (Remotti, 2011).

From the 17th to the 18th centuries, culture was considered as the opposite side of what belongs to nature. Culture was defined as the universal characteristic of human cohabitation, the quintessence of all the techniques, customs and traditions that all human beings possessed and differentiated them from the animal world (Dei, 2012: 32-33). By contrast, nature referred to what was born and grow organically (from the Latin "*nascere*"). After the First World War, the traditional debate nature/culture was set apart and culture was seen as something that all communities have, but it was compared to its plural: cultures. In fact, there is an evident difference in the meaning between the singular term of culture and the plural concept of cultures: if culture is a common feature of all human beings, each culture has its own different characteristics (i.e. values, norms, beliefs, rituals, etc). This means that each

culture has developed its own forms of socialisation and acculturation that distinguishes it from the others.

Culture is an elastic and dynamic concept: in essence, it is an enigma. Scollon and Jones (2012: 3) define culture as "a way of dividing people up into groups according to some feature of these people which helps us to understand something about them and how they are different from or similar to other people". With regard to this definition, it is stressed that even though differences between cultures exist, there are also some similarities that make the classification of them more difficult to capture. Migration, travel, business and international education are facilitating face-to-face intercultural contact, and more than that, advances in technology are also making it easier to link people virtually in different parts of the world. As we become increasingly interconnected, it has become hard to draw a precise line between cultures.

Although it is generally believed that each community has its own particular culture that is limited to a specific territory, after the Second World War and later the fall of the Berlin Wall, this equivalence proved to be no longer adequate to describe the world (Geertz, 1999: 13-16). Globalisation is constantly eliminating the borders between countries, and direct contact with dissimilar others are an inescapable part of life. This is why everyone should be aware of this process, and therefore, should adapt to new changes.

Nonetheless, each community is generally linked to a specific culture, which can be described as a pool of knowledge that constitute the learned systems of meanings in a particular society. D'Andrade (1984 in Ting-Toomey, 1999: 9) conceptualises "culture" as a:

Learned system of meaning, communicated by means of natural language and other symbol system... and capable of creating cultural entities and particular senses of reality. Though these systems of meaning, groups of people adapt to their environment and structure interpersonal activities...Cultural meaning systems can be treated as a very large diverse pool of knowledge, or partially shared cluster of norms, or as intersubjectively shared, symbolically created realities.

In this definition it is emphasised that culture is a shared system that is learned by human beings who live in a specific territory. They adapt to the environment in which they live, and develop specific language, symbols, knowledge, values, norms, beliefs, traditions, and other capabilities and habits. Culture is, therefore, transmitted through everyday interaction among members who share the same community and territory. In brief, culture is not universally the same, but created and formed according to the requirements of a specific society and the demands of the environment. This is why "each population has a certain character that is expressed in its behaviour, so that there is a geographical distribution of types of behaviour" (Brighton, 2013: 39), as stated by the famous German-American anthropologist Franz Boas, also known as the "Father of American Anthropology".

Weaver (1986), like many other cross-cultural researchers such as Hall (1976) and Ting-Toomey (1999: 10), compared the notion of culture to an iceberg. What is visible and easily described is the so called overt culture - which includes cultural artefacts such as fashion, trends, music, cooking, dress, religion, and both verbal and non-verbal symbols - while covert culture is what is implicit, difficult to be seen, grasped, and captured at first sight. Traditions, values, norms, beliefs and symbolic meanings are all the elements that are hidden, they belong to a very large part of what is not visible in the iceberg, which is also called 'deep culture'. It refers to "the unconscious meanings, values, norms and hidden assumptions that allow us to interpret our experiences as we interact with other people", as affirmed by Shaules (2007: 11). Figure 1 shows a representation of the cultural iceberg model as proposed by Ting-Toomey (1999: 10).

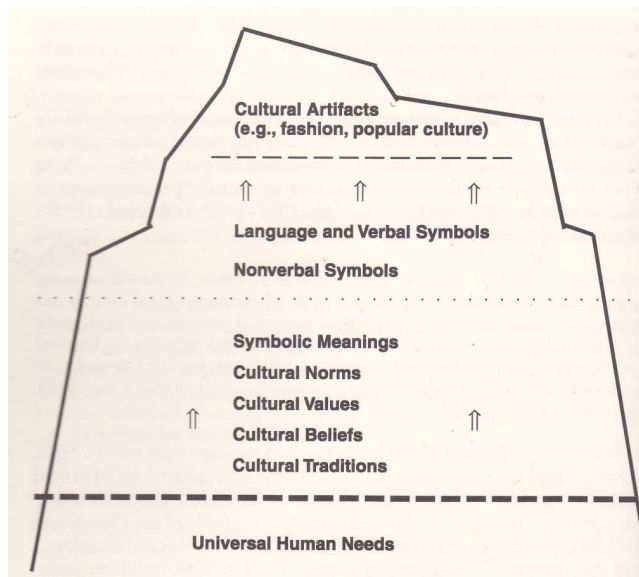


Figure 1: Culture: an iceberg metaphor

As can be seen, the part below water includes traditions, values, norms, beliefs, symbols. Looking in depth at all these elements, one can affirm that culturally shared traditions generally include myths, legends, ceremonies, and rituals. These are passed on from one generation to the next via an oral or written medium. Cultural values refer to what a community considers to be 'fair' or 'unfair', a 'good' or 'bad' behaviour, a 'polite' or 'impolite' manner. This is linked to what is morally correct or not in a specific society. More than this, each culture has specific norms that are the set of rules that constitute what is a proper or improper behaviour in a given situation. Therefore, social dos and don'ts are created and their aim is to "shape people's behaviour through child rearing, schooling and professional training" (Kramsch, 2001: 6). Culturally shared beliefs are all the assumptions that a group of people hold without question: these may include the concept of time, space, the meaning of life, death, and the afterlife, and so on. Finally, particular symbols exist and they carry a meaning according to the interpretation that each community gives to them. A symbol can be represented by an object, but also by a word or a gesture.

In essence, it is important to understand that each cultural community is organized according to the meaning and values it has developed. Therefore, each

community has different forms of acculturation, dissimilar rules, behaviours, concepts, etc. What can be taken for granted for a culture, it can be considered totally unknown or unfamiliar for another one.

Ting-Toomey (1999: 12-15) identified five functions of culture, as she attempted to reply to some general questions like: What does culture do for human beings? Why do we need culture? First, culture allows people to identify themselves as members of a social group (family, neighbourhood, nation, friends, professional affiliation). Therefore, it serves the identity meaning function: it means that our concepts about being successful, well-educated or competent depend on the values of a given culture, and therefore, of a given social group. Second, it leads people to feel included in a certain group and, as a consequence, to exclude people who are culturally different. A sense of membership is created as well a comfort zone, where people feel safe, accepted and they do not need to justify or explain every action, as all the community already understands their behaviour. In fact, within our own cultural group, we speak the same language, we practise the same rituals, we respect the same norms, we recognize the same symbols, we generally venerate same values. What is different creates uncertainty, fear and anxiety, because we do not understand it. Third, culture shapes our in-group and out-group attitudes in dealing with people who are culturally dissimilar. As human beings, there is a tendency to consider our culture as ethnocentric to some degree: this means that we think that our practises are superior, more correct and more civilized than the others of a different cultural background (Dei, 2012: 34). This is why we are scared and we feel uncomfortable when dealing with a different culture, and oftentimes, we hold unfavourable attitudes toward dissimilar people. Fourth, as mentioned earlier, culture facilitates the adaptation among the cultural community and the environment. People adapt their needs and ways of living in response to a changing habitat. However, it is also important to take in to account that culture is dynamic, and therefore it can change according to a different ecological environment. Fifth, and the most fundamental element of our study, culture and communication are dependent one to the other. In sum, culture affects communication, and vice versa. Without communication, culture does not

exist. In fact, people of same cultural community acquire common ways of viewing the world through their daily face-to-face interactions with other members of same speech group.

As Hannerz (2004: 111- 126) demonstrates, there are four organized frames that help culture to be developed and spread, and the first and most important one is the so called daily life frame. As we observe our parents and people around us from when we are babies, we grow up and learn culture from them. We continually interact with our speech community and, as a consequence, we create our personal experiences according to what we have observed. This is why "most members of a society come to understand a situation in accordance with principles of organization that govern events in which they are subjectively involved" (Kachru, Smith, 2008: 35). In other words, culture - with its norms, beliefs and values - is created and passed down from one generation to the other. Hannerz (2004: 111- 126) also analyses the power that may have the national state and the market to influence people's ideology and behaviour. Briefly stated, what the anthropologist wants to emphasise is that common cultural views are strongly reinforced through institutions like family, school, the workplace, religion, the government, the media, etc.

To conclude, it is clear that communication is a fundamental factor of culture and it is necessary to define cultural experiences. Each community develops its own culture according to the changing habitat, the sense of identity its members acquire, the comfort zone they create and the rules they set. However, culture should not be considered a static system, but a dynamic one. In the era of globalisation all the meanings, values, rules, beliefs are constantly reviewed and subjected to rapid changes. In other words, when we consider a culture, we can recognise a general system of meaning that is shared by that specific community, but at the same time we should be aware that not everything might be shared, and slight contradictions may exist also within the same cultural group. In fact, members of the same discourse community have different biographies and life experiences, they may differ in age, gender, or ethnicity, they may as well have different opinions, way of viewing, ideas, mental activities and so on. Moreover, "cultures change over time" (Kramsch, 2001:

10); they are heterogeneous and, as mentioned above, constantly changing. This is why it is hard to draw a clear borderline between one culture and another. However, although a borderline might be difficult to draw, it does exist.

1.3. COMMUNICATION IN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXTS

1.3.1. Language and culture

As has already been pointed out, communication involves mainly verbal language, but not only. However, "language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives", as stated by Kramsch (2001: 3). This means that language both expresses cultural reality - as the words a speech community uses reflect their ways of viewing and beliefs according to their common experience and cultural stock of knowledge - and embodies it - as all verbal and non-verbal aspects are understandable to the group they belong to, without any need to be explained.

What is more, language also symbolises cultural reality. In fact, language is a symbol of social identity: this means that, on one hand speakers identify themselves as member of a specific discourse community, on the other hand they are also identified as people sharing same language. Each language has its system of signs, each community uses the same linguistic code. As mentioned earlier in Jakobson's model of communication (Matera, 2008: 10), one of the basic elements to interact is uttering the same language in order to be understood. Therefore, people speaking a common language usually have same accent, share same vocabulary and discourse patterns, and recognise the same symbols.

All thing considered, language is not only a powerful and essential means of communication, but it also carries an overwhelming cultural identity function. That is to say, speaking a certain language means transmitting a series of messages related to one's origin, social and cultural concepts, and even stereotypes.

However, although various languages exist around the entire world, there are some that, over the centuries, have become understood worldwide. This is again due

to the process connected with globalisation, that is the driving force responsible for all these socio-political transformations. The greater degree of contact and interconnectedness across borders in the past 20 years has led to the creation of a huge demand of a language that can be spoken and understood by everyone. In other words, a common language was required especially for commercial, diplomatic, administrative and religion reasons.

Therefore, the need for a Lingua Franca became crucial. The term is usually taken to mean "any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues, for who it is a second language " as Seidlhofer (2011: 7) states. This means that the use of a common language for the purpose of enabling and facilitating communication between dissimilar linguacultural people was more considered an urge than a competence. Among all Lingua Francas - like English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese and Swahili - English language has become of paramount concern from the beginning of the 21th century. The reason why English has prevailed over the other languages are twofold: on the one hand the expansion of British colonial power; on the other hand the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century (Gotti, 2012: 25).

1.3.2. What is English as Lingua Franca (ELF)?

In this research I turn to consider the case of English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF), as it will be a key element of this study. Globalisation has gone hand-in-hand with the globalisation of English, as "the creation of world relations based on the operation of free markets" (Jenkins, 2014: 2) has led to an increasing number of international encounters. This mobility has allowed people from various parts of the world - with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds - to meet, and more than that, the growing number of intercultural institutions, along with the socio-political changes, have created an enormous demand for a common language. This is why "English was chosen as "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the

chosen foreign language of communication" (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7). In essence, given the fact that different speech communities cannot negotiate without the use of a common language, English was usually and ever more frequently used as a means of international and intercultural communication.

With the aforementioned reasons, it seems necessary to take into consideration Braj Kachru's (1985) studies about English speakers. He categorised different 'Englishes' in three concentric circles of influence: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, the Expanding Circle (see Figure 2).

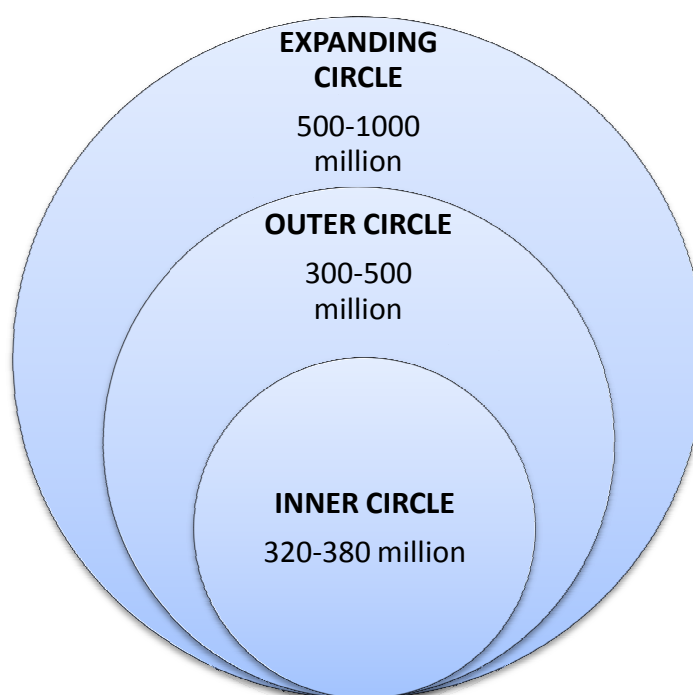


Figure 2: Kachru's concentric circles model (1985, in Gotti 2012).

It is worth noting that the Inner Circle, which represents all the nations where English is used as primary language (i.e. USA, UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand), counts around 320-380 million of native speakers. The Outer Circle represents much of the former British empire, where English has developed as a Second Language (SL)

either as a language of the elite (such as in India, Nigeria, Philippines, Singapore, etc), or a language of communication among diverse population (i.e. Barbados, Jamaica etc. where there was a slave population). In that circle are included around 300-500 million of Second Language speakers, while the Expanding Circle covers around 500-1000 million people. The Expanding Circle is, therefore, very consistent in its number and it consists of the countries where English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL).

However, this model cannot account for the global situation of English today, but is a good starting point for analysing alternative models of English use. Therefore, it seems necessary to understand the difference between the use of English as a first language and as a second language, as well as to explain the distinction between EIL (English as an International Language) and ELF (English as Lingua Franca).

English as a native language (ENL) is used by the countries where English is acquired as first mother tongue. That is to say, it concerns the notion of 'nativeness' (Schneider, 2007: 17). It is believed that only native speakers fully command a language and have proper institutions: therefore, British English and American English turned out to be considered the standard models of English.

English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to the countries where "English has essentially acquired in institutionalised form" (Durham, 2014: 5). This means that countries like India, Bangladesh, Ghana or Kenya have their own official language, but English has developed as a second language for purposes of administration, education, law, business, etc. - for intranational and international communication - and it is increasingly used in all domains of life. Since in those countries English is not acquired as a mother tongue, different varieties have been developed, that are characterized by an extended range of sociolinguistic, stylistic and register uses. In other words, as English in those areas is no one's first language, each nation - and to be more precise, each region - differs in grammar norms, phonology, lexicon and syntax.

Soon after the Second World War, English achieved the status of an international language, and spread all over the globe to become the predominant international language. Seidhofer (2011: 3) argues that "English as an international language (EIL) is usually understood as covering uses of English within and across

Kachru's 'Circles', for intranational as well as international communication". In other words, not only has it been 'exported' to many nations primarily through colonization, but it has also been 'imported' by others who decided to learn it as a foreign language (EFL).

However, "it is the foreign language speakers of English, rather than the first and second language speakers, who have made it the truly international and universal language of the 20th and 21th century", as stated by Durham (2014: 2). Therefore, ELF has come to be considered "the most extensive contemporary use of English" (Jenkins, 2008: 23). To give a definition of English in its current manifestation, Seidlhofer (2014: 25) argues that ELF should be regarded as "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option". However, although ELF interactions include interlocutors from all the Circles, it seems that they widely and mostly occur among people coming from the Expanding Circle (in other words, between non-native English speakers, henceforth NNESs). As a consequence, native English speakers (NESs) are likely to find themselves in the minority in ELF interactions. Nevertheless, any user of English can be a user of ELF, no matter if it is a NNES, post-colonial English speaker or a NES.

Figure 2 clearly indicates that the majority of people use English as an international or universal language (about 80% of English speakers are non-native, and the largest group is the Expanding Circle) rather than as their mother tongue. As has already been pointed out, this has created a great impact on the English language that does no more belong solely and numerically to native speakers; its international speakers have also developed a claim for ownership. The extent of its reach, both geographically and domain-wise, includes the entire globe. In other words, English has rapidly developed from "the native language relatively small island nation" to "the most widely taught, read, and spoken language that the world has ever known" (Kachru and Nelson, 2001: 9).

Given the huge variety of languages around the world, it seems that speakers from different first language groups develop their own ways of speaking English, which are not strictly linked to precise grammar rules and a specific accent. This means that,

according to different geographical areas and cultures, people learn and master English using slight differences in phonology, morphology, pragmatics, idiomaticity and lexicogrammar. In other words, although English is widely taught using either the British model or the American one, people usually do not develop native speakers characteristics. Moreover, as ELF recognises that the majority of the world's English speakers are NNEs, it means that this majority has the right in a way to determine the kind of English they wish to use. So "ELF is marked by a degree of hybridity not found in any other kind of language" (Jenkins, 2014: 31) which depends on the biographical, cultural and socio-political background of every person. It is, therefore, a dynamic phenomenon where negotiation of meaning is obviously required. Given the fact that nobody is a native speaker of ELF, a degree of inaccuracy in phonology or in grammar can be tolerated in international communication. If the output of a message is clearly delivered and understood by the other participant of a conversation, incorrect sentences or wrong British or American pronunciation will not be an obstacle in any interaction.

Many researchers into ELF such as Seidlhofer (2011), Cogo and Dewey (2012), Jenkins (2014), and so forth, have studied and have been investigating the role of language in intercultural encounters, paying attention to the most relevant differences in its usage among dissimilar cultures. According to their studies, some of the most common ELF features can be charted as the following ones: firstly, ELF speakers may turn a noun that is uncountable in English (e.g. *information/advice/feedback*) into countable ones (e.g. *informations/advices/feedbacks*) or vice versa; they may drop the third person present singular tense (e.g. *she go* instead of *she goes*); they may pronounce the same word with a different accent (e.g. the sound *th-* or *w-* in words like *think* or *work*); they may confuse relative pronouns *who* and *which* (i.e. extension of *which* to serve functions previously served only by *who* and vice versa: "the person which", "the book who"); they may omit definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in English, or insert them when there is no need; they fail to use correct forms in tag questions (i.e. *isn't it?*, or *no?*); they may use idiomatic expressions in innovative ways (e.g. *in my observation* replacing *in my experience*, *head* instead of

mind); they may increase explicitness (How long time..?, black colour, etc), and so forth.

All things considered, ELF prioritises communicative effectiveness over "correctness", so NNES "errors" may be accepted for the sake of communication. The ever-growing use of English around the globe has also fostered a new idea of teaching English. Attention has shifted from the mastery of grammatical competence to a communicative-focused approach (Richards, 2006). This does not mean that grammar is not relevant, but the emphasis is nowadays on open-ended conversations, where collaboration between the participants is the core goal of interaction, together with negotiation of meaning. The prime focus is on real communication and, therefore, fluency skills are paramount, and tolerance towards speakers' errors is obviously required.

However, ELF should not be considered a simplified and reduced kind of English, which promotes errors and inaccuracy. It should be seen as a current global manifestation of the use of English, which is not linked to a single variety, but on the contrary the 'shared repertoire' linked to the diversity of people involved has to be negotiated each time in any interaction, according to different situations. Therefore, intercultural speakers need to acquire a pragmatic competence, that is the ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning. In all, these aforementioned reasons indicate that the use of ELF is important while considering intercultural communication competence (ICC), as people from different cultures and first languages have to find a way to communicate using a common code, but at the same time they should be aware of the differences that exist among them.

To conclude, ELF is both the primary lingua franca of globalization and the most extensive contemporary use of English. It is a new phenomenon that requires adaptation, tolerance and communicative competence. In fact, in the current world, communication is defined by the capacity of individuals of different cultures to interact. This is why people should be open-minded and aware of new patterns of communicative practices in using ELF.

1.4. SUMMARY

This chapter has aimed to give a general overview of the basic elements of this study. Given the current importance of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), the concepts of communication and culture have been identified and analysed, as well as the urge to find a shared code (i.e. ELF) while negotiating in international encounters. Moreover, the ever-growing process of globalisation has been emphasised, as it is the most powerful driving force responsible for any socio-political transformations. It is thanks to those transformations, along with the ever-growing interconnectivity, that the notion of ICC has become of paramount concern in today's world. That is why ICC is now considered an area of interest and an important area of research. In the following chapters, I will explore in greater depth the concept of ICC, its components and elements, the skills required, and I will take into account Indian culture and it may be involved in interaction in an intercultural setting.

1.5. SURVEY ON INDIAN ENGLISH AND CULTURE

1.5.1. Methodology

This study aims to explore and describe how a specific cultural group of people usually communicate and give meaning to their actions and environments. In other words, how communities act towards things on the basis of the meanings such things have for them and how they produce social reality through interactive process. Since my study aims to understand the process that leads someone to acquire intercultural communicative competence, I chose to take into consideration a specific "culture" as an example.

However, a great deal of caution needs to be exercised when we make generalisations about cultures with reference to continents, nations or regions. It is important to be aware of the differences based on age, gender, education, religion,

ethnicity, profession, and so forth when discussing verbal interaction within or across national or regional cultural contexts. So when we talk about "Western culture" or "Asian culture", we cannot associate each individual who lives in Western or Asiatic world with all the conventions of behaviour associated with its labels. Karchu and Smith (2008: 38) affirm that "the association between cultures and behaviour are usually formed by what ones learns from scholarly sources, e.g. anthropological or sociological descriptions, or popular sources, such as travelogues or folklore". Each and every community has its own patterns, which may change through time, space, level of education, and so forth.

For all these reasons, I decided to explore not only a specific area of India, but also a specific community. I elaborated a survey and I submitted it to a small group of Indian young people. It included questions about the challenging areas which are described in Chapter 3 (language, politeness, behavioural habits, conversational topics, non-verbal communication, concepts of time and space). The data of the survey, reported in chapter 3 and 4, may help to illustrate how to acquire a competence in intercultural communication with Indian people.

1.5.2. Motivation and social setting

As has already been stated, talking about a culture can be considered an oversimplification: I cannot affirm the data I collected portray the structure of the entire Indian culture. That is why I chose to investigate a specific social setting and therefore, I elaborated a survey with open-ended questions, and I submitted it to a small group of 14 Indian youths (from 20 to 23 years old) who currently live in Indore, which is the largest city of Indian state of Madhya Pradesh by population. I should state that my choice was not random: I spent around two months in Indore (from 28th February until 18th April 2015), and I personally perceived many linguistic and cultural differences that at the same time fascinated and shocked me. This is the reason why I chose to explore the Indian culture of that specific area of India, and therefore, the results I collected aim to be useful if someone has to deal interculturally with an Indian

coming from that area. Moreover, I decided to deliver the survey to young people, who are also the ones I met during my experience in Indore, for a twofold reason: firstly, they constitute a typical focussed model to achieve a specific perspective, and lastly, I think they can assure an up-to-date vision about current communication and culture in Indian reality.

1.5.3. Research aim

The aim of this research is to investigate current values, beliefs, attitudes, as well as leaning more about Indian English and communication strategies. I wished to obtain a full and complete description of everything that might be relevant to whatever can be said with assurance about some social phenomenon. I was especially interested in understanding the link that exists between IndE and culture, in exploring the culture-specific verbal and non-verbal behaviour in order to gain the ability to use these features in a culturally appropriate way. Therefore, the areas that I considered to be relevant for my purposes regarding ICC are: language, politeness, conversational topics, behavioural habits, non-verbal communication, concepts.

As it is an exploratory study, I looked deeply into these areas to obtain a wider knowledge within a specific social setting rather than a broad population. The data I collected and analysed helped me to interpret bits of reality, and therefore, to illustrate how a non-Indian person may communicate effectively and appropriately and relate to an Indian interlocutor in any intercultural encounter (in other words, how non-Indian people may enrich their knowledge and achieve ICC).

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

2.1. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE (ICC)

2.1.1. Introduction

Intercultural Communication Competence has become a popular topic of study in recent years. Among the most famous researchers of ICC such as Holliday, Byram, Fantini, and so forth, there are still many others who are investigating the role of language in intercultural encounters, paying particular attention to the interplay between cultural diversity and language practice.

Given the increased interconnectivity and the ever-growing need for good communication skills, that competence has turned out to be a requirement rather than an advantage. In fact, "[...] with an estimated 6,900 languages across the approximately 200 countries of the world, it is very likely that intercultural contact will involve encounters between people who speak different languages", as reported by Noels, Yashima, and Zhang (2012: 52). Therefore, it is now no longer enough to study and master a foreign language to a high level of accuracy and fluency in order to communicate successfully, but it has become indispensable to know what to say and how to say things according to different participants, situations, roles, intentions (Richards, 2006: 9).

Làzar (2008: 9), when defining intercultural communication competence, pointed out that it is to a large extent "the ability to cope with one's own cultural background in interaction with others". Therefore, it is believed that in order to achieve effective and appropriate intercultural communication, three concepts should be taken into account and examined in depth: language, culture and identity. In fact, "linguistic competence and cultural competence are often assumed to be related", as affirmed by Byram (2012: 85). The connection between language and culture has already been discussed in the previous chapter; however, here I will explain the link that ties both language and culture to identity.

The aim of this chapter is to offer a comprehensive and up-to-date introduction to the field of intercultural communication and to explain how one might be able to achieve appropriate competence. That is to say, I wish to offer a general overview on this field with the hope to raise interest on how to achieve communicative efficiency and proficiency when dealing with a cultural stranger. This requires an open-minded attitude as well as willingness to both learn and incorporate new forms from people whose national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds are very different from ours. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the focus of intercultural communication is on interactions between people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds and on their negotiation of identities and meanings.

2.1.2. Definition of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication has already been defined in the first chapter as the "symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meaning in an interactive situation" (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 16-17). Considering this definition, the components of ICC can now be analysed in detail. They are widely taken to mean the presence of two or more individuals from different cultural backgrounds, the symbolic exchange, process, the negotiation and interactive situation.

In order to achieve intercultural communication, the essential element seems to be the presence of at least two individuals of different cultural communities. Each individual is associated to a specific identity, that is related with some recognizable features normally associated to one group. In other words, Byram (2012: 85) states that each person is "identified as someone who 'fits in' to a group of native speakers in terms of behaviours, of appearance, of opinions and beliefs, in short, or culture". Therefore, he or she will perform differently, according to his or her cultural-based features, " [...] which are the day-to-day things we do which can seem strange from people coming from foreign cultural backgrounds - how we eat, wash, greet, show respect, organise our environment and so on. These are the things which are

commonly associated with 'our culture' or national culture; but they also differ between small groups within a society", as stated Holliday (2013: 3).

When those intercultural interlocutors make contact in any international encounter, they use their own peculiar verbal and nonverbal symbols to interact. As already been pointed out, the differences in communication depends upon the socio-cultural context in which they take place and upon each individual's personal background knowledge. This means that culture and language mutually collaborate in the process of communication. Risager (2012: 101) makes reference to the concept of *linguaculture*, a cultural movement originating in the German-speaking areas of Europe in the eighteenth century whose aim was to emphasise that "language should be seen as intimately related to nation, people and culture". However, when two intercultural interlocutors meet, they do not speak same language, so they have to opt for a shared means of communication: they may choose either English or another *Lingua Franca* idiom in order to achieve a shared code, but whichever language they choose, it will mirror to a certain degree their linguistic and cultural models, and this may undermine the aim and meaning of the conversation. This is why communicators should negotiate in any intercultural conversation.

As stated in the definition, another core concept of intercultural communication is that it is a process, in the sense that once two strangers meet and attempt to communicate, they enter in a mutually interdependent relationship. They will follow some of the models of communication, already discussed in the first chapter, with the consequent simultaneous encoding and decoding of the interlocutors' exchanged messages. It is here that the importance of negotiation arises: both interlocutors have to negotiate the exchanged meanings. In fact, this is the main goal of ICC. As intercultural encounters may risk misunderstanding, language and communication problems, people need to be flexible, open-minded, respectful and should also have an higher degree of tolerance towards what seems to be impolite or inappropriate according to one's respective viewpoint.

Bhabha (1994 in Ikas, Wagner, 2009. 149) introduces the figure of 'third space' than was later used by Kramsch (2009 in Jackson, 2012: 213) and Holliday (2014: 2) to

emphasise the need of creating a neutral domain in which people from different cultures can come together and be themselves. It is in that space that communication of two individuals - who are aware of each one's differences and, at the same time, are eager to negotiate meanings - takes place effectively and appropriately. However, I will return to the task of defining both the concept of negotiation and 'third space' in more detail below (see 2.3.).

Lastly, the interactive situation refers to the interactive scene: it includes the environment (where the interaction takes place - at school, at home, at work, in a coffee, in a shop, etc) and the role relationship between the interlocutors (teacher-scholar, employer-worker, businessman-businessman, etc). Therefore, after the setting and the social role is defined, people have to think about whether to choose formal or informal language and what lexical content is needed in that given situation. That is to say, interlocutors will be aware of the appropriate linguistic and behavioural boundaries and they will plan their interactional discourse accordingly.

To sum up, all these concepts will constantly occur when dealing with intercultural communication. More than that, in order to achieve effective communication and create a shared meaning between dissimilar individuals in an interactive situation, it is of primary importance to take into account the identity and relational meanings of any intercultural interaction.

2.2. THE IDENTITY PERSPECTIVE

In the previous chapter the concepts of communication and culture were analysed, as both notions are required in order to understand the phenomenon of ICC. Given the interconnected nature of present global communication, it is widely believed that communication does not only require a common language-code in order to exchange information with foreign people, but culture has turned out to be a key aspect to communicating in the global village. In fact, when two strangers meet and start to talk to each other, they recognise the other component as a member of a specific social and cultural group. That means that, people usually classify their interlocutors

according to their cultural background (their origins, language, appearance, colour of skin, dress-code or accessories) and social identity (a teacher, a friend, a parent, an employer, a stranger, etc.). Therefore, the identification covers aspects such as culture, ethnicity, gender, relationship role, as well as personality issues.

As culture is the main element to take into account in intercultural communication, the key areas it covers involve the area of ideological, sociological and communication area (Cucchiara; Vigo, 2006: 45). The ideological area includes aspects such as history, religion and values. In the sociological area, education and socialisation are the basic elements of research, while the communication area is linked to themes such as verbal and non verbal communication. All these features obviously influence any kind of intercultural interaction; therefore people should be aware of any possible issue they may encounter in dealing with diversity.

According to this, Riley (2007: 31) emphasises the important role that social knowledge has in intercultural communication. He states that "any society can be described as a set of structures and functions for the management of knowledge, which, taken together, form the social knowledge". Society is continually producing knowledge, which is shared and acquired in and through language. It is organised into disciplines and domains, stored in social institutions - such as language, oral history, literature, etc. - and stocked in libraries, archives, data banks, and so forth. As knowledge is distributed in various ways, it creates different communities based on shared knowledge. Each individual acquires the knowledge of his or her community, and that knowledge will be obviously influenced by culture, behavioural habits and each individual's personality - that is developed according to his or her experience, participation and observation of the surrounded environment.

In essence, each person forms his or her own identity accordingly: it is a sort of "recognition of cultural belonging, which is internal to the individual, while culture is external" (Nunan, Choi; 2010: 3). In other words, our identity tells us who we are, but it is not something we can decide on ourselves: as it is at least partly social; it is constructed by other people. Identity is "what makes 'me' as opposite to all other individuals [...]", as affirmed by Riley (2007: 31).

This is the reason why, very often, our concept of a foreign person who belongs to a specific culture is linked to stereotypes. As we commonly associate individuals' identity with group identity, we widely believe that each person has specific traits that make him or her recognisable within a group of people, so he or she will obviously share those common features with all the other members of the community. However, "stereotyping is a rigid way of thinking", as affirmed by Cucchiara and Vigo (2006: 45) and, more than that, "cultural prejudice is closely associated with racism" (Holliday, 2013: 126). We all classify individuals of a cultural group according to general opinions that have spread around the world. In other words, we subconsciously acquire prejudices about other cultures and people, and we act accordingly. As the existence of these pre-existing prejudices should be recognised, the major challenge in today's world lies in overcoming them. Of course, it seems they create the basis of an interaction and, as a consequence, they influence the speaker's attitude. Therefore, it is inevitable that people have general views on other cultures and assume they have specific values, beliefs, behaviours and way of thinking. However, stereotypes may be an obstacle to successful intercultural communication. Indeed, when dealing with diversity, we should suspend judgements and any kind of criticism.

All things considered, "IC is a question of openness to the differences to the others" (Cucchiara, Vigo; 2006: 45). This means that not only should a person be able to master a language and be aware of another culture, but dealing effectively and appropriately with diversity is another step: it requires the ability to understand and interpret otherness - that is to say, identity and culture. Intercultural competence involves skills, attitudes, knowledge as well as some personality traits such as respect, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, interest, curiosity, patience and, as stated before, willingness to suspend prejudices (Cucchiara, Vigo; 2006: 45). To sum up, intercultural competence means tolerating, respecting and accepting diversity. All these features are, therefore, required in order to achieve both communicative and cultural competence.

2.2.1. Primary Identity Domains

Up until now I have taken into consideration the importance of cultural and social based identity in intercultural communication. When dealing with others in any international encounter, we tend to associate them with an identity, that is an image we create of that person. As previously mentioned, we classify people according to their cultural aspects, as well as ethnicity, gender and personal traits. All these features belong to what are called Primary Identities (see Figure 2). They are created from the process of socialisation and culturalisation, which influence people's behaviour.

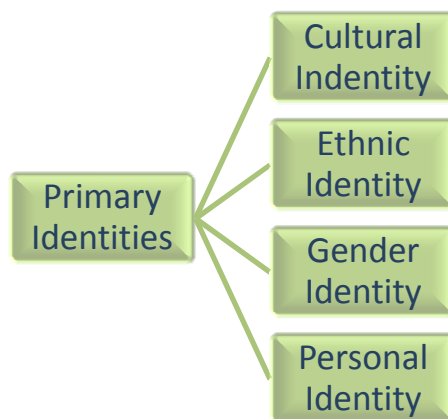


Figure 2: Primary Identity Domains (Ting Toomey, 1999: 29)

As pointed out earlier, every person is associated with a specific culture. Cultural identity arises from the fact that people sharing the same environment and living in the same community acquire a common set of features, norms, values and beliefs. They recognise themselves within a cultural membership group and are aware that other cultures are marked by a certain degree of unfamiliarity. With dissimilar others, an individual's norms and routines are constantly being questioned, so whoever is not a member of that specific community is classified as an outsider who has to be understood and interpreted.

Ethnic identity also has great impact in culture. People descending from the same ethnic roots share a common history; therefore ethnicity is basically linked to aspects such as national origins, race, language, religion. That is to say, people also share the same ideological area. This feature should not be undervalued when communicating with a person. Another core aspect to take into consideration while communicating with diversity is gender. We should be aware of how a larger culture or ethnic group constructs images of females and males. Each culture has different gender expectations, and it is important to be aware on how we 'should' or 'should not' behave with a woman or man in order to avoid misunderstanding. In fact, "men and women [...] grow up with different experiences and operate in different social contexts, and so they develop their own norms of communication and frameworks through which to interpret the communication of others", as Scollon and Rodney state. (2012: 242). Gender identity is a culturally constructed phenomenon that consists of the meanings "culture attributes to men and women and the personal and social effects of those meanings on individuals' concrete lives [...]". (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 34). It means that there may exist different ways of socialising that are supported and reinforced by existing cultural practises. Therefore, when dealing with another culture we do not have to underestimate this aspect, and we should not understand and respect others' ways of behaving.

Personal identity is also part of the Primary Identities. It is widely taken to mean the way that each individual constructs his own identity and self. Everyone has a different and unique story which depends on the country where they live, the language they speak, the culture they share, the level of education they have acquired, the religion they believe, the experiences they live, the goals they want to achieve. All these conceptions may change at different age brackets, at different life stages, and with different life experiences. In sum, personal identity includes all the information and any kind of feeling that an individual has regarding his or her personal self-images in his or her current moment of life. The personal identity is perceived by the others while communicating: the way one moves, speaks, thinks are all exhibited while socialising.

According to the well-known American sociologist Goffman (in La Mendola, 2007), people are capable of developing several concepts of self, seeking "favourable conditions" in the social experience. That is to say, the self is the face we show to others at any given time. Obviously it depends on how we perceive ourselves in a particular situation, on our views of ourselves as members of a group - that is to say, as an individual who belongs to a specific social identity (Riley, 2007: 88) - and, accordingly, on the person we have in front of us (a teacher, a policeman, a stranger, an elderly person or a friend).

2.2.2. Situational Identity Domains

Related to this, the Situational Identities can be considered (see Figure 3). In fact, not only is it important to consider the different cultural, ethnical, personal background and the gender of our interlocutor, but when communicating people should also be aware of the relational meaning conveyed, as well as the role, facework and symbolic identities. These identities are more dynamic than the Primary ones, because they are closely linked to the external situation. However, they are not independent, in the sense that they are influenced by and influence the Primary Identities.

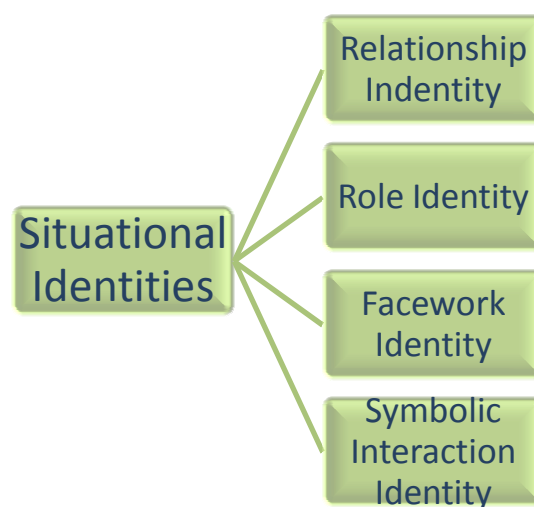


Figure 3: Situational Identity Domains (Ting Toomey, 1999: 29)

The state of the relationship between the two communicators is important in order to communicate effectively. In fact, it is significant to know who the participants are and what role they take on any situation. The relationship identity depends on both context and situation: "each socialisation process informs us of the boundaries of such issues like space, authority and power dynamics" (Brighton, 2013: 52). Of course, we acquire certain values and norms while growing in a specific environment and within a cultural group. According to those cultural-acquired features, interlocutors can choose whether to be formal or informal in a speech event, and are aware of the particular position they are taking; therefore, they will use their verbal language and non-verbal gestures accordingly. In other words, interlocutors choose the appropriate 'communicative style', as affirmed Scollon (1995: 34).

Those are the reasons why the role identity is a key aspect too. People should know how to behave correctly in any situation within a particular society. As an example, someone who is "Indian" will have acquired that identity through being brought up surrounded by other Indians, and will unconsciously learn their culture - that is, their beliefs, rules, rituals, values, language, religion, etc. In other words, each individual has a sort of 'software of the mind', so he or she automatically uses formal or informal registers, different tone of voice, words, and gestures according to each and any situation (Cucchiara, Vigo, 2006: 41). Norms vary from one culture to the next, and there are various lists of 'dos and don'ts'. There thus arises the necessity to know what is proper or improper within a cultural group in order to avoid misunderstandings, miscommunications and gaffes.

In face-to-face interaction, people have to communicate appropriately with the other interlocutor. In doing this, they have to display their outlook, that is their face. First and foremost, people want to both enhance positive face to honour others' face, so they try to avoid behaviours that may threaten and undermine their and the other's reputation. That is to say, facework identity makes it possible to manage favourable interaction (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 38). It is linked to the concept mentioned above of the self: awareness of group and person based identity helps the interlocutor to know which self he/she has to show in that situation.

Ultimately, each culture has its patterns both regarding verbal and nonverbal communication. It means that different language-speaking communities use different set of rules regarding rhythmic patterns, word-order, and other devices (Kachru, 2008:72). The way we use these symbolic cues rely on the Primary identities, that is to say, they depend on our cultural, ethical, gender and personal background. Each community has different styles of linguistic and nonverbal codes in relating with the others: in other words, a different symbolic interaction identity. The way we use those patterns communicates to others how we want to be treated and how we want to be perceived. In interaction with a cultural stranger, it is important to understand the interlocutor's symbolic interaction identity in order to be open-minded and avoid repulsion. In fact, what we think is impolite in our culture (i.e. a word, a gesture or an attitude) may be accepted or also considered good manners in another culture.

As follows from the above discussion, the skills of ICC have to centre upon the notion of self and the ability to understand who, what, when, where and how an intercultural encounter might be efficiently and appropriately performed (Brighton, 2013: 59). The "Who" depends on Primary Identities: everyone has to understand what is allowed or not when dealing with another culture. In fact, the prime goal of ICC includes both awareness of one's own culture and the ability to interpret and understand other cultures. Therefore, it is important to grasp the right identity of the interlocutor ("what" culture, gender, ethnicity and personal identity he or she carries), and afterwards, to think about the situation ("when" and "where" is the interaction taking place?) and find out about the appropriate Situational Identity to perform in that specific interactive situation. Ultimately, taking into consideration all the above mentioned elements, communicators have to think about the right way to interact ("how" may I efficiently communicate, according to the interlocutor's cultural background, role, gender, and environment?). To conclude, both Primary and Situational Identities play a critical role in the intercultural communication process, and therefore, they should be taken into consideration in any intercultural encounter.

2.3. NEGOTIATION THEORY

With respect to what has been said so far, international communicators should pay attention to both Primary and Situational Identities before starting a conversation with the correspondent interlocutor. Each person has his or her own values and role in an interaction, and this obviously shapes their attitudes. With reference to the definition by Ting-Toomey (1999: 16-17) already examined, have emphasised the importance of ICC as a process where two or more communicators enter in a mutually interdependent relationship. It means they start to communicate and exchange their ideas and information. Both of them play the role of sender and receiver: a simultaneous encoding and decoding of verbal and verbal messages takes place in the exchange process.

However, in order to achieve mutual understanding, they should use a shared code. That is to say, the symbolic exchange includes a language that can be uttered and perceived as understandable by both the interlocutors. As already discussed in the first chapter, the widespread extent to which English has diversified globally has given rise to an increase in its use across the world. "English has become a worldwide lingua franca" (2012: 25), and it is generally chosen and used among speakers from various linguacultural backgrounds. This is why ELF has become the main tool for communication today and a core area of research in language teaching.

Given the dissimilar background, the meaning of the messages delivered should be negotiated in international communication encounters. In fact, when a person interacts with another of the same culture, there is no need to comprehend the other's attitude and way of speaking. Almost everything is crystal clear to both interlocutors: they share common language, patterns, behaviours, dress-code, non-verbal gestures, norms, values, and so forth. In other words, they have same conceptions of what is good and what is bad, what is forbidden versus permitted, what is moral and what is not, what is dangerous and what is safe.

On the contrary, when two communicators have a different cultural background, the prime aim is to learn how to deal with the otherness. They both find

themselves out of their comfort zone, they have to opt for a shared linguistic code and therefore, negotiation of identities, meanings and attitudes turns out to be a key element in intercultural communication. The concept of negotiation is defined by Ting-Toomey (1999: 40) as:

A transactional interaction process whereby individuals in an intercultural situation attempt to assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and others' desired self-images. Identity negotiation is, at a minimum, a mutual communication activity. At the same time, the communicators attempt to evoke their own desired identities in the interaction; they also attempt to challenge or support the others' identity.

This means that an intercultural speaker should first identify his or her interlocutor, and then negotiate and support his or her identity. In fact, the speaker knows that to see only one identity in a person is a simplification. He or she knows something about the other communicator's beliefs, values and behaviours, but he or she will be also aware that there are some other identities hidden in the person with whom he or she is interacting (Byram, Gribkova, Starkey, 2002: 10).

All things considered, all individuals in all cultures have similar basic human needs in communication: they want to feel included, understood and safe. That is why not only identities should be negotiated, but also meanings and attitudes. In fact, "IC has come to be seen as an opportunity to put into question one's own cultural assumptions and a source of enrichment", as Kramsh and Uryo state (2012: 211). It is well-known that each individual behaves and utters differently, according to his or her personal and cultural background. Even though a shared code is used between interlocutors, slight variation in language patterns and pronunciation may exist, as the participants may have different degrees of proficiency. This may cause miscommunication because of interlocutors' socially and culturally different norms for interpreting others.

However, rather than focussing on ICC as a problem, it is interesting to explore the potentiality of ICC for personal and discursive growth. Therefore, being able to negotiate identities, meanings, attitudes as well as overcome prejudices is not

only a powerful competence in the new era of intercultural communication, but it also leads to personal and discursive improvement and enrichment.

2.3.1. Creation of Third Space

In the current era of economic globalisation, large-scale migrations, internationalisation of education and virtual communication, the dualities us/them, native speaker/non-native speaker, inclusion/exclusion, orientalism/occidentalism, self/other have been rendered more complex: "cultures seem to increasingly resemble one another" (Kramsh, Uryu, 2012: 213). By contrast, this has not facilitate communication, and nowadays it seems harder to capture a clear borderline from one culture to another.

Following the cultural infiltration and mutual contamination around the world, "cultural values cannot really be totally shared." (Holliday, 2014: 2). In fact, given the advanced in technology and the ever-growing interconnection, people may move easily, get in contact with different cultures with their ways of living and thinking, and have the opportunity to question their values, beliefs and norms. As mentioned in Chapter 1.2.2., migration, travel, business, international education and technology are facilitating both face-to-face and virtual intercultural contact, making it easier to link people in different parts of the world. Therefore, it is believed that the process of globalisation make it possible to create new points of view and perspectives. It follows that nowadays all cultures are hybrid at a certain degree, and as a consequence, talking about cultural values may be considered an oversimplification. The current hybridity calls for a neutral domain in which people from different cultures can come together and be themselves. Bhabha (1994 in Feng. 2009: 75) emphasised that in intercultural communication:

[...] the two places ('You' and 'I') are mobilised to produce meaning in the passage through a Third space which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or

fixity; that even the same sign can be appropriated translated, rehistoricised and read anew.

This means that culture is all about meaning-making, it is not a static fixed system, and therefore all cultural statements and systems that may be used in an intercultural interaction are constructed in a contradictory and ambivalent space for enunciation. When two interlocutors meet, they create what Pratt (1992 in Kramsch, Uryy, 2012: 213) calls a 'contact zone', that is "the social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination". It is in that space that the speakers introduce their personal realities, negotiate their identity, collaborate, and learn how to organise their meanings and how to transform possible conflicts into a fruitful dialogue.

In other words, in intercultural encounters a high degree of tolerance is endured, and each sentence or gesture can be adjusted, translated and interpreted. The 'third space' is, therefore, defined by Kramsch (2009 in Hua, 2014: 153) as a spatial metaphor for "eschewing the traditional dualities on which language education is based".

2.4. HOW TO DEVELOP INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Intercultural communication requires tolerance, respect and acceptance of diversity, that is otherness. Cucchiera and Vigo (2006: 46) affirm that "looking out is looking in": this means that the development of communication competence in another culture provides the opportunities to reflect upon one's worldview, something that is not possible without a second vantage point. It is an experience that opens up choices and can be both powerful and enriching. For all these reasons, the acquisition of communicative competence has turned out to be both an advantage and a requirement in the current era of globalisation: it offers the opportunity to suspend

prejudices, to be open to new information and ideas as well as to learn how overcome the general tendency to use ethnocentric standards in evaluating dissimilar others.

However, it is a competence that is not easy to acquire and therefore, a gradual process is required. Moreover, it is not possible to anticipate all the knowledge of other cultures and to reach a perfect and complete competence, as cultures are themselves constantly changing.

It is important to emphasise that the acquisition of intercultural competence does not mean that a person should attempt to reach native or 'near native' competence. It allows but does not demand native-like competence, recognising that individual choices are both complex and personal. Hence, there is not a standard model to pursue: it is more a question of being aware of the other identity and culture, and both collaborate and cooperate with otherness. It is in this way that an intercultural speaker may develop an intercultural style and learn how to overcome divergence. In other words, that competence is required "to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with other who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (Fantini, 2005: 1).

Therefore, in order to achieve ICC and its criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction, it is important to take into account five essential factors: knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovering and interaction, and critical cultural awareness/political education. This model is based on Byram's (1997: 34) preliminary reflections on intercultural communication. Contrarily, Fantini (2012: 272) classifies these factors into four dimensions that are knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness, while Ting-Toomey (1999: 49) calls for three components: knowledge, motivation and skills. All the models proposed are valid, and are similar, however I will take into consideration Byram's classification, as he represents one of the most influential models in foreign language teaching and learning.

2.4.1. Knowledge

Knowledge does not mean knowing everything or most of the features of a culture, but rather it involves the knowledge of how social groups and identities function and what is involved in intercultural interaction. When people interact socially with a cultural stranger, they usually bring to the situation their knowledge of the world, which includes substantial knowledge of their own culture and country. At the same time, they may share some knowledge of each other's background, and perceive their interlocutor as a representative of a particular country, with its values, norms and traditions. Therefore, knowledge is a precondition in any intercultural situation.

The knowledge of a particular social group and of its culture is always present to some degree, although it is not sufficient: in order to communicate successfully people should also acquire the knowledge of the process of interaction. This knowledge is not acquired automatically, but in steps, and it involves the knowledge about concepts and processes in interaction.

Ting-Toomey (1999: 49) defines knowledge as a "process of in-depth understanding of certain phenomena via a range of information gained through personal experiences and observation". In essence, it is believed that being involved in a specific cultural setting is a great advantage: on the one hand, one has the possibility to gain a broader and personal view about the other culture, its values, beliefs, and norms; on the other hand, one may acquire new information concerning language, non-verbal communication, concepts, behavioural habits, conversational topics, politeness strategies, and so forth. In other words, through personal experience and observation one has the chance to explore by himself or herself the cultural features that are not visible in the so called 'iceberg' of culture (see chapter 1), to reflect about any pre-existing stereotypes about that culture, and to foster sensitivity towards 'otherness'.

However, new information may also be acquired by attending intercultural classes, readings, watching television, using the web, interacting with colleagues and travelling. It is a process that leads from a state of an unconscious competence - that

is the ignorance stage in which an individual is unaware of the communication blunders he or she has committed in an interaction - to a conscious competence - "in which communicators are fully aware of their own systems of thinking, reacting, and experiencing and simultaneously attending to the system of thinking, feelings, and behaviours of their interaction partners" (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 52).

In conclusion, knowledge (savoirs) involves "knowledge of social groups and their products and practises in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction" (Hua, 2014: 152).

2.4.2. Attitudes

Attitudes of curiosity and openness are another pre-condition for successful intercultural communication. It means that a person should be self-motivated to discover and integrate different standpoints, categories and contexts to interpret an encounter. Therefore, in order to acquire ICC some personal traits are needed. These involve "respect, empathy, flexibility, patience, interest, curiosity, openness, motivation, tolerance for ambiguity, and willingness to suspend judgment" (Cucchiara, Vigo; 2006: 45).

In sum, this means that a person should be ready to relativise his or her own values, beliefs and behaviour and not to assume that they are the only possible correct ones. It is a matter of suspending our ethnocentric vision and developing critical cultural awareness. Therefore, ICC requires "questioning and discovering, not simply accepting a transmitted account of a specific country and its dominant culture (Byram, 1997: 113). The cultural stranger represents a challenge, and offers the best chance "to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange". (Byram, Gribkova, Starkey, 2002: 19). That is to say, intercultural experience with a dissimilar other puts into question our habits and beliefs, and teaches us that multiple perspectives exist. It allows people to familiarise with what is unfamiliar: it is an opportunity to go out of our comfort zone and to test our limits.

The anthropologist Levi-Strauss (date in Ulf, 2004) offers a perfect explanation of what has been said until now:

a person cannot simultaneously fully enjoy the other, identify himself with him, and at the same time remain different. The whole conversation with the other, if successfully completed, condemns, sooner or later, the originality of his nature, and of mine.

To conclude , intercultural attitudes (*savoir être*) are linked to "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (Hua, 2014: 152). Byram (1997: 34) states that attitudes "[...] can lead to a 're-socialisation', [...] where individuals dismantle their preceding structure of subjective reality and re-construct it according to new norms".

2.4.3. Skills

Knowledge and attitude factors are preconditions, although they may be modified in the process of intercultural communication. In fact, it is important to keep in mind that socialisation with the dissimilar other does not follow a fixed model, as cultures are dynamic and constantly changing. However, in order to become an intercultural communicator, some skills are required.

In fact, skills are as important as attitudes and knowledge. They include the ability to integrate those factors with appropriate and effective intercultural practise. Byram (1997: 37) divided and classified two broad and related categories of skills: on the one hand, skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) that refers to the ability to interpret a document, or event from another culture, to explain it and to relate it to documents or event's from one's own; on the other hand, skills of discovering and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*) that include the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practises as well as to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

The former relates to the ability of interpretation, which strictly depends on knowledge of one's own and the other environment. Therefore, knowledge is essential and allows people to identify relationships between different cultures, and to explain the similarities and differences perceived. This skill is linked to what is generally written, a document, writings, literature, and so forth, so it does not need to involve interaction with an interlocutor.

Contrarily, the latter needs to involve an individual. It is an ability which may be essentially developed in communicating with someone of a different country. In this way, the person may perceive and build up a specific knowledge, and has the chance to understand that dissimilar values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours exist, whether documents or interaction. That is to say, it is an opportunity to acquire new information and ideas by observing and listening.

2.4.4. Critical awareness

The last, but not least, component of ICC is critical awareness or political education (*savoir s'engager*). It refers to the "ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria the perspectives, practices and products of one's own and other cultures and countries" (Hua, 2014: 152). It means that not only should a person become aware of other people's values, but he or she should first be aware of his or her own values - those that have been acquired through formal education or by other means - and be critical starting from them.

In fact, the observation of different lifestyles, ways of perceiving the world, with dissimilar norms, lets us realise that a multitude of perspectives exist and, more than that, it puts into question our criteria. It appears then that people are more inclined to negotiate and mediate intercultural exchanges, and as a consequence, perform more successfully in intercultural encounters. However, this does not mean changing someone's perspectives and values, but just making them explicit and conscious in any evaluative response to others.

2.5.BASIC CRITERIA OF ICC

To be a competent intercultural communicator, individuals need to transform their knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical awareness of intercultural theories into appropriate and effective performance. As mentioned many times in this thesis, the main goal of ICC is to develop a competence which allows people to communicate appropriately and effectively in a wide range of intercultural situations, and to reach discursive satisfaction. When the criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction are reached, the outcome of communication can be deemed successful.

2.5.1. Appropriateness

The appropriateness criterion refers to "the degree to which the exchanged behaviours are regarded as proper and match the expectations generated by the insiders of the culture" (Ting-Toomey, 1999:262). Everyone has a sort of 'software of the mind' as Cucchiara and Vigo state (2006: 41) which is a sort of mental file that guides us and makes us aware of what is proper or improper in any situational event. In fact, our knowledge of the world strictly depends on our the geo-political context in which we live, on the education we have acquired , and on the experiences we got.

However, in any socialisation experience ethnocentric evaluations should be set apart, and intercultural communicators need to learn to mutually adapt to each other's behaviour appropriately and flexibly. In other words, it is a process that leads to obtaining both a self-perception and other-perception competence. In this way the interlocutor knows how to perform, what can be negotiated, and what should be avoided when dealing with the dissimilar other. Although it is a long-term learning and practising process, it is a fundamental criteria of ICC.

2.5.2. Effectiveness

Communicative efficiency is a primary concern, especially concerning the lingua franca speakers. As they speak the shared language with different degrees of proficiency and accuracy, they should be prepared to negotiate misunderstandings and to cooperate.

The effectiveness criterion emphasises the importance of promoting intercultural understanding on content, identity, and relational levels. This means that the interlocutor has to know what is contingent in the culture of his or her interlocutor, and is aware of his or her expectations as regards the content of the message conveyed. Furthermore, a communicator has to deal with the situation: he or she has to know his or her identity role in that situational encounter, and therefore, he or she acts accordingly. Finally, attention should be also focussed on relational meanings: both interlocutors have to define the intimacy distance and power distance of their relationship. This is very important, as people in different cultures have different privacy and relational needs, and as a consequence, different expectations concerning the interaction process itself.

To conclude, effectiveness refers to "the degree to which communicators achieve mutual shared meaning and desired goal-related outcomes", as states Ting-Toomey (199: 263).

2.5.3. Satisfaction

If interaction is appropriately and effectively managed, both interlocutors will feel satisfied. In fact, any communicative encounter, intracultural or intercultural in their nature, has the goal to achieve interaction satisfaction: this means that each individual desires positive affirmation from a cultural stranger. They feel satisfied when their desired identity images are validated, while they experience dissatisfaction when the desired identity images are denied (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 265).

In other words, when dealing with people who are perceived as different in respect of cultural meaning, beliefs and behaviour they exhibit, it is of paramount

concern to be aware of their cultural background, as well as their ethnicity, gender, personal identity and their role in the interactional experience. Once the interlocutor understands the cultural premises and assumptions of the given situation, he or she will act using the appropriate verbal and non-verbal messages , and will reach interaction satisfaction.

2.6. BECOMING AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATOR

I have described ICC as a long-term learning and practising process which needs appropriate knowledge, attitude, skills, and critical awareness in order to be achieved. When persons of different cultures meet, they enter into a mutually interdependent relationship. Given their linguacultural different background, they are aware that miscomprehensions and misunderstandings may occur between them, but they hope to be understood, respected and supported in order to accomplish satisfaction (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 47). Therefore, both Primary and Situational identities should be taken into account.

Once the identity is perceived, communicators are aware of what is allowed and what has to be avoided with the cultural other. Therefore, both interlocutors will be ready to negotiate identities, meanings and attitudes. They will interact using a shared code system, and they will create a common symbolic space known as 'third space', where a hybrid culture will be shared. In fact, Kramsch (2012: 213) emphasised the need to "create a culture of the third kind in which they can express their own meanings without being hostage to the meanings of either their own or the target speech communities".

Intercultural communicative competence is linked to communicative competence in a foreign language. This means that an intercultural communicator is a person who is able to act in a foreign language in a linguistically, sociolinguistically, and pragmatically appropriate way. "Since English is the primary means of international communication, it is increasingly regarded as the most common form of intercultural interaction" as Cogo and Dewey state (2012: 25). Therefore, English as a lingua franca

serves as the most widespread means of international and intercultural communication that the world has ever seen.

According to Byram (1997: 48), intercultural communicative competence includes linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. He refined the formulation of van Ek's model of 'communicative ability' (1986:35) and implied links with the factors of knowledge, attitude, skills and critical awareness (see 2.4.). Following his model, ICC requires both linguistic and discourse competence: the former refers to "the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language", while the latter is "the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes". This means that not only should people be able to produce meaningful utterances which are formed in accordance with grammar rules of the target language, but in an interaction they should also recognise and use appropriate strategies, taking into account the cultural other's norms, values, attitudes, etc. In other words, intercultural communicators should accommodate the dissimilar other's modes of interaction.

Furthermore, both linguistic and discursive competence are influenced by sociolinguistic competence. This is "the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor - whether native speaker or not - meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor" (Byram, 1997: 48). That is to say, the ability to negotiate new and unfamiliar meanings with people who are perceived as different in respect of the cultural meaning, beliefs and behaviours they exhibit.

All things considered, once a person has acquired appropriate knowledge, skills, attitude and has developed a critical cultural awareness, he or she has also acquired intercultural competence. However, in order to be defined an intercultural communicator with intercultural communicative competence, that person should also

develop linguistic, discourse and sociolinguistic competence. Figure 3 provides a clear summary of the components of intercultural communicative competence.

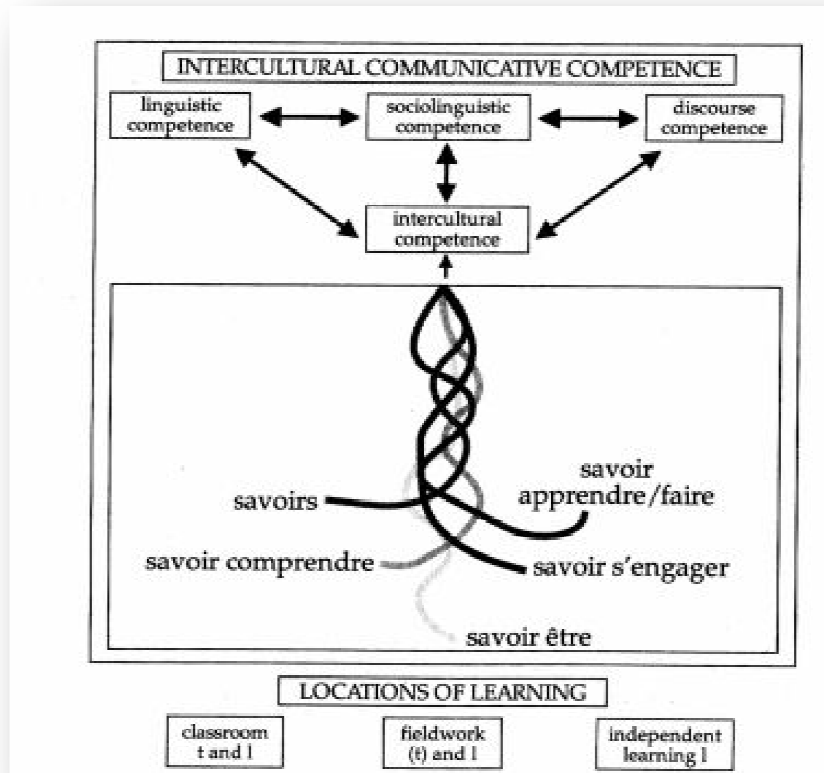


Figure 3: The components of ICC (Byram, 1997: 73)

To conclude, when intercultural communicators experience communication appropriateness and effectiveness plus satisfaction, it means that they have acquired appropriate ICC, and therefore the outcome of communication may be considered successful.

CHAPTER 3

*THEORY INTO PRACTICE: A FOCUS ON
INDIAN ENGLISH AND CULTURE*

3.1. FROM THEORY TO PRACTISE

The previous chapters explored the concept of ICC and explained how a communicator may develop such competence when dealing with another culture, taking into account the strong link that ties identity, language and culture. With respect to the theory I described, I now want to offer a concrete example, in order to let people think about how they might develop ICC when dealing with a specific culture: therefore, as has already been mentioned in chapter 1, I will take into consideration India, its language and its culture.

My aim is not only to describe the areas of intercultural communication between Indian people and others which may be seen as problematic , but also to offer new points of view and perspectives: this means that I would like my readers to question their beliefs, values, norms and rituals, in other words, to set apart their ethnocentric perspectives. I wish to describe the process that leads from resistance of diversity to acceptance, and finally to adaptation. In fact, these three reactions usually affect the internal state of any communicator who has to deal with a dissimilar other. "Resistance implies a rejection or denigration of difference, acceptance implies a validation of difference without necessarily changing oneself, adaptation implies a change taking place inside the sojourner in reaction to the demands of the intercultural environment" (Shaules, 2007: 127). That is to say, the goal of this research is not just to let people know more about Indian language, culture, values, attitudes, and so forth, but to let them incorporate new viewpoints and develop an open-minded approach.

Furthermore, I wish to demonstrate how what we generally define 'problems' of communication may turn out to be a source of enrichment of our general knowledge. In other words, linguistic and cultural barriers may be overcome with patience, willingness to suspend prejudices, tolerance, openness, flexibility, interest, respect and strong motivation. All things considered, I consider intercultural learning an important process that leads to personal transformation; it is basically what differentiates a simple tourist from a competent person in intercultural

communication (as highlighted by Byram, 1997). Therefore, I hope this study may help to increase knowledge about India, its culture and language; in other words, I hope to offer a basis to think about how to develop intercultural communicative competence when dealing with Indian people.

3.2. INTRODUCTION TO INDIA

As is well-known, India is the largest of all countries in the Asiatic continent and it has a vast population. According to the estimates of 2005 collected in Sailaja's work (2009: 2), India is home to 16.7% of the world's population, covering 2.4% of the world's surface. Given its 1,125 million citizens, what emerges is the tremendous significance that English carries: in fact, English became India's official language from the adoption of the Constitution, which occurred in 1950.

As has already been pointed out in chapter 1.3.2., India is included by Kachru (1985) in the Outer Circle. Therefore, Indian English (IndE) is considered a variety of the Outer Circle which was acquired by people following the process of colonization. "Used mainly as a second language today, IndE shares with other varieties in its category several important features: a history of transplantation and 'broken transmission' (Kandiah, 1998: 36), the status of an institutionalized variety with a wide range of functions in society, signs of nativization in structure and use, and the emergence of local usage norms" (Sedlatschek, 2009: 7).

However, it is important to emphasise that IndE is mostly used by people living in urban and semi-urban areas (with reference to the Census of 2001, 27.78% of India's population lives in urban areas), while the rest of its population who lives in rural areas usually do not use it (Sailaja, 2009: 2). Moreover, IndE is used mostly in the areas of education, administration, law, mass media, science, technology, trade and commerce.

In the following sections, I will present IndE from a historical and contemporary perspective, and then I will introduce the Indian language and culture into the main topic of research of this paper. In other words, I will explore the areas

which may cause communicative misunderstandings, in order to list the most important features which everyone should know when dealing with Indian people, and I will report the data I collected from the survey I submitted to the group of Indian young people who live in the area of Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Moreover, as I am personally involved in this topic, I will also include my personal narrative about my experience in India in the next chapter, describing the differences I noticed and the difficulties I faced, and I will also report the answers I obtained from two Indian young men who were taken into account as case studies.

3.3. INDIAN ENGLISH: spread and current situation

English reached India for the first time in the sixteenth century with the arrival of the Jesuit Missionary Thomas Stephens in Goa. Two decades later, Queen Elisabeth, who was ruling the English Empire in that period, granted merchants in London a charter to trade with India. Therefore, the East India Company was established and would develop into a major political force. English was introduced as a means of communication in trading posts, and the language started to be occasionally taught as a foreign language.

However, English became stabilized throughout the eighteenth century. In fact, "Britain overcame competition from other European nations in its attempt to gain control over the Indian subcontinent", as Sedlatschek states (2009: 9). The East India Company was under full political control from Britain after the Indian Act was passed in 1784. It had its minister in London, and the Governor-General in Calcutta supervising its activities. In the following years, English gained more and more power, covering the major domains of administration, bureaucracy, and commerce but it was still perceived as a foreign language. In the first half of the nineteenth century, English also became established in education. This happened following the renewal of the East India Company, which allowed several missionary schools and colleges to be opened.

The success of English in India can be linked to two main factors: on the one hand, many British settlers moved to India, as there was an increasing demand for

Indian clerks speaking and reading English; on the other hand, a growing number of Indians became involved in the bureaucratic affairs of the Empire. For these reasons, not only did English become of prime interest in schools, but people also started to talk in English in urban areas. Of course, the introduction of the printing press was one of the major pushing factors in the development of English: in fact, textbooks, essays, translations, and so on circulated around schools.

By 1830, English was no longer considered a foreign language, and it developed into 'Indian English'. This notion (IndE) arose to mark the difference from the standard English, and to emphasise its nature as a variety of English. Mehrotra (1998: 15) defined it as a "non-native variety of English used in India. Although based on standard British English (BrE), it has evolved over the years certain linguistic features, distinct from the native variety, in the consonance with the socio-cultural and linguistic realities of India". In fact, Karchu affirms (1986: 5) that the term non-native Englishes is used "for those transplanted varieties of English that are acquired primarily as second languages. [...] English is used as a tool of power to cultivate a group of people who will identify with the cultural and other norms of the political elite". As stated before and in chapter 1.3.2., he classified IndE as a variety of the Outer Circle.

In essence, English became the language of education and of the government, and therefore shifted the status of English from being a foreign language to being an officially second language (in other words, from being 'English in India' to IndE). Moreover, this marked the beginning of bilingual education in India.

However, it is in post-Independence India that English was officially recognised. India became independent in 1947, after its strong efforts to push away the British power from the country. The political scene was dominated by Mahatma Gandhi, who proclaimed "Real education is impossible through a foreign medium" (Gandhi, 1922: 451) and exhorted Indian population to nonviolent struggle against British rule. With the dawn of freedom, "[...] the climate change in favour of the use of vernaculars as the natural media of instruction although English continued to dominate particularly in the fields of higher education and administration", as Mehrotra states (1998: 5). That is to say, Hindi was assigned the status of national

language in the Constitution, in order to foster integration and promote a sense of unity, but "since English had become established firmly in the domains of administration and bureaucracy and as the language of higher education and the legal system, it could not be replaced instantly" (Sedlatschek, 2009:18).

Therefore, article 343 of the Constitution of India granted for fifteen years the role of English as an official language, which was extended to an infinite period of time, through the Official Language Act subscribed in 1963. "Although the official language of India is first Hindi, English is given equal if not more importance" (Sailaja,2009: 5).

As concerns the medium of education, it was considered an important issue to take into account in the program of the national development, and as has been just stated, Indians wanted English to be replaced by an Indian language in the education field. From that time onwards, two kind of schools have coexisted in India: English-medium schools and Indian language-medium schools. Those Indian-medium schools opted for a regional language as a means of education rather than Hindi. "In 1990, out of the 28 states and seven Union Territories, English-medium education was available in more than 30 at each of the three levels, viz.. primary, middle and secondary", as stated by Tollefson and Tsui (2004: 184). However, only around 10% of English schools existed at primary and middle levels, while 91.62% were the Indian language-medium schools at primary level, and 88.64% at middle level. It should be noted that although English schools were mostly attended by urban middle and upper-class students, a great number of urban poor and rural children started to ask to be admitted to them. In fact, English schools were considered as "the vehicle of modernity", being English a language of rationality and progress, while Indian languages were portrayed as "vehicles for tradition and as instruments that fulfil emotional needs and maintain cultural values and practices" (Tollefson and Tsui, 2004: 190).

All things considered, IndE is now an important medium of communication, and has a crucial role in social and cultural organisation. In fact, language, culture and society are tied by a powerful relationship which influences people's behaviours, attitudes, values, viewpoints and perspectives. It seems, thus, that language has an

overwhelming importance in communication, and this is why I am interested in exploring this variety of English with reference to ICC.

3.4. THE CHALLENGING AREAS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

ICC requires knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical awareness: in order to communicate effectively and appropriately with a dissimilar other, it is important to be aware of the challenging areas that may cause misunderstandings and problematic issues in communication. In fact, some cultural and linguistic differences can make communication quite difficult. This is why many researchers such as Kachru and Smith (2008), Scollon R., Scollon S.W. and Jones (2012), Cucchara and Vigo (2006) identified those areas and tried to explain the possible problems a person may face with someone from a different culture. Those areas are related generally to language, politeness, conversational topics, non-verbal communication/body language, behavioural habits, concepts (Cucchara and Vigo, 2006: 43).

In the following sections I will explore each area, taking into consideration the Indian language and culture, and explaining the possible obstacles a non-Indian person may encounter when he or she interacts with an Indian speaker. Therefore, I will introduce the challenging areas, and report some instances which derive from both general knowledge about India and my personal experience. Moreover, I will make reference to the answers I obtained from the survey I delivered to the group of Indian young people, in order to reveal a current point of view about those areas. In other words, my aim is to offer some real examples regarding these areas, in order to increase knowledge about Indian language and culture. In fact, knowledge is one of the five essential factors required in order to acquire ICC (Byram, 1997: 34), together with attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovering and interaction, and critical cultural awareness/political education. Therefore, I want my readers to think about any possible linguistic and cultural difference, and how they may develop

appropriate attitudes, skills and critical awareness in order to negotiate with Indian people and to achieve interactional satisfaction in any possible intercultural communicative encounter.

However, before looking in depth at those areas, I want to point out some issues: as a shared code is needed in any intercultural experience, I will take into account the Indian English language. In fact, IndE is one of the varieties of the Outer Circle used as a 'contact language' in ELF interactions, with its own features and characteristics. Therefore, I will explore IndE and how it is influenced by Indian culture and its official language. Moreover, these areas will also be taken into account in chapter 4 with an additional perspective: in fact, in the following chapter I will report and compare the answers that two Indian people gave to the survey I have elaborated. The questions concern the challenging areas I will now introduce.

3.4.1. Language

As already noted in chapter 1.3.1., there is a strong although ambiguous relationship between language, culture, and society. Kramsch (2001: 3) stated that language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality. That is to say, language reflects people's ways of viewing the world and beliefs according to their common experience and cultural stock of knowledge; therefore, all verbal and non-verbal aspects are understandable to the group they belong to, without any need to be explained. Moreover, since language is a symbol of social identity, people identify themselves and others through their use of language.

However, it is not clear "whether language is an autonomous system irrespective of its role as a means of human communication or whether it is primarily a medium of communication and therefore has a crucial role in social organization [...]" (Kachru, Smith, 2008: 15). The only certain thing is that language, culture and society continually influence each other; therefore, each speech community has its own typical system of interaction, which depends strictly on its ideological, sociological and communication characteristics (see chapter 2.2.).

Given the use of various Englishes around the world, it seems important to be aware that each kind of English functions differently and may have dissimilar communicative goals. Moreover, it may vary according to speaker variables such as gender, age, education, patterns of multilingualism and mother tongue (Lange, 2012: 80-87). In general, according to different geographical areas and communities, people master English at different degrees of proficiency, and therefore, the most common differences in language usage regard the areas of phonology, morphology, pragmatics, idiomaticity and lexicogrammar.

The linguistic scene in India is complex: fifteen major languages are recognised as 'national languages' by the Constitution (Kachru, 1989: 13). Of these, Hindi covers the largest group (29.67% of total population according to the 1961 census). English was recognised as the associate official language, and it is learnt as a subject by most students who cross the elementary stage. In fact, "it is generally used as a medium of instruction in most subjects at the university level, and it is available as an optional medium at the lower levels" (Kachru, 1989: 16).

As regards the phonetic and phonology area, it is important to underline that the Indian accent is marked by regional variation. However, there are some general tendencies which may be recognised. When interacting with an Indian, one will immediately notice the difference in pronunciation from the British and American standard varieties. Therefore, it will be difficult to immediately understand how IndE functions. The most common differences regards how they pronounce some sounds like the /v/, /w/, /θ/ and /ð/. The difference between /v/ and /w/ is often absent in the speech of many IndE speakers: both sounds tend to be neutralised to the labio-dental approximant /β/. Therefore, words like *villager* and *winner* are pronounced using the same sound. As regards the fricatives, the sound /θ/ is sometimes articulated, while the sound /ð/ is completely missing. (Sailaja, 2009: 20-21). These dental fricatives are replaced by India dental plosives /t̪/, or /t̪h/ and /d̪/. For example, the first sound in words like *thought*, *thing*, *think* is the voiceless dental plosive.

With reference to morphology, a very common feature of IndE is that of code-switching. "Code-switching is the phenomenon of beginning an utterance in one

language and changing the language in the mid-course" (Sailaja, 2009: 62). It usually happens in informal contexts. An example can be the following one: "Have your tea *aur jaldi chalo*" (and fast come) instead of "Have your tea and come fast".

Moreover, it seems interesting to notice that in tag questions Indian speakers usually exhibit the variant *isn't it?* in all contexts - i.e. You will come, *isn't it?* (Sailaja, 2009: 59). In addition to this, they often use the invariant *no/na* as a tag (Lange, 2012: 216-230). This tag derives from Hindi with the function of seeking confirmation or some kind of reaction (i.e. You come, *na?* / They should do it, *no?*).

In addition, in IndE the progressive is used quite freely. According to Kirkpatrick (2007: 94), one of the most relevant features associated with IndE is "the use of present continuous in contexts where other varieties would use the simple present". As a result, it seems that Indians use the progressive form with verbs that cannot be used with *-ing*: "*I am having my book with me*", "*I am liking it*", "*She is not understanding anything*" (Sailaja, 2009: 49), "*Shammi must be knowing my sister*" (Kirkpatrick, 2007: 94). It follows that this use is more remarkable with verbs of sense and knowing and stative verbs, and the reason of this progressive usage maybe be caused by a direct transfer from Indian languages.

With respect to lexicon, IndE vocabulary comes from Britain. However, several words are completely different from either British or American English, and are related to Indian culture. This means that these words refer to restricted items, used only in India (Sailaja, 2009: 73-74), like *kurta* (long, loose Indian shirt), *dosa* (pancake made of rice and lentil batter), *maida* (refined flour), *puja* (ritual prayer), etc. As can be noticed, these words mostly cover aspects of religion, food, and clothing.

3.4.1.1. Survey results

The area of language is a core element of ICC. As has just been stated, IndE is used as a second language (SL) in India, and therefore, it is of my interest as a variety of English. This is why I submitted to the interviewees some questions about how, when

and where they learnt IndE, about its usage in daily life, and about how they feel about speaking it.

When I asked the participants where they learnt to speak English, 13 out of 14 mentioned school as the place where this second language (SL) is taught. Moreover, 4 out of 14 also mentioned family, 2 mentioned friends, and one also included the playground as a place for the development of IndE. It emerges from their replies that IndE is learned from childhood (6 out of 14 refers to early years of learning, while 2 stated they started to learn it around 8 and 10 years).

When I asked them with whom they usually speak English, the majority of people replied that they use IndE with friends (11 out of 14, even though one said that it happens rarely), 8 out of 14 mentioned foreign people, 5 family, 2 unknown people, 4 school (college, with teachers), 4 mentioned the workplace (with colleagues, or within professional contact), while one mentioned restaurants. As regards the occasions, one replied that its situational, and it depends on the person, if (s)he is comfortable with it or not. Another one answered that he uses IndE all the time with people who can understand it. Another participant stated there are no specific occasions, while another affirmed she uses it when she has to explain something, in chats, and presentations. It emerges that IndE is used whenever it is considered suitable and with all people who can understand it. The domain covers friends, the educational and professional area, as well as public spaces and interactions with foreign or unknown people.

After this, I asked them how often they speak English in their everyday life: the replies I obtained from this question reveal the frequent use of IndE among Indian youths. In fact, it results that they speak IndE daily: 5 out of 14 of the participants stated they use it everyday. 4 interviewees affirmed they use it more than twice a day, 2 most of the time, one stated that she uses it at least 15 minutes a day, one affirmed he uses it quite frequently, one replied half of day, while another emphasised he uses it all the time when he is working. Moreover, one interviewee stated that she uses English words every 5 minutes. This statement reveals the presence of the code-

switching phenomenon while talking (this phenomena has already been discussed above).

As regards the turn talking system, they were asked about what they consider polite or not when having a conversation. It appears that interrupting the interlocutor is considered impolite for 6 out of 14 interviewees because one may lose the focus and may be irritated. Therefore, it is important to listen first, and then to speak when the other person takes a pause or becomes silent. In other words, it is polite to wait for your turn, and more than that, the participants emphasised the importance of respecting elders when speaking. With reference to overlapping, 2 out of 14 affirmed that it is impolite and may happen in aggravated situations, while one participants considered it as polite. Just a person made reference to pauses as polite, and as regards silence, one affirmed it is polite, another that it depends on the situation: during a conversation it is impolite to stay silent, during an argument it is polite. Moreover, one interviewee added that politeness in speaking is a matter of respect, and shouting or being rude is really impolite in a conversation.

After that, I asked them on which occasions they use formal language and if it depends on social status, role relationship between the interlocutors, age, sex, power, group membership. According to the data I collected from this answer, it seems that formal language depends strictly on age. 8 interviewee out of 14 affirmed that elderly and seniority are both important factors to take into consideration when speaking. Not all of them underlined the necessity of a formal language, but at least when speaking with people who are older, respect and politeness are both required. 5 participant mentioned the need for a formal language in work area (used for interviews, office presentations, with customers, in business), 5 out of 14 affirmed it is used with strangers and unknown people, while 4 mentioned it is used with teachers and professionals. It follows that 2 out of 14 emphasised that formality depends mainly on social status and authority, one stated it depends upon groups, while 2 interviewees affirmed that formal language does not depend on anything, it is just how a person is comfortable with. As regards informal language, it is mainly used in family and friendship domains (4 mentioned family and 3 mentioned friends), but in family, it

seems that the register may vary according sex, age and relationship. In fact, 2 people underlined the fact that even though there is no need for a formal language in family, respect has to be an essential element when talking to elders and with the opposite gender. By contrast, an interviewee affirmed that formality does not depend on sex, but just on authority (seniority and position). In all, it seems that formal language is required when interacting with elders, strangers, teachers, and in business domain. Informal language is used with friend and in family, but elderly should be respected.

Moreover, 9 participants out of 14 affirmed their language does change according to who they are speaking to, while the other 5 stated the contrary. Among the youths who change English according to their interlocutors, 3 out of 14 affirmed that with friends the language is casual, easier, with a mixture of Hindi and English words and slang; this way of speaking might be considered inappropriate for parents, teachers, uncles, aunts, etc. The use of the terms "uncle" and "aunt" reveal a striking feature in IndE discourse: in fact, as it will be pointed out in chapter 3.4.2., these forms are usually used by Indians to address the elders as a mark of respect. Moreover, 2 out of 14 affirmed that with colleagues slang words are common. Therefore, formality depends on the people and situation: 3 out of 14 mentioned work as a place where sophisticated English is required, one included the school domain (professors), and one youth stated that with foreigners you can speak more fluently and fast. Moreover, 2 out of 14 affirmed that English usually changes according to the interlocutor: if (s)he may judge you, then proper language is used, otherwise any kind of English can be used. Among the people who affirmed that no variation of English is needed while talking, there is one that affirmed that if he is talking to people who do not understand good English, he will use general vocabulary and easier words, another interviewee affirmed that it is only the way of replying which changes depending on the degree his or her interlocutor has in understanding English, and another one gave as an explanation that his English does not change because he uses it rarely with people who can understand it.

Finally, I was interested in how they felt about speaking English and if they consider it to be their own language. This question brought to light an aspect that links

identity to language. It seems that the majority of the interviewees consider English to be their own language (10 out of 14). On the contrary, 2 people affirmed that even though they feel good toward English, they do not consider it to be their language; one person affirmed that he loves speaking Hindi, but English is good as it helps intercultural communication (but still not consider it as his language), while one participant does not know how to feel toward it. All the others who display a positive feeling toward it added that they feel good and comfortable with English, and that it is a great and easy language (as well as their second mother tongue). One of the interviewees also emphasised that he is proud about speaking English, as its usage is increasing day by day. Moreover, an interesting answer is that of a participant who affirmed that as Hindi changes from one region to the other, English may be used as a common code to communicate, within and outside India. It results that everyone has a positive feeling toward English, but not all of them consider English to be their own language. However, they all recognise the importance of that language as a means of communication for everyone who can understand it.

3.4.2. Politeness

All human speech communities use politeness formula and appropriate register when interacting according to different situations; however, politeness varies according to each and every cultural speech community, and therefore, it follows that what is polite in one language is not necessarily polite in another language. Scollon R., Scollon S.W. and Jones (2012: 46) prefer the term 'communicative style' instead of the more general term 'register' to refer to interpersonal politeness and power relationships among participants. What they want to emphasise is that each community is endowed with a different communicative style, and has a different concept of politeness.

There are similarities across cultures in the kind of strategies used to express politeness, but there are also clear differences of form. These differences are what create problems in ELF interactions; in fact, "politeness is closely tied to cultural values" (Kachru, Smith 2008: 42), and people should be aware of that. The parameters

of politeness include face, status, rank, role, power, age, sex, social distance, intimacy, kinship, and group membership. This means that politeness depends on the characteristics of the person we are interacting with.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 13) emphasise the importance of the notion of "face" in intercultural encounters: "it consists of two specific kinds of desires ('face-wants') attributed by interactants to one another: the desire to be un-impeded in one's actions (negative face), and the desire (in some respects) to be approved of (positive face)". This core notion of face is subject to cultural variation, so one should be aware in intercultural communication what kinds of acts may threaten face, what kinds of personal style in terms of graciousness, social relations, etc. are appreciated and what are not. In other words, face risk may be high in intercultural encounters, because the concept of politeness may be perceived differently.

With reference to India, it seems interesting to explore some interesting general politeness features. First of all, *please*, *thank you*, and *sorry* generally do not exist in Indian languages and are not used within families" (Sailaja, 2009: 88). That is to say, Indian people rarely use these formulas, and especially avoid them with members of family, relatives and friends.

However, I obtained a different result from the answers of my survey: in fact, as regards thanking, the interviewees affirmed that it is a good word and a kind gesture. It is used to appreciate the other person, and it makes people feel good. 3 out of 14 emphasises that it should be used also for small favours. One interviewee affirmed it showcases your values and manner, and another stated that if it is made by heart he also smiles. 2 participants affirmed they use it many times, and other 2 use it everyday. As regards social differences in thanking, 7 out of 14 people answered there is no difference between thanking an older person, a stranger or a friend, but there are 4 people who told that a difference may exist. In fact, an interviewee affirmed he touches the feet of elders to thank them, while he shakes hands if he thanks a friend or a stranger. Another one answered that formal thanking is saying "thank you", while informal one can be a hug. Another interviewee affirmed that thanking should be respectful for an elder, polite for a stranger, and informal for a friend.

As concerns apologies, they are considered good manners and a golden word that should be used if someone commits a mistake. 2 out of 14 interviewees affirmed it is good for maintaining relationships, while another participant affirms that apologies should be used to make people feel good, therefore it is beneficial and respectful. With reference to the social differences in apologising, 5 out of 14 people affirmed there is no difference between apologising an older person, a stranger or a friend, while 4 people affirmed that a difference exists. 2 of them stated that apology is formal with a stranger or elder, while it is informal with friends. Moreover, one interviewee affirmed that different apologies have to maintain a different level of dignity. This means that dignity depends on the person you should show your regret. Another participant stated he does not use apologies with friends.

Another striking feature of IndE discourse appears in its address forms: in fact, Indian speakers usually address their interlocutor as mother, brother, sister (*/ma'am/, bhaiya, bhena*). "Even complete strangers may be thus addressed [...]" (Kachru, Smith, 2008: 50); it follows that when they are at restaurants, they will call the waiter *bhaiya*, and when they want to show respect to an elder, they will address him or her using the words *uncle* or *aunt*. Moreover, at a professional level, the use of *sir* or *madam/ma'am* is expected for one's superior (Sailaja, 2009: 87).

As regards hospitality, if a guest wishes to refuse an offer, he or she has to find a polite way to do that. In fact, India culture does not "[...] defer to the wishes of the guests, it simply means that a refusal of offer for food or drink is not to be accepted readily" (Kachru, Smith 2008: 42); therefore, the guest would be encouraged to eat and drink some more, and the host will insist that he or she does so.

When I asked to the interviewees about offering, it emerged from their replies that Indian people love sharing and helping people. They consider offering a warm gesture (3 out of 14), while 2 interviewees affirmed that it is a gesture of politeness, another interviewee that it is a matter of respect, another one that it is a selfless gesture, another that it showcases your generosity, and other 2 people affirmed they usually offer something whole heartedly and happily. 3 out of 14 people mentioned the fact that they normally offer things to people: 2 of them mentioned food items,

but they also mentioned a newspaper as an object that may be offered, or to go forward if there is a queue. Moreover, one interviewee affirmed that Indians believe their guest should never go home with empty stomach: it follows that if you visit an Indian family, it will surely offer you something. Moreover, one participant affirmed that kindness costs nothing.

On the other hand, it appears that refusing an offer may be considered impolite, so 4 out of 14 interviewees affirmed that people should be polite in refusing, one stated that he finds a decent manner because he does not want the person to feel bad, 2 stated that it is good to hesitate, and 3 stated that they add a thanking formula to refuse an offer (i.e. by saying "*No, thank you*"), other 2 usually give an explanation, while one looks for an excuse rather than hurting the person's feelings. Moreover, 2 youths affirmed they do not like to refuse, and if it happens they procrastinate the refuse, while 2 others affirmed they rarely refuse. In sum, The majority of the interviewees said that it is good to refuse in a polite way.

3.4.3. Conversational topics

When people interact in intercultural encounters, they should be aware that some topics should be avoided. Each culture has its own norms (expectations about what should be done or how things should be done) and values (standards used for defining good and bad) which give us information about what is allowed in another culture and what is not (Shaules, 2007: 182). Therefore, some knowledge about law, formal rules, cultural and religious beliefs, values and attitudes seems to be necessary when dealing with dissimilar others.

Indian culture is labelled as an amalgamation of several cultures, languages, religions, customs, etc. Given its vast population and the extent of its territory, it is a multilingual, pluralistic, and multi-ethnic society. Therefore, it is very difficult to contrive a clear idea of culture, with common beliefs, attitude and values. In fact, Indian culture may change according to the geographical area, religion, family rank, generation, and so forth. Young people, especially those living in cities who may have

the opportunity to have a broader perspective of the world, are influenced by globalisation and contemporary trends, while older people, especially those in rural areas, may have a narrower view, and not be so open to changes.

Therefore, it seems important to know that in interaction with Indian people, one should pay attention to whom one is talking to, in order to avoid some topics that may undermine the outcome of the interaction. However, as it is not possible to know each individual's ideology at first sight, it is important to know some general areas of conversation that it is better to refrain from talking about.

India is known everywhere for its huge variety of religions: it is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. However, the majority of the Indian population practice Hinduism - in 1991, Hindus formed approximately 83% of India's population (Fuller, 2004: 5). When Hindus talk about their religion, they want other people to respect their beliefs and tradition, as any religious group does. Therefore, it is important to avoid topics such as the eating of beef with Hindu people. Cows are considered sacred animals, and as a consequence they are not killed.

Moreover, in India themes like sexuality and marriage are usually avoided. In fact, it is generally believed that people should not marry a person of another religion or class. In fact, there are some restrictions "[...] prohibiting marriage with certain relatives or between certain groups as they are considered incestuous or undesirable" (Rana, 1998: 3). It is important, therefore, to pay attention when talking about those topics as well.

In fact, according to the answers I collected from the survey, it results that 10 out of 14 of the interviewees affirmed that taboo topics exist in their culture, 2 said that they do not exist, while other 2 did not reply to the answer. However, it results that in India talking about sex is considered a taboo (5 out of 14 mentioned it as a taboo), one mentioned also homosexuality, another one adultery, and another one pornography. 2 youths mentioned also abortion, other 2 mentioned child marriage, one mentioned suicide and another one dowry. They explained that India has a vast diversity, so there are various people with different perspectives, thoughts and opinions. However, taboo is not compulsory, it depends on the people you are

speaking with. There are no rules which prohibit to talk about a certain subject, so people have independence to talk about what they want. However, there are some topics which are better to be avoided (especially with older people), and some rules should be followed (as covering the head by a scarf or stole while praying). One interviewee affirmed that as now more people are educated, the scenario has been changing. However, one should be aware that the above-mentioned topics may undermine a conversation with an Indian person, therefore a great deal of attention should be taken when mentioning them.

3.4.4. Behavioural habits

As has already been pointed out in chapter 1.2.2., cultures differ in values, norms, beliefs, traditions. More than that, every community has its own behavioural habits. Hofstede (2005) presents an 'Onion' which covers the four central concepts of culture: symbols, heroes, rituals and values. Values are clearly visible via Heroes - who are either alive or dead, real or imaginary people, who serves as models for behaving - and Rituals. Therefore those four concepts are "[...] attainable practises that can be learnt by outsiders" (Brighton, 2013: 43). In other words, observation of others' cultural behaviours helps people to understand what is accepted and what is not, what things can be done and what should be avoided.

Perhaps one of the most important practices a person should be aware of when dealing with an Indian regards dining etiquette: Indian people usually wash their hands before eating, because they do not use spoons or forks. In fact, they usually eat with hands. When they finish the meal, they go to wash their hands again, as no napkins are available. Eating with the hands may be considered impolite in many cultures, but it is good manners for Indian people. Moreover, burping is allowed in every moment and situation.

As concerns the question about dining etiquette I submitted to interviewees of the survey, I found out that 6 out of 14 people underlined that they eat with all the family members, and one of them also added that sometimes his mother feeds him

with her hands. 4 of them stated they pray God for giving them food before eating. One participant affirmed that Indians wash their hands and mouth before eating: in fact, 3 out of 14 affirmed that Indian people use their hands for eating. However, one participant affirmed that eating with bare hands is used now mainly in the south of India, but in north it is considered impolite. Another claimed, on the contrary, that Indians can start eating directly from the serving bowl. It results that usually Indian people do not consider impolite to eat with hands, and praying before eating is a ritual that many of them follow.

Strictly linked to this topic is also the one regarding the kind of food they do not eat. In fact, this question arises Indian's values as regard meat. In fact, 6 out of 14 declared to be vegetarian, while 3 of them affirmed they do not eat beef. Moreover, other 2 interviewees mentioned meat in their replies: one told he has never tried beef but he eats everything, the other one answered he eats everything except pork because he does not like the taste, but his culture restrains him from eating non-vegetarian food. It results an important issue of Indian culture, and more specifically, of Indian religion. However, just 2 out of 14 mentioned religion as an explanation: one affirmed it is due to religious beliefs, another one affirmed that cow is considered as a God in India, and more than that, it is the animal who gives milk and many more things. He also added that killing and eating a cow in India is not allowed. One participant also replied that in India they worship animals. Moreover, 2 youths affirmed they do not like hurting animals and then eat them with fun, and one went in more detail by saying that he does not support killing innocent animals by just giving a baseless reason of maintaining the biological chain. He thinks that people who eat non-vegetarian food do not think about the cycle, but just eat it because it is tasty, and this is wrong in his eyes. Another stated that is because he has an emotional heart and thinks that killing animal to eat is cruelty, and another one affirmed that is because he is kind with animals. It seems thus that Indian people do not like hurting animals (especially cows) but they worship them. They think killing animals is cruel. However, 2 out of 14 answered they eat everything, while one of them affirmed he does not eat only green vegetables for personal reasons. It follows that not all Indian people are

vegetarian, so exceptions may be found. In fact, one interviewee explained that even though he does not eat non-vegetarian food, most of the people around him like his family and friends eat non-vegetarian. However, it seems of great interest to know that cows are worshiped and not eaten by the majority of Indian people, so it is better to respect this belief and to avoid eating or talking about meat in front of them.

As regards clothing, it is good manners to respect Indian dress code: in fact, legs, shoulders, and breast should be covered. Those restrictions especially involve girls; therefore, if a woman does not respect them, it may happen that people start staring at her, and this may cause problems of safety. However, those restrictions do not depend on law or religion, but from general desire to keep women safe; therefore, it is highly recommended not to show woman's body because it is considered inappropriate.

However, 14 out of 14 of the interviewees affirmed they usually wear Western clothes, while they only use typical Indian dresses such as pyjamas for men and lehengas for women on some particular occasions (i.e. during festivals, functions, going to temple, family gathering). They said they prefer casual clothing for daily usages (i.e. t-shirts, jeans, leggings, sneakers). This may be considered an infiltration of globalisation in Indian reality, but even though they wear those Western cloths, they keep their legs, shoulders and neckline covered.

With reference to drinking and smoking, it is important to know that they are legal in India. However, people cannot drink alcohol or smoke anywhere and anytime. Many Indians consider drinking improper because of the bad effects that alcohol may cause. Moreover, girls usually do not smoke in public places. However, those restrictions usually depend on the area of India, and also on every family's mentality.

3.4.5. Non-verbal communication

According to Ting-Toomey (1999: 114), "nonverbal messages serve multiple functions in intercultural interaction. While verbal messages convey content meaning, non-verbal messages carry strong identity and relational meanings". Moreover, while

verbal messages usually involve human intention, non-verbal ones can be also unintentional: they can help to emphasize, substitute, or even contradict the verbal language. As regards intentionality, Key (1980: 22) emphasises that "many, if not most, of the behaviours are articulated out-of-awareness". It means that even though people use non-verbal communication daily, it is not clear how much they are able to perceive it.

This is why people of different cultures should pay attention in the use of non-verbal language: in fact, the same non-verbal signal can have a different meaning in another culture, and therefore, can create ambiguities and misunderstandings. A typical example regards the gesture which accompanies the affirmation "yes": while in many cultures it is usually combined with nodding (moving the head forward with a sudden movement), in India the gesture they use may be ambiguous. In fact, they move their head from left to right - which in other cultures is a sign of doubting instead of agreement.

With reference to other typical gestures which regard Hindu people, it can be mentioned the one of joining hands and bending down saying *Namastè* (hello, good morning) when they meet a person, and touching the feet of elder person in sign of respect. According to the interviewees of the survey, when they greet a person they use different signs, and this depend on the interlocutor: handshake is good with friends or in formal meetings (6 out of 14), 3 out of 14 mentioned hug when they meet a friend or family member, one said he waves hands, and other 2 replied they join hands. In fact, 5 out of 14 affirmed that Indian people usually say *Namastè* in greeting someone, while 6 out of 14 affirmed that they smile. 2 youths affirmed they touch the feet of elders to greet them, but it is also a sign used on their arrivals and before they leave, because it is considered respectful. Therefore, body contact is required when you greet a person, and greetings do change according to the social role of the interlocutor. It results that in general, it is good to smile and shake hands when you meet someone.

Non-verbal messages are powerful in communication, and are often the primary means of signalling one's emotions, attitudes and the nature of the

relationship with other people. They generally include facial expressions, bodily gestures, eye contact, touch, distance/proximity, posture, and so forth (Cucchiara, Vigo, 2006: 43). As regards eye contact in India, it seems from the results I obtained from the survey that Indian people usually gaze directly at their interlocutor: 9 out of 14 participants affirmed this for different motivations. 4 affirmed that it is to show confidence, one because he can gauge the interlocutor's attention level, one that it is a sign of active participation in a conversation. However, 2 youths said that with seniors or juniors eye contact is quite rude, and 3 participants stated they do not look directly at eyes.

In addition to this, non-verbal communication also includes physical cues such as skin colour, sex, age, hair, clothing, body shape, etc. As already noted in chapter 1.2.1., communication does not involve only the verbal language, but also the non-verbal language. Through appearance aspects one displays "[...] under voluntary control - hair, clothes, skin, bodily paint and adornment - and those less controllable - height, weight, etc" (Fiske, 1991: 68), one sends messages about one's personality, social status, and identity. Therefore, people may discern the group their interlocutor belongs to, and tend to respond to him or her via stereotypic group images.

In India, the adornment features such as clothing, jewellery, cosmetic and accessories reflect the cultural reality: women cover their legs and breast, the accessories they use tell us if they are married or not, and the bodily paint of Indian people suggests the religion they belong to.

3.4.6. Concepts

Every culture has different conceptions about issues like time, space, power, honour, and so forth. "Time and space are boundary-regulation and identity-protection issues", as Ting-Toomey states (1999: 127). This means that we do not want to feel unsafe and threatened: every individual wants to feel trusted, protected and included, and therefore, he or she builds a sort of personal sacred space. According to Fiske (1991:68), "how closely we approach someone can give a message about our

relationship". In fact, spatial distance depends on the nature of every relationship: with friends an intimate distance is conveyed, while in formal business transactions social distance is required. However, every culture has a different concept of space: given the large amount of people of India, less spatial distance is required compared to Western culture for example. However, 11 out of 14 interviewees stated that physical distance is needed in a conversation. 3 of them affirmed that it is good to maintain a comfort level of distance, and 2 affirmed that proximity depends on the relationship between interlocutors. One participant also added that it may depend on sex, while another one affirmed that distance is required to avoid transmission of bacteria.

The concept of time also varies from one culture to another: therefore, it is important in intercultural encounters to know how the dissimilar interlocutor perceives punctuality. In fact, in some cultures punctuality is considered a golden feature, while in others it may be not. Therefore, it seems important to get some knowledge on this in order to avoid any kind of trouble. As regards Indian point of view about punctuality, it seems they consider it to be an important virtue that everyone should have (12 out of 14 affirmed that), and 2 of the interviewees also affirmed that it reflects someone's personality. However, even though they consider polite to arrive on time, just one participant affirmed she is usually punctual. 6 of them affirmed that they may be late, and more than that, 2 interviewees stated that Indian culture lacks punctuality.

As regards the concepts of power and honour, it seems necessary to know that Indian culture is divided into castes: it is a system that

"[...] divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics: separation in matters of marriage and contact [...]; division of labour, each group having, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which their members can depart only within certain limits; and finally hierarchy, which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another" (Domont, 1980: 21).

The most respected and powerful caste is that of Brahmins (ancestors of priests), and then follows the Kshatriya (ancestors of warriors and kings), Vaishya

(ancestors of merchants and landowners) and Sudra one (ancestors of commoners, peasants and servants). However, subdivisions inside each caste exist. Furthermore, there are also some people who find themselves out of caste: they are called Other Backward Classes (OBC) or Schedule Caste (SC). Castism has influenced Indian culture, and also nowadays there are still restrictions as regards marriages, job, honour, etc. However, it seems important to know that those restrictions seem to have been attenuated in recent times.

As concern concepts, I asked the interviewees if there are some areas of Indian culture that they might be considered strange to someone from another culture. With this question I wished them to wonder about the cultural differences they perceive as dissimilar from other cultures. Some of the replies were very general, stating that many areas may be considered strange: 2 people mentioned that rural areas have strange traditions and false practices (i.e. they sacrifice goat in front of their Gods during festivals). One interviewee affirmed that the South part of India may be considered strange, because they have a total different culture. It seems those replies reflect also the interviewees' opinion about what they consider strange. 2 out of 14 affirmed that India has different cultures, so it results that extreme diversity from an area to the other exist. However, 3 out of 14 youths affirmed that food may be considered strange to an outsider, because sometimes it is very sweet and most of the times spicy. 2 people mentioned dresses (one in general, while the other one makes reference to the bright colours of clothes), then they mentioned as strange the following areas: marriage, relationships, castism, bare feet people, touching the feet of elders, worshipping of many Gods, worshipping animals, loud processions on roads, independence, scratching head and the existence of many languages.

3.5. CULTURAL LEARNING AS A MEANS TO OVERCOME CULTURE SHOCK

To acquire basic communicative competence in a culture, it is of paramount concern to be aware the most important differences which exist as regards verbal and non-verbal

use, habits, behaviours, concepts, and politeness strategies. This is why I have reported some concrete examples that reflect Indian reality. In fact, according to Byram's model (1997: 33), knowledge is a precondition in any intercultural situation, and therefore, it is the first step necessary to achieving ICC. Knowledge serves to overcome any possible misunderstanding in intercultural encounters, and help people to react positively to difference.

In fact, it may happen that people experience culture shock, which is "the anxiety that result from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Shaules, 2007: 106). In other words, it is the emotional traumatic reaction to a new environment, and it generally occurs when the culture we are interfacing is very different from the one we are accustomed to. People who find themselves out of their comfort zone may suffer an identity crisis, and they feel disoriented. Related to this, Weaver (1993) described three elements of culture shock: first, the loss of familiar cues; second, the breakdown of interpersonal communication; third and last, an identity crisis. This means that a person who is missing his or her typical behavioural routine or social environment, and is experiencing communicative alienation in a foreign context, may feel frustrated and anxious. Therefore, he or she may start to question his or her perceptions about the world, behaviours, values, and so forth.

It is believed that intercultural experience forces people to alter their views of the world. Knowledge about a culture as well as personal involvement in a new environment constitute a demand of change. Therefore, the areas I have described in this chapter serve first to think about other forms of organising and adapting to the needs of a culture and its environment, as well as to offer the possibility to develop appropriate skills - to interpret, relate, discover and interact - and critical awareness in order to negotiate identity, meanings, and attitudes with Indian culture. According to Ting-Toomey (1999: 266) "without culture-sensitive knowledge, communicators cannot become aware of the implicit 'ethnocentric lenses' they use to evaluate behaviours in an intercultural situation". That is to say, the challenging areas I have described constitute a basis for developing ICC when dealing with people living in India. Such information may help communicators to overcome linguistic and cultural

barriers, as well as culture shock, and may be considered a source of enrichment. Being able to negotiate in an intercultural encounter is an important ability which may lead to successful communication. In sum, cultural and linguistic learning are both essential factors in order to enrich people's knowledge and to acquire ICC.

CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND CASE STUDY ON INDIAN ENGLISH AND CULTURE

4.1. RESEARCH MOTIVATION

The ICC process has been described both theoretically and practically in the previous chapters. However, although some examples have been provided with reference to the Indian language and culture, I now wish to look into this potential process from another perspective. Therefore, this chapter is meant to explore ICC from a twofold point of view: from that of an outsider of Indian context and from two insiders who will be taken as case studies. Those divergent views may help to better understand the range of differences in communication from one culture to another, and to build an idea on how to enrich one's skills in communication when approaching otherness.

In fact, intercultural communication may be seen to be a process which enriches one's personal knowledge of another culture. Through interaction with a cultural stranger, one may obtain much information thanks to the way one's interlocutor speaks, and thanks to the gestures, behaviour, dress code, and so forth he or she displays. ICC requires an open-minded vision as well as intercultural competence, as it helps people to create new points of view about the world and wider perspectives. In fact, not everyone communicates and uses the same standardised patterns: every community has its own. That is why I was interested in exploring how an interlocutor may enrich his or her knowledge in language and non-language areas with reference to India. Once one has acquired such information, one may be more inclined to negotiate identities, meanings and attitudes with an Indian interlocutor of that specific social setting and therefore, might be able to interact effectively and appropriately. In other words, I wish to offer a basis to achieve satisfactory interaction and ICC.

However, knowledge and positive attitudes are only preconditions of intercultural competence. It has been already pointed out that Byram (1997: 34) calls for the need of five components to acquire intercultural competence: knowledge, attitude, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, plus critical awareness. Assessing knowledge is thus only a small part of what is involved. However, there are several ways to acquire information about another language and

culture: in the classroom, through fieldwork, or thanks to independent experience. Generally, the classroom is an ideal space for the systematic and structured presentation of knowledge, and it can offer the opportunity for the acquisition of skills under the guidance of a teacher. Fieldwork combines classroom activities with a period of residence. It allows for the development of skills in real time, particularly those linked to interaction, as well as experiencing the significance of non-verbal behaviour. Finally, "independent learning is a factor in life-long learning" (Byram, 1997: 69), and allows for the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes as a consequence of previous training.

Therefore, it seems important to develop a critical awareness and to have a cultural experience. The former is based in the classroom, while the latter is based mainly in residence in the foreign country (Byram, Morgan: 1994: 55). Direct experience in the cultural environment helps people to acquire insights into otherness, to step outside what is taken for granted, and more than that, to act on the basis of new perspectives.

All things considered, as I spent around two months in the heart of India, I personally experienced several linguistic and cultural differences during my daily life there. I learnt that everything that I previously considered to be an obstacle or a difficulty has proved to be a personal enrichment. I learnt how to communicate effectively with Indians, how to behave, what is considered polite and what should be avoided. This experience enriched me both personally and professionally, as being able to manage intercultural communication should be one of the prime interests of any linguistic and cultural mediator. With this study I want to offer my cultural experience as an example, and to describe the differences I observed during my journey. Moreover, I took advantage of two Indian interlocutors to explore more in depth their culture and IndE: therefore, I will also offer their vision in the following section.

4.2. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

India is known everywhere for its fascinating culture, for its notable religious diversity, for its immense population and its breath-taking landscapes. When someone thinks about India (s)he may imagine many lively colours, long coloured dresses, the flavour of spices, the typical music, the enchanting architecture of the temples, the splendour of the Taj Majal, and so forth. However, India cannot be portrayed just as an aggregation of positive and cheerful elements: it also has its dark side. India is also linked to poverty, people walking without shoes and sleeping in the street, low education, contagious diseases, mountains of rubbish in the streets, beggars, pollution and over-crowding.

A combination of these elements led me to choose India. I was interested in volunteering and joining an educational project in this country, as well as using English to communicate. I wanted to delve into another culture, to replace my fear of the unknown with curiosity, and to offer my efforts in order to do something helpful. More than that, this experience would help me to improve my fluency in English. In fact, I ended up speaking English for a significant amount of time, as it was the only possible means of communication. I joined the Aiesec association², and I left Italy on 28th February, 2015. My destination was Indore, the largest city of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. It lies in the heart of India, and I reached it on the evening of that day. I lived there until the 18th April 2015.

I did not know what to expect from that experience. I just wanted to improve my language skills, to discover different ways of communication, to explore different lifestyles, to offer my help and efforts volunteering in a school. I found myself out of my comfort zone, and I did not know how hard it could be. However, I had the

² AIESEC is the world's largest youth-led network creating positive impact through personal development and shared globalised experiences. AIESEC was officially founded in 1948. According to its most recent annual report (2013), AIESEC is set in 123 countries and territories. It enable 26,000 international placements, coordinated by 70,000 AIESECers. Its vision is to spread peace and to fulfil humankind's potential, while its values include striving the excellence, demonstrating integrity, activating leadership, acting sustainably, enjoying participation and living diversity.

opportunity to understand personally the challenges of intercultural communication, and to enrich my knowledge about Indian culture.

Therefore, I will offer with this study a narrative enquiry about my life experience in India, and I will describe the differences I noticed, as I can state I was playing the role of a participant observer in Indian context. The participant observation method (Dei, 2012), fostered by the Polish anthropologist Malinowski in the 20th century, helped me to verify the theory about Indian English and culture. Living in a community, experiencing its daily life, communicating with its members and taking part of the typical cultural rituals allow people to better understand a culture, and lead them to acquire a competence in intercultural communication. Therefore, the fieldwork model helped me to collect some relevant data which can be significant for qualitative research. In fact, my aim is to provide with this study some information that can be useful for anyone who wishes to communicate with Indian people - more precisely, with that specific ethnographic context -, so those results may be a basis for negotiating identities, meanings and attitudes. Knowledge about a culture is a precondition in order to create a third space for communication and celebrate difference.

4.2.1. Language

The first thing that struck me was the language: I was aware of the different accent and pronunciation of Indian English but I was not ready for it. It was difficult at the beginning to understand each of the people I met, because everyone had his or her own way of speaking. However, it was just a matter of habit: once you understand someone's accent, you have no further problems in understanding him or her.

I was especially impressed by how Indian people pronounce some sounds such as /w/ and /θ/ in words like *want*, *work*, *think* or *two*. Moreover, the accent is very different from British and American standards, also in its rhythm and intonation. However, it was interesting to discover that they also change language while speaking: I mean, they sometimes switch from IndE to Hindi: they may start to talk in a language

and then switch it, or just use some Hindi words in their IndE statements. This feature is very common in India due to its multilingual situation. Therefore, one can hear sentences such as "I want some *paani*" instead of "I want some water". Moreover, they usually address their interlocutors as *bhaiya* (brother) or *bhena* (sister) if they are of the same age, *uncle*, *aunt* or *mam* if they are elder people. Therefore I felt their *bhena*, and I used those words too to address them.

I had the opportunity to meet a wide range of people: children in the school, the young people of the Aiesec association who helped me a lot, and also adult Indians: therefore, I could interact with different genders and ages. I lived in a hostel for a week, and then I moved to a flat. A family there took care of me and the other interns. I felt at home: that family soon turned out to be a real family for me. They pampered me, we did many things together, and they also helped me to integrate.

I also learnt that not everyone speaks English in India: only educated people who go to school are able to master it. So if you go around and you need any kind of information, it is hard to find someone who is able to reply. However, people in restaurants or hotels usually speak it.

4.2.2. Clothing

The second thing I was struck by was the dress code: not that of men, but that of women. In fact, I was confused by the fact that women should cover their legs and neckline, but can show their belly. They usually wear the sari, a typical Indian female dress which is a strip of unstitched long cloth draped over the body in various styles. It is typically wrapped around the waist, with one end draped over the shoulder, exposing the belly. I was little prepared for this, so I brought with me just long dresses and trousers, and I did not go around with bare shoulders. I think the most important thing when someone travels is to respect: that is why I adapted to their cultural beliefs. I do not consider vulgar to show a woman's legs, neckline, and shoulders, but as Indian people do, I totally accepted it.

However, it is also now common to wear contemporary clothing, as India was exposed to international fashion and this led to a fusion of Western and Indian styles of clothing. Especially among youths, traditional Indian clothing such as the kurta has been combined with jeans or leggings due to its relative comfort.

I was fascinated by the great variety of colours they typically wear. Those colours make me think about the Indian multitudes of outlooks, lifestyles, festivals and traditions. It was so strange and at the same time so enchanting to see how those long vibrant dresses can change the external environment and also one's personal perception of the fashion of another culture.

4.2.3. Food and dining etiquette

I was surprised by the Indian dining etiquette. The table manners are completely different from the ones that I am accustomed to. Indian people do not generally use forks and spoons: they simply eat with their hands. In fact, food has to be consumed with one hand only, that is the right one. It is a good habit to wash one's hands before the meal, and to wash them again after it. Indeed, no napkins are used at tables. Also soups, which are usually eaten using a spoon, are eaten with the hands: you should pour the soup in a dish and mix it with *chapati* - the typical Indian flatbread.

As regards the food, it is very important to know that the majority of the Indian population are vegetarian. More than that, I learnt that it is impolite and also forbidden to talk about beef, not just when you are eating, but always. Cows are considered sacred animals by Hindus, and therefore they are a symbol of religion. Hence beef is not available in most restaurants in India, and it is also hard to find restaurants where meat is served. The only meat you may sometimes find is that of pork or goose.

However, in India you can find a great variety of spices, vegetables, fruit and herbs. Indian cuisine offers a wide variety of regional dishes. Another problem that I faced there was that Indians love spicy food. More than this, they do not understand the meaning of non-spicy food. If you ask for a non-spicy dish, you will surely feel your

lips burning after the first bite. What is more spicy for us, is completely non-spicy for them.

As concerns the beverages, they usually drink chai - a flavoured black tea beverage that is mingled with aromatic Indian spices and milk - instead of coffee. It is polite to offer chai when someone comes to meet you, and it is also consumed for breakfast and in the mid-afternoon. I was also impressed by the fact that the majority of Indians do not consume alcohol. There are some laws that limit the sale and consumption of it. Therefore, you can drink alcohol in some discos, but it may happen that in some restaurants the alcoholic beverage menu does not exist at all.

4.2.4. Public spaces and cleanliness

When one thinks about India, one knows that it is a developing country, and therefore, the landscape is completely different from the one of the developed nations. I was prepared to face poverty, beggars and people sleeping in the street. However, the impact with Indian reality was very strong.

First of all, the majority of buildings are very old, both in cities and villages. Indian shops usually do not have shop windows - except the most modern ones. Fruit and vegetables are sold everywhere, also in the traffic dividers. Modern houses are raised near huts. Temples are scattered everywhere. Trash and garbage, along with stray animals, are a common sight in urban and rural areas of India. More than that, due to India's high-concentrated population, you will never find a corner with nobody standing there.

Above of all, I was impressed by animals wandering in streets. There are cows, dogs and pigs everywhere, also on lanes. So if you are driving, you should pay attention to them. As stated before, the majority of Indian people are vegetarian and respect animals, as they are considered sacred.

Moreover, I was shocked by the significant amount of waste that dominates the Indian landscape. Street corners, rivers and canals are piled with trash. Everything is so dirty compared to my Western country. It is usual to throw everything where you

want, as there is a lack of a waste-management programme. In fact, there are few dustbins around the cities, and people are not accustomed to preventing solid waste pollution.

On the contrary, Indian women are obsessed with cleaning the floor of their houses. This is linked to a religious belief: if people keep their homes clean, Indian gods will visit their home and bring to them health, wealth and happiness.

4.2.5. The driving system

India adopted the English driving system, so they drive on the left. What is surprising about their driving system is that they do not have strictly fixed rules. They sound their horns every time they want to overtake any means of transport. This causes a significant problem in terms of noise pollution.

More than this, there is no limit to the number of people who can enter a vehicle. Seven people can get into a car. Five people without a helmet on a bike. Slalom is allowed, and Indian driving is thus very unusual for an outsider. As concerns public means of transport, many of them have some seats that are reserved for women. This is because the Indian government supports women's empowerment. An Indian explained to me that it is because Indian government wants to support women, as they are equally powerful and talented as men. Perhaps this can be linked to an Indian belief which considered women inferior to men, but now things are changing and this measure may be considered a step towards gender equality. However, not every public means of transport reserves those seats for women.

I was surprised to discover the use of auto-rickshaws as taxis. It is a three-wheeled motorised cabin cycle, suited for short distances, as the carriage is open and they are quite slow. They are also very cheap, and when one uses it, one should bargain the price.

4.2.6. Symbology

I learnt from my experience in India that everything there has a meaning. Every object is a symbol of something. The majority of symbols are linked to Hinduism. For example I can mention the *rudraksha*: this is a necklace made of the seeds of the rudraksha tree, which represent the tears of Lord Shiva. That necklace is a symbol of protection, health and happiness. Another common religious symbol is the tilaka: it is a mark that is painted on the forehead as a sign of spiritual devotion. Moreover, there are some necklaces, rings, anklets and other accessories which are only used by married woman.

4.2.7. Experience at school

I volunteered as a teacher in a summer camp in Indore. As a teacher, I helped the children to improve their English and knowledge of other subjects. We conducted many activities related to several topics such as geography, cultural differences, vocabulary enrichment, spelling, maths, arts and crafts, aerobics and sport. Moreover, we danced together, we baked cakes, we watched fairy tales, and we played a lot of games (role play, word chains, etc.). I wanted to give them a global perspective: they learnt a lot from me, my country and about the world, and I learnt a lot from them. I realized that responsibility, patience, and dedication are required when working with children, and this helped me to improve professionally.

4.2.8. Conclusions

All things considered, after this experience I feel enriched, both personally and professionally. I learnt how to adapt to each and every situation, how to overcome disparities, how to face difficulties, and how to accept, respect, adapt and integrate. I can now affirm that I was able to go beyond cultural differences and ethnocentric assumptions, and to integrate into Indian culture. I expanded not only my knowledge

about another language and culture, but also my perspectives and worldview. Discovering new ways of life teaches you to be open-minded, flexible, to suspend judgments, and to foster greater sensitivity towards "otherness". Therefore, I can state that I learned to negotiate identities, meanings and attitudes, and to develop an intercultural communicative competence.

4.3. CASE STUDIES

My personal narrative may be an example of what an outsider may experience when facing a different culture and setting. As I was a participant observer of India reality, I had the opportunity to challenge the difference and to make the stranger more familiar: in other words, I had the chance to acquire an insight into otherness and, as a consequence, to develop ICC regarding the Indian context. However, with this study I wish to offer not only my experience, but I also aim to focus on the Indian perspective. Therefore, I chose two Indian interviewees and I questioned them about the challenging areas I have already discussed in chapter 3. The questions I submitted to them were the same as those of the survey used with the small group of young Indian people, but I included further semi-structured questions because my aim was to obtain a broader understanding of human phenomena using a context-specific and subject-specific examples. The aim of these case studies is to understand the richness, complexity and multiple perspectives of ICC. I have compared the replies of the two participants in order to capture the similarities and differences of viewpoints and behaviours which characterise social actors who live in a specific environment (in the area of Indore city). The case studies are two young Hindi men living in the area of Indore (Madhya Pradesh), and I will refer to them as Case Study 1 (23 years old) and Case Study 2 (22 years old) in my report.

4.3.1. Language

The first area of the survey introduces the language dimension in intercultural communication. As the focus of this study is on intercultural encounters, Indian English was taken into consideration in the questions. As mentioned in Chapter 1.3.2. and more deeply in chapter 3, IndE is used as a second language (SL) in India, and it is of my interest as a 'contact language' used in ELF interactions (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7). As it is a variety of English, I wished to obtain more knowledge about the place of English in India, how and when Indian people learn IndE, about its usage in daily life, and about how they feel in speaking it. I wished to understand which identity those case studies feel to belong to according to their perception of language and culture. In fact, it has been emphasised in chapter 2.1.1. the strong link that ties identity to language and culture. Every individual develops a specific identity that depends on both the community of native speakers the person is delved into and on its culture (Byram, 2012: 85). Therefore, the majority of Indian verbal and non-verbal symbols rely on the native language and the national culture.

As regards the acquisition of English in India, both interviewees affirmed they learnt English at school, but with a difference. In fact, Case Study 1 started learning it when he was 3 years old, while Case Study 2 at the age of 8. In India children start learning English as soon as they are admitted to schools: as it has already pointed out in chapter 3.3., two types of institutes exist and they are known as English medium - where English is taught at the age of 3 - and Indian language medium - at the age of 10. However, Case Study 2 learnt English also from his family, friends, and playground.

Their approach towards English seems to be quite different: Case Study 2 speaks English more than Hindi daily (60% English vs 40% Hindi), while Case Study 1 speaks just 10% English compared to 90% Hindi. In fact, Case Study 1 does not consider English to be his own language, and affirmed that he loves undoubtedly speaking Hindi. However, he finds English a good and necessary language, as it serves to communicate with different people around the world. On the contrary, Case Study 2 affirmed he was not comfortable with English when he started to learn it, but now he

feels very familiar with it. Although he affirmed that he cannot consider English to be his language - as it was imported during the British Empire - he also stressed that it is a shared language that breaks communication barriers between different languages and people. As Hindi changes from one region to another, English seems to be common for all; therefore, he underlined the importance of English not only in communication with foreign people, but also with other Indian people.

More than that, it appears that Case Study 1 speaks English mostly with foreign people and rarely with friends, while Case Study 2 speaks it mostly at his work place, but also with friends, colleagues, and foreign people. However, it emerges that when they speak informal English, they both mix English words with Hindi ones: this confirms the existence in India of the code-switching phenomenon which has been discussed in chapter 3.4.1. Case Study 2 affirmed that this use is called 'Hinglish'. When I asked him to give me a definition of Hinglish he answered: "*Hinglish is using English with a mixture of Hindi*" (i.e. "*Behna I love you bhot saara*", which means "Sister, I love you a lot"). Afterwards, I also asked to Case Study 1 to give me a definition of that phenomenon and he replied that "*Hinglish is a common word that is used to describe mixture of Hindi and English*".

Looking back at the theory of Englishes around the world, I was wondering if they feel English to be their second language (SL) - as it is officially recognised in India - or if they feel it to be a foreign language. Therefore, I asked them to think about it and to explain the reasons. Case Study 2 affirmed that both options are valid in his opinion: English is the second language of India, but as it was imported it is a foreign language. On the contrary, Case Study 1 stated it is just a foreign language in his opinion, because it did not originate in India. Moreover, he added he considers the regional language as its second language.

As regards formal language, it appears that it is used especially at work, with teachers, strangers and people who have authority. Case Study 2 emphasised that formality depends on seniority and position in terms of money and power. Moreover, Case Study 1 added that with elders you can speak casual English but one should be respectful to them. Both interviewees affirmed they prefer to talk using easier and

common words and expressions because people can understand them better (*"traveller"* instead of *"voyager"*, *"dude, you are a expert at your job"* rather than *"dude, you are a virtuoso"*).

With reference to the turn talking system, it appears that it is impolite to interrupt or overlap in formal contexts (at work, school, etc.) or with older people of family or out of it. In fact, one has to first listen and then one can only speak when pauses or silence occur. Interrupting and overlapping may happen with friends and it not impolite. Case Study 1 stated that silence is obligatory when praying, while Case Study 2 affirmed it is necessary while the national anthem is played.

4.3.2. Politeness

Kachru and Smith (2008: 41) emphasise that "the concept of politeness is crucial in any communication, but it is more so in crosscultural communication". In fact, politeness may vary across cultures: even though some similarities may exist, there are also some differences, which, if not aware of, may create problems for both interlocutors. With reference to politeness area, I was particularly interested in exploring the use of thanking and apologising in Indian culture, as well as to understand how Indian people perceive the concepts of offering and refusing plus how they usually express agreement and disagreement.

As regards thanking, both participants stressed the importance of thanking also when it is used for small gifts or favours. It shows one's good and kind nature. They stated that formal thanking is required with strangers and can be accompanied with a handshake, while with friends it is informal and can include kissing or hugging. With elders, thanking should be respectful, and Indian people usually touch the feet of older people to thank them. Case Study 2 affirmed that this gesture is also used when apologising, and stressed that apologising with strangers should be formal, while with friends it has no particular features. Case Study 1 stated that joining both hands, as Indians do while praying, is their cultural gesture while apologizing, but it is very rare these days. Case Study 2 thinks apologies are beneficial and make people feel good,

and Case Study 1 affirmed that people have to apologize until they are being apologized, so one should not irritate someone by saying sorry again and again. The gestures of touching the feet of elders and that of joining both hands can be linked to typical Indian gestures to show politeness and respect. In fact, as it has been pointed out in chapter 3.4.2., "politeness is closely tied to cultural values" (Kachru, Smith 2008: 42), and therefore, the parameters of politeness may vary according to the culture one belongs to.

When I asked about offering, both interviewees answered they always offer something to people when they are around. It emerges that they first thought about offering something to poor people such as food or newspapers (they affirmed "*Indians love sharing*" and "*kindness costs nothing*") rather than thinking about offering in more general terms. Therefore, I asked them if it is polite to offer something if a guest comes to visit their home, and they both affirmed that it is very polite to offer something to drink and eat (i.e. tea). However, Case Study 1 affirmed it is common that the guest rejects the offer on the first call, so it is polite to offer it twice or thrice. This seems to explain the reason why the guest is usually encouraged to eat and drink some more, as it has already been discussed in chapter 3.4.2.

As regards refusing, they both stated that it is not impolite to refuse if you do it politely, so they add a thanking formula if this occurs (i.e. "*No, thank you*"). Case Study 1 stated he usually explains the reason (i.e. "*No, thanks, I have it of my own and really thanks to you for offering*"), especially if a poor person or a person from a scheduled caste offers something to him, because he does not want them to feel discriminated against, while Case Study 2 said it depends on the offer: sometimes he explained the reason of his refusal and other times he does not.

As regards agreement and disagreement, they both mentioned a smile as a typical gesture of agreement. Attention should be taken with disagreement: in fact, it can be considered rude, so Case Study 2 usually apologises for his disagreement and elaborates a convincing and genuine reason for it, while Case Study 1 prefers to express his disagreement in private. They both added that the vertical movement of head shows agreement, while the horizontal one shows disagreement. However, there

is another head movement used for agreement that may be ambiguous for an outsider: they sometimes move their head from left to right - which in other cultures is a sign of doubting instead of agreement. As it has been stated many times throughout this study, attention should be kept when using gestures.

4.3.3. Conversational Topics

As has already been discussed in chapter 2.2., a shared language is the basic element required in any intercultural communication, but it seems to be not enough in order to communicate appropriately. In fact, ICC requires knowledge of the target culture; in other words, the interlocutor's cultural background has turned to be a key aspect to achieve communication satisfaction, because it helps people to avoid misunderstandings and embarrassing situations. Therefore, every individual acquires the knowledge of his or her community, but also develops his or her own personality that is linked to one's experiences, participation and observation of the surrounding environment. As a result, each person forms his or her own identity, and part of it is strictly connected to one's cultural background.

Therefore, it seems of overwhelming importance to recognise the interlocutor as a member of a specific community, who shares with it a common set of features, norms, values and beliefs. A great deal of attention is required when someone talks with a cultural stranger, especially as regards the topics of conversation, as I have already pointed out in chapter 3.4.3. In fact, some topics are avoided in several cultures because they are considered rude, impolite, vulgar or immoral. As the main goal of ICC is to achieve effective communication, people should respect the interlocutor's restrictions in conversational topics. More than that, as English is used by different interlocutors with a different degree of competence and it also reflects one's culture with its grammar system, values and beliefs, intercultural communication does require negotiation of meanings as it has been stated in chapter 2.3. as well as in chapter 1.3.2. with reference to the necessity of acquiring a pragmatic competence.

When I asked the two participants whether there are some topics that should be avoided in conversations in their culture, I surprisingly received two different replies: on the one hand, Case Study 2 affirms that they exist but they are not compulsory, on the other hand Case Study 1 affirmed that no taboo topic exists. However, it seems that Case Study 2 thought more about the behaviour rather than topics of conversation: in fact, he stated that smoking in public, doing sexual activities in public, and violence are considered taboos, because smoking in public is harming others, sex is considered very private, and violence is considered the worst thing because Indians want to live in a peaceful society. On the other hand, Case Study 1 stated that what the other interviewees of the survey affirmed to be taboo topics (i.e. sex, homosexuality, adultery, pornography, child marriage, abortion, beef, suicide), are not even a matter of discussion in his culture. In fact, he affirmed that there are many people in India who do not follow the culture. Abortion, suicide, eating beef are not practised in Indian culture, therefore who practises them seems to belong not to Indian culture.

As concerns the question about small talk, Case Study 2 affirmed that he usually initiates his conversation by saying "*excuse me*", while Case Study 1 generally says "*Namaste*", which in Indian means "hello" and also added a question about the interlocutor's health (i.e. "*is everything fine?*"). To avoid silence, he asks something like "*what's up?*", while Case Study 2 starts asking about general information of his interlocutor.

4.3.4. Behavioural habits

Not only should people pay attention to the topics of conversation when interacting with a person of another culture, but they should be ready to negotiate the interlocutor's attitudes. There may exist some behaviours that might be strange for an outsider, and may also be considered as bad manners. However, "IC is a question of openness to the differences to the others" (Cucchiara, Vigo; 2006: 45), and therefore, not only awareness about the most common behaviours of the target culture seems to

be really important when having a conversation with a cultural other, but it is necessary in order to be a skilled intercultural mediator to respect and tolerate the other's attitudes and gestures, as it has been emphasised in chapter 2.2.

As regards Indian culture, the most sticking behavioural habits I was interested to explore are linked to Indian food and dining etiquette, cloths, attitude towards the environment and animals, and crying in public. As both interlocutors are vegetarian, they do not support killing innocent animals to eat them. Anything related to the cow is considered very spiritual in India; they worship cows, so if someone talks about beef or eats it in front of them, they consider this behaviour as very brutal and impolite. Moreover, they both added that the typical dining etiquette requires the washing of hands and mouth before going to the table, as Indian people usually eat with the hands (forks are not commonly used in Indian homes, while it may happen to see people using spoons). According to Case Study 1, in his culture people should not talk while eating, but it is now very rare to find people following this rule. In fact, Case Study 2 affirmed that it is good to interact with people, because it is said in India that *"guests are always welcomed"*. He also added that he usually prays before eating, while Case Study 1 stressed the fact that originally people ate on floor. As regards clothing, both interviewees affirmed they usually wear Western clothing, and they only use typical Indian dress on some occasions (i.e. festivals, functions). They think that everyone should have the right to wear what he or she wishes, also girls. However, they stated that girls usually do not wear miniskirts or shorts because they are Western clothing, and people are not comfortable with them. As regards cleanliness of public spaces, they both affirmed that if they have to throw something, they look for a dustbin. They consider impolite to throw waste on the pavement, and Case Study 2 stated that it is also against the law, even though some people follow it and some others do not. When they replied to the question about their opinion about free animals in the street, it appears that they care about them. Case study 1 affirmed that there should be proper management regarding free animals as they may cause accidents and may cause diseases. With reference to crying in public, Case Study 1 thinks it is good to hide emotions in public because people should hide their weaker

part, while Case Study 2 thinks that crying is an emotional behaviour which is accepted by everyone.

4.3.5. Non-verbal communication

Knowledge about dissimilar others' habits and verbal strategies is not enough in order to become an intercultural communicator: non-verbal language plays an important role too, as has already been pointed out in chapter 1.2.1. According to Cucchiara and Vigo (2006: 43), it relates to paralinguistic features (e.g. body language, facial expressions, eye contact, distance/proxemics, etc.). Therefore, it is important to obtain some knowledge about the most common non-linguistic signs which are used in a culture, especially those which regard the gaze, body contact and typical gestures in some particular situations. In fact, every culture has its system of non-verbal signs, and some of them may be universal, others may be culturally-linked and others may be the same even though their meaning can differ in another culture, and therefore, can create ambiguities and misunderstandings, as has already been discussed in chapter 3.4.5. Again, negotiation of attitudes is needed when communicating with a cultural other.

I questioned the interviewees about eye and body contact, typical Indian gestures in general, and the ones needed when welcoming or saying goodbye to a person. As concerns eye contact, both interviewees affirmed they gaze at their interlocutor's eyes because this makes people think of them as more confident people. However, case Study 2 stated that it is considered impolite to look into elders' eyes, because one should show respect to them. As regards body contact, they mentioned that touching the feet of the elders and teachers is a regular gesture in Indian society, and it is used to give them respect and to take all the positive things from that person. This gesture can be considered typical of Indian culture, and may be labelled as strange to many cultures. Other body contacts may be a handshake with a stranger, hugs with friends.

As regards the gestures when greeting a person, they affirm that joining hands is used to say "hello" when you welcome someone, waving hands is used for saying goodbye if the person is far, while shaking hands is used when the person is nearer. However, with elders it is common to touch their feet, while with friends hugging is common.

4.3.6. Concepts

As every culture has different perspectives as regards concepts of space, time power, honour, and so forth, I was interested in investigating how they feel about punctuality and social distance in communication. In fact, it has been stated in chapter 3.4.6. that those concepts are essential in intercultural communication in order to avoid misunderstandings and embarrassing situations. Many cultures do not consider distance between interlocutors as essential, while others may feel discomfort if their territory is 'invaded' (Ting-Toomey. 1999: 127). As regards the concept of time, it may vary across cultures, and knowing the feeling about punctuality of a culture seems to be important in intercultural encounters. In fact, many cultures perceive punctuality as an essential quality, and so they do not bear lateness. On the contrary, there are others who perceive delay as a normal habit. Moreover, I was interested in knowing the Indians' point of view about what they think that might be strange to someone from another culture, so I also questioned the interlocutors about that.

As regards punctuality, both interviewees think it is very impolite to arrive late in any situation, because not only the person who is late loses his or her important time but also he is wasting the time of others. They believe that punctuality is an important virtue, so they try to arrive on time. With reference to proximity, they both affirmed it depends on the situation. Case Study 2 stated there should be a standard distance to avoid communicable bacteria, while Case Study 1 added that couples should avoid proximity in front of elders of the family, because it may be considered impolite. As regards the areas that may be considered strange for an outsider they mentioned Indian spicy food, Indian dresses, Indian traffic, relationships, marriages, lack of punctuality, the existence of various festivals, free animals on streets,

worshipping the cow, and the generosity of Indian people. Therefore, they recognise these areas as culturally-linked to Indian reality, and they caught the difference between their habits, beliefs, attitudes, and values compared to other cultures.

4.4. ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES

Once I read the results of the survey I submitted to the two interviewees I was impressed by the way they expressed their emotions, judgments and evaluation (Brombin, 2002: 401) in the answers they gave me. Therefore, I was interested in analysing their replies not only in terms of their content, but I also wished to focus on the lexicon they used. In fact, the words and the grammar used refer to their system of beliefs; in other words, to their culture. Therefore, I used the computer program AntConc to investigate the most common words they used and to obtain some information about how they express themselves when they are questioned about some areas of their culture.

As regards the lexicon, the words *elders* and *senior* captured my attention. *Elders* is mentioned 17 times (13 times by Case Study 1 and 5 times by Case Study 2), while *senior* is used only by Case Study 2 in 3 different sentences, but it was also widely used in the answers I obtained from the general survey. *Senior* is used for a person who is elder or of a higher designation. When they mention those words it seems they are arranging those people in a sort of social pyramid, in which they are situated in the highest level. They always use a tone of respect when mentioning them, and in most cases those words are used in relation to the gesture of touching the feet. It appears that Indian people hold in high regard older people, and consider them a source of inspiration. Therefore, older people in India should be respected and honoured. The word *respect* was used in their replies 7 times as a noun (i.e. "*showing respect to the elders*"), and only one time as a verb, and, as it has been just stated, it was almost used with reference to older people.

The nouns *heart*, *God*, and *smile* are used respectively 4, 5, and 7 times throughout their answers. *Heart* is employed as a general term by case Study 1, who

emphasised the fact that Indians are "*heart touching*" and good people, while Case Study 2 used it both to refer to himself (i.e. "*I have an emotional heart*"), but also in more general terms talking about Indian people. Consequently, the use of the word *God* demonstrates clearly the strong link that Indian people have with religion. Case Study 1 mentioned God with reference to prayer times, while Case Study 2 mentioned it one time for moments of prayer, and the other 2 times with reference to animals. In fact, he believes God lives in animals, especially in the cow. 4 out of the 7 times, *smile* was used as a noun, while the other ones as a verb. However, its usage was almost connected with signs of agreement or disagreement, thanking and apologizing. This gesture may reflect Indians' personality: perhaps smiling is considered an important sign in many situations.

As concerns the verbs, I was interested in analysing the modal verbs employed by the two interlocutors. As is well-known, the use of a modal rather than another may be crucial: in fact, the interlocutor's intention changes according to the modal he or she chooses. Modals are used to express evaluations and are influenced by the speaker's attitude toward something. This means that the choice depends on personal evaluations which are linked to one's cultural background and individual experiences.

With reference to obligation and duty, I wished to understand their preferences in the use of *should/ have to/ must* in their replies. According to *Advanced Grammar in Use* (Hewings, 2013: 36-38), *should* is usually employed to talk about obligations and recommendations, but it indicates a less stronger duty compared to the modal verbs *must* or *have to*. In fact, while *should* is merely an advice, *must* is used in formal rules, regulations and warnings. In other words, it is a stronger recommendation, and it is usually used as a subjective obligation, while *have to* indicates necessity and objective obligation. It results that the verb *should* was used 7 times by Case Study 1 and 3 times by Case Study 2. It was almost used to indicate duty or recommendation (i.e. "*one should not irritate*", "*we should not talk while eating*", "*there should be a standard distance*"). It seems they were thinking about Indian common systems of rules and norms when replying; in other words they referred to

their culture. As they know what is allowed and what is not, it appears they reported Indians' common rules in their answers. However, *must* is never used in their replies, while *have to* is used 3 times but with reference to personal obligation.

Possibility (Hewings, 2013: 30-34) is expressed using *can*, *may* and *might*. *Can* is the most used verb (it was used 13 times by Case Study 1 and 15 times by Case Study 2), while *may* is only used by Case Study 1 in 5 sentences, and *might* is used 3 times by Case Study 1 and one time by Case Study 2. While *may* is used to suggest something that is possible, *might* suggests a smaller possibility. On the contrary, *can* indicates that something is possible and actually happens.

As regards the adjectives, the most frequently used are *good* and *impolite* (18 times). It seems that they are used as opposites: what is good is not impolite, and what is impolite is not good. In fact, they used these adjectives when referring to good or bad manners, that is to say to explain what is considered polite and what is not in their culture (i.e. "*it is not good to overlap*", "*thanking someone is a good gesture*", "*it is impolite to throw things on the ground*", "*it is very impolite reaching late*"). However, Case Study 2 used *good* 3 times in association with the word English (i.e. *good English*), and he explained that he refers to its formal and high vocabulary use. *Polite* and *bad* are only used 5 times, while *improper* and *rude* are used 6 times. Again, those adjectives are used with reference to their system of judgments, evaluation and belief.

The most used adverb is *generally* (i.e. "*generally guests reject the offer on the first call*", "*I generally say Namastè*", "*generally in India people are very helpful*") but it was only employed by Case Study 1. It seems he wanted to report what he considers to be a general rule or behaviour in India. Case Study 1 was also the only one who used the adjective *important* in 7 sentences (i.e. "*it is important to listen what other people speak*", "*I believe punctuality is an important virtue*", "*it is important to learn English*"), and the verb *love* 5 times (i.e. "*we Indians love sharing*" "*one thing is present in abundance in India and that is LOVE*", "*I love speaking Hindi*"). The way he expressed himself in his answers reflects what he thinks about his culture, and does include all the elements that are hidden in the cultural iceberg (see Chapter 1.2.2.). The unconscious meanings, values, norms of the 'deep culture' emerge in his replies, in his

thoughts and his lexical choice. The same cultural background emerges from Case Study 2's replies, even though the lexical choices sometimes vary. For example, Case Study 2 was the only one who used the adjectives *compulsory* and *comfortable* 4 times (i.e. "*it is not compulsory to speak in English with people*", "*English is compulsory when I speak to someone new*", "*I was not comfortable with English*").

4.5. CONCLUSIONS

The comparison of these two cases demonstrates the complexity of the Indian reality: the interviewees revealed a different attitude towards Indian English, and that dissimilar behaviours and viewpoints may exist even in the same culture. In fact, as regards language, Case Study 1 does not use English frequently for a twofold reason: on the one hand, the majority of the people around him do not speak English, on the other hand, he prefers speaking Hindi. On the contrary, Case Study 2 speaks more English than Hindi daily, and not only with strangers, but also with friends and colleagues.

As regards politeness, they have quite same opinions, and the striking feature they mentioned and that can be of interested for an outsider, is that Indian people usually touch the feet of elders as a sign of respect, and this gesture may also occur when thanking, apologising or greeting them. Thanking and apologising are considered good behaviours, and it results that Indian people love sharing and offering. Attention should be taken when refusing and disagreeing: politeness is always required in those situations.

With reference to conversation topics, some differences emerged in the interlocutors' opinion about what is taboo in their culture. It seems that there are no rules which prohibit people from talking about something, but Case Study 2 affirmed that some behaviours linked to smoking, sex and violence should be avoided, while Case Study 2 affirmed that topics such as sex, homosexuality, adultery, pornography, child marriage, abortion, beef, suicide, are not even a matter of discussion in his culture, and added that people who practice abortion, suicide, and eat beef do not

follow the culture. Therefore, even though he affirmed that no taboos exist in his culture, it seems that his explanation is stating the contrary: by saying that these topics are not discussed, he is stating that people do not talk about them. Therefore, attention should be taken when discussing about those above-mentioned issues.

Both interlocutors have same opinion about typical behavioural habits linked to food, dining etiquette, clothing, free animals in street, and cleanliness. They just have dissimilar opinion as regards crying in public: in fact, Case Study 1 stated people should avoid their weaker part in public, while Case Study 2 does not feel this to be important.

As concerned non-verbal communication, they both stated that eye contact is required, but Case Study 2 affirmed it is better to avoid it with older people in sign of respect. Body contact is only required when welcoming or saying goodbye to people, it can be touching the feet, handshaking, joining hands, waiving hands or hugging according to different situations and people.

Finally, they both consider punctuality to be an important value, and body distance necessary, even though proximity depends on the familiarity they have with their interlocutor. As regards the areas of Indian culture they think that may be considered strange, Case Study 2 mentioned Indian dresses, traffic, an spicy food, while Case Study 1 mentioned marriages, lack of punctuality, the way they celebrate festivals, free animals on streets, worshipping the cow, and the generosity of Indian people. It results that many areas may be strange for a person who has never dealt with Indian culture.

All things considered, the results I obtained serve to obtain more knowledge about how Indian people perceive verbal and non-verbal communication, and therefore, the information may serve as a basis to understand and accept diversity. However, this does not mean that an outsider should imitate Indian people in language and behaviours when interact with them, but these information may be helpful to both avoid culture shock and appreciate otherness: knowledge helps people to be more inclined to negotiate identities, meanings and attitudes with their interlocutor, and therefore, it serves as a basis to create a third space, which is the neutral domain

where negotiation takes place in intercultural encounters. In fact, the aim of ICC lies in revealing a positive attitude towards diversity, willingness to know more about the target culture, and developing appropriate skills to negotiate in intercultural encounters. Being critical towards one's own culture and the other's one is essential, because nothing that is said or done can be considered totally right, polite, or appropriate. Opinions, beliefs, values, attitudes, norms, may change from one culture to another: what matters in intercultural communication is flexibility and openness, in order to accept diversity and make the strange familiar.

Conclusions

This study aims to emphasise the ever-growing importance of intercultural communication in today's globalised world, and as a consequence, the necessity of acquiring ICC when dealing with a cultural stranger. In fact, owing to technological advances in transportation and communication, intercultural contact has been increased even more in recent years. This means that nowadays, most of the encounters involve people who share neither a common language nor a cultural background.

Given the fact that every culture may differ from the others in its system of values, beliefs, traditions, norms, symbols, and so forth, it seems of paramount concern to get some knowledge about cultural aspects which involve both verbal and non-verbal communication; knowledge about this areas of communication serves as a basis for dealing appropriately and efficiently with a dissimilar other. It follows that in order to be a competent intercultural speaker, one should display an open-minded attitude and curiosity towards otherness. In fact, it is demonstrated how knowledge and attitude factors are preconditions in any intercultural encounter. They both may help people to develop appropriate skills to interact with a cultural group of people, and to acquire cultural awareness.

However, intercultural encounters require a shared code that can be understood by both interlocutors. There thus arises the importance of English as Lingua Franca (ELF), that is the most used 'contact language' around the world in intercultural communication. In fact, globalisation has gone hand-in-hand with the globalisation of English, and given the fact that different speech communities cannot negotiate without the use of a common language, English was usually and ever more frequently used as a means of international and intercultural communication.

It follows that ICC involves linguistic, sociolinguistic and discursive competence as well. That is to say, an intercultural speaker should manage a shared language (i.e. English in this case) and should acquire appropriate knowledge, attitude,

skills and critical awareness as regards the target culture of the interlocutor in order to become a competent intercultural mediator. However, this does not mean imitating the target culture, but ICC should be considered as a basis to create a social space where speakers can introduce their personal reality and negotiate their identities. In this "third space" both interlocutors collaborate and learn how to organise meanings, as well as how to transform possible conflicts into a fruitful dialogue. That is to say, ICC serves to negotiate meanings, identities and attitudes with the interaction partner in order to reach the criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness and satisfaction. In fact, the aim of ICC is to produce a process and an outcome that may be deemed successful. This requires willingness to suspend prejudices, tolerance for ambiguity, motivation, respect, flexibility, empathy, curiosity and interest, as ICC is a matter of openness to the difference. It is a process that questions one's beliefs, assumptions and values, and fosters greater sensitivity towards otherness.

In fact, I hope that this study may help people to understand how what we usually label as problems of communications may prove to be a source of enrichment in one's personal background. The challenging areas related to language, politeness, non-verbal language, conversational topics, behavioural habits and concepts might be overcome with an open-minded perspective and willingness to perceive diversity not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange.

The reasons why I chose to explore Indian culture and Indian English (IndE) were twofold: first of all, I wished to offer a practical example to the theory, and secondly, as I spent around two months in India, I was deeply involved in an Indian reality; I had the opportunity to capture difference and to face it. Therefore, my aim was not only to offer general knowledge about IndE and culture as an example to build a basis for developing ICC, but I wished to contribute with my personal experience. More than that, during my sojourn in India I met many people, and this helped me to go into greater depth in the topic. In fact, I had the opportunity to take advantage of my Indian contacts as a resource to obtain more knowledge about many aspects of Indian culture and its second language (IndE).

The survey I elaborated was meant for mirroring the point of view of a small group of Indian young people, who portray a contemporary and up-to-date model of thinking and behaving in Indian context. Moreover, the case studies serve as a current proof to demonstrate the complexity of Indian reality: the interviewees revealed a different attitude towards Indian English, and that dissimilar behaviour and viewpoints may exist even in the same culture. My choice was not random: I wanted to demonstrate how culture is dynamic and constantly changing; in other words, how globalisation has been influencing the mentality of young people. Therefore, it seems necessary to reconceptualise the concept of culture, as well that of identity. Although some general cultural features exist, talking about a specific culture has turned out to be considered an oversimplification in recent times. Culture may change with respect to geographical areas, religion, ethnicity, personal background, gender and generational gap. Every aspect of culture is not fixed, but is influenced by constant change, variability and mutability.

Moreover, I was also interested in exploring IndE as a variety of English. Given India vast population, IndE seems to play an important role in intercultural communication; in fact, it is one of the most powerful varieties used in ELF interactions. However, there should be recognised that IndE may vary from one region to another, from one generation to another, from a person to the other, and so forth. However, some common linguistic features may be recognised. Therefore, not only have I reported some general information regarding IndE, but I also investigated this area in the survey. I wanted to obtain information about its usage in everyday life, and to know how Indians feel toward this language.

It appears that Indians learn English mostly at school in primary classes and used it especially with friends, but also with foreign or unknown people, family, in schools, at work and in restaurants. Therefore, English is spoken every day and on different occasions: a formal register is used mainly at work, but also with teachers and unfamiliar people. Most of the interviewees affirmed that they feel English to be their language, so they demonstrate a positive attitude towards a language that was imported during the colonisation period of the British Empire. They consider it to be a

useful means of communication with foreign people as well as with other Indians, as in India there are many different languages, but English is a common language for everyone. However, a contrast emerged from the case studies: while Case Study 2 speaks English more than Hindi daily (60% English vs 40% Hindi), Case Study 1 speaks just 10% English compared to 90% Hindi. In fact, he does not consider English to be his own language, even though he finds English a necessary language, as it serves to communicate with different people around the world. This clearly demonstrates that the use of English rather than Hindi depends on one's personal choice.

As regards politeness, thanking and apologising are considered good manners and important to maintain relationships. Thanking should be formal and respectful with older people (i.e. Indians touch the feet of elders to show respect) and strangers (i.e. handshake is used), while it can be informal with friends (i.e. hugging). The same occurs with apologising, even though no great difference exists in the way one expresses one's regret. As regards offering, it emerges that Indians value sharing and helping people. Moreover, it seems that Indians believe their guest should never go home with empty stomach, and therefore offering is necessary. It follows that refusing an offer may be considered impolite, so if someone has to refuse an offer, (s)he has to add a thanking formula or an explanation to soften the refusal. As regards disagreement, it seems it is better to express your opposing opinion politely and with respect, in order to maintain a good relationship.

With reference to conversational topics, it seems that in India talking about sex, homosexuality, adultery, pornography, abortion, child marriage, suicide and dowry is avoided: in fact, these areas are considered taboo topics, and a great deal of attention should be paid when discussing about those themes.

Behavioural habits were also taken into consideration: in fact, it appears that the majority of Indian people worship animals, so they do not eat non-vegetarian, and it is better to avoid talking about meat, especially beef, because they consider it to be a sacred animal. Moreover, eating with hands is not considered impolite in Indian culture. As regards clothing, it appears that Indian people are always more frequently dressing casual clothes due to the influence of globalisation in Indian reality.

With reference to non-verbal communication, the most important result I obtained is linked to greetings: it seems that handshaking is used in formal encounters, hugging with friends and touching the feet is used with elders. It emerges that in India elders are really respected, and Indians usually touch their feet when thanking, apologizing and greeting them as a sign of great respect. Moreover, eye contact is important in interaction, but a great deal of attention is required with older people.

As regards concepts, it seems that Indian people lack punctuality, but consider it important to maintain a comfort level of distance when interacting. Moreover, I was interested in discovering what areas they consider strange for an outsider: it results that food, dress, marriage, relationships, castism, bare feet people, touching the feet of elders, worshipping of many Gods, worshipping animals, loud processions on roads, and the existence of many languages may be unfamiliar areas for non-Indian people.

In fact, these areas were the same that surprised me when I arrived in India. As I was involved in an Indian context, I played the role of a participant observer, and therefore, I could serve as an example of a cultural outsider. Not only did I have the opportunity to face diversity, but this experience helped me to expand my perspectives, to understand and accept linguacultural diversity, and to develop ICC. In other words, the participant observer method is of overwhelming importance, because it helps people to set apart their ethnocentric perspectives, and to change in reaction to the demands of the intercultural environment. It is a matter of enriching one's worldview, without perceiving diversity as a problem, but as a source of leaning and enrichment.

The results I obtained from the survey and case studies appear to demonstrate that knowledge about the interlocutor's cultural background is essential in order to avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings, and serve as a basis to negotiate with otherness. In this way, people can think of how to communicate efficiently with the interlocutor according to his or her linguistic and cultural background. As the analysis of the case studies demonstrates, slight variations may exist even in the same linguacultural context. People are not only influenced by their culture, but also by their personal experiences. However, the analysis of attitudes

reveals common features in the way they express their emotions, judgments and evaluation: in fact, the lexicon and the grammar they use to refer to their system of beliefs. Therefore, it emerges that when they were replying, they were thinking about what is right, polite and proper according to their culture.

To conclude, I hope this study might arouse interest in the topic of ICC, as the advent of globalisation is fostering an ever-growing need for intercultural speakers. The skills and competencies involved in becoming a fluent foreign-language learner include not only linguistic competencies such as grammatical knowledge and reading, listening, speaking, and writing abilities but also Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). It seems that ICC has turned out to be as important as all the traditional abilities that have been taught to second language learners. Therefore, I hope that my results regarding Indian English and culture may be useful for any communicator who wishes to interact in Indian context. If a person has an open-minded attitude and is aware of the differences (s)he may encounter, (s)he may develop appropriate skills and critical awareness to deal appropriately and effectively with an Indian interlocutor.

RIASSUNTO

Questa ricerca nasce da un interesse personale che riguarda da un lato una grande passione per le culture in generale e dall'altro un amore per le lingue che sto studiando. Questo mi ha portato nel corso degli anni a scegliere un percorso di studi che riguarda le aree linguistiche e culturali e a sfruttare le mie competenze su tali ambiti durante i miei viaggi all'estero. In particolare, l'esperienza che ho vissuto in India mi ha fatto riflettere su molte questioni, come ad esempio quelle che riguardano le difficoltà comunicative che si incontrano quando ci si rapporta con un'altra cultura e, quindi, con altri valori, usi e costumi. Ho scelto di andare in India per due ragioni: offrire il mio aiuto per un progetto di volontariato e sfruttare l'inglese come lingua di comunicazione. Ero pronta ad affrontare le problematiche che riguardavano un inglese 'diverso' da quello a cui ero abituata e quelle che includevano uno stile di vita completamente dissimile da quello occidentale. Nonostante ciò, l'impatto con l'Indian English e con la cultura indiana è stato molto forte e penso di aver sperimentato sulla mia pelle ciò che viene definito 'shock culturale'. Tuttavia questa esperienza mi è servita a crescere sia personalmente che professionalmente e a maturare un interesse ancora più forte nei confronti della comunicazione interculturale e delle problematiche che si possono riscontrare quando ci si interfaccia con una persona di cultura diversa.

Questa tesi tratta quindi della comunicazione interculturale e dell'importanza che si deve dare alla negoziazione di identità, significati e atteggiamenti; infatti negli incontri interculturali risulta essenziale essere flessibili, tolleranti e di mentalità aperta, in quanto la persona con cui si comunica potrebbe avere dei concetti dissimili e delle caratteristiche diverse dalle nostre per quanto riguarda il rispetto, i comportamenti, la pronuncia, i rituali. Risulta quindi importante avere delle conoscenze di base sulla cultura dell'interlocutore per evitare malintesi e favorire una interazione che sia efficace ed appropriata alla persona e alla situazione.

In seguito a queste motivazioni è nato l'interesse per questa ricerca, nella quale non solo viene analizzato il processo della comunicazione interculturale, ma vengono anche valutati i componenti e i criteri necessari per poter acquisire una

competenza in tale ambito. Questa tesi è suddivisa in quattro capitoli: il primo serve come introduzione all'ambito della comunicazione e della cultura in un mondo sempre più globalizzato; il secondo si addentra nella tematica della comunicazione interculturale e include i componenti e i criteri necessari per sviluppare una competenza comunicativa interculturale; il terzo prende in considerazione l'India come esempio per sviluppare tale competenza e valuta le aree critiche della comunicazione culturale; il quarto e ultimo riporta la mia esperienza personale da un lato e il punto di vista di due casi studio dall'altro.

In particolare, il primo capitolo fornisce un panorama della situazione globale attuale: infatti il ventesimo secolo ha testimoniato l'avvento della globalizzazione. Questo processo ha portato a recenti e rapidi cambiamenti su ogni aspetto della vita, partendo dal modo in cui si percepisce il mondo attuale. Infatti dopo la caduta del muro di Berlino avvenuta nel 1989 non si può più pensare ad un mondo diviso in blocchi rivali e potenze compatte, ma un modello più pluralistico, frammentato e irregolare ha preso il sopravvento. Le equazioni paese/nazione e cultura/identità non reggono più: a causa della sempre maggiore interconnessione i confini netti che prima identificavano una cultura con un determinato territorio e con una determinata identità non esistono più. Per questo motivo il concetto di cultura oggi è difficile da definire ed è da considerare un enigma. Generalmente si tende a pensare che la globalizzazione porti alla omogeneizzazione globale e che quindi oggi ci sia meno cultura. Tuttavia la diretta conseguenza dell'interconnessione fa sì che ognuno di noi disponga di una fetta sempre più ampia di cultura che stimola i sensi e le menti. Siamo quindi assistendo ad una redistribuzione della cultura negli spazi e nei significati.

Tutto questo ha conseguenti ripercussioni sull'area della comunicazione interculturale. Infatti "comunicare significa costruire e mettere in scena una rappresentazione di se stessi" (Matera, 2008: 7). La comunicazione include non solo il linguaggio verbale, ma anche quello non verbale. Viene quindi sottolineata l'importanza che possono avere i gesti, gli sguardi, le posture, i movimenti, le strette di

mano, ma anche di aspetti che riguardano il look, quali l'abbigliamento, l'acconciatura, i tatuaggi, gli accessori: in tutto ciò il carattere culturale risulta evidente.

Viene poi sottolineato il legame che tiene unito il concetto di cultura a quello di comunicazione. Infatti la globalizzazione, con i suoi conseguenti sviluppi nella tecnologia avanzata, ha permesso un incremento degli incontri interculturali. La gente si sposta oggigiorno più facilmente per i più disparati motivi che vanno dal turismo, al settore business, alla migrazione. I contatti con altre culture vengono quindi facilitati, non solo quelli faccia a faccia, ma anche quelli virtuali. Internet, la tv, i social network rendono la comunicazione e le informazioni accessibili a tutti e le distanze vengono così accorciate. Nella comunicazione interculturale è risultato quindi necessario trovare un codice comune per interagire: questo ha favorito l'evoluzione dell'inglese come Lingua Franca (ELF). Infatti l'inglese oggigiorno è dappertutto. L'interconnessione ha favorito la globalizzazione dell'inglese stesso, che però viene utilizzato dalla gente con un grado di competenza alquanto differente. Viene quindi sottolineato il modo in cui l'inglese come Lingua Franca sia diventato il linguaggio di contatto tra le persone che non condividono la stessa lingua e cultura.

Inoltre questo capitolo include una introduzione alla parte pratica di questa ricerca: infatti ho sottoposto un gruppo di giovani indiani provenienti dalla città di Indore a un questionario che si concentra sulle tematiche della comunicazione interculturale, al fine di offrire un esempio pratico alla teoria da un lato e dimostrare le difficoltà che si possono riscontrare quando si comunica con un'altra cultura dall'altro. Tuttavia lo scopo non è quello di far emergere la differenza come un problema da superare, ma di considerarla come possibile fonte di arricchimento personale per chi vuole sviluppare una competenza interculturale. Infatti la differenza serve come base per ampliare gli orizzonti e riscoprire altri modi di vedere il mondo e di comunicare. Riassumendo, il primo capitolo tratta i concetti fondamentali che stanno alla base della tematica principale di questa tesi: comunicazione, cultura e ELF sono infatti gli elementi cardine di ogni incontro interculturale.

Il secondo capitolo definisce la competenza interculturale come un processo nel quale due o più individui si incontrano e iniziano a negoziare le loro identità, i

significati e i loro atteggiamenti, utilizzando un codice linguistico comune. Vengono quindi approfonditi i concetti di identità - in quanto ogni incontro interculturale va trattato in base alle caratteristiche della persona con cui si interagisce e in base alla situazione - e quello di negoziazione - in quanto risulta di estrema importanza essere tolleranti nei confronti della diversità comunicativa che il proprio interlocutore utilizza. Viene quindi sottolineato come sia necessario creare un 'terzo spazio comunicativo', cioè un dominio neutrale in cui viene assicurata la variabilità dei significati e dei simboli culturali, in cui tutto può essere reinterpreto e tradotto.

Si passa poi ad analizzare il processo che porta una persona ad acquisire una competenza interculturale. Viene sottolineata l'importanza della conoscenza, dell'attitudine, delle abilità e della capacità critica. Infatti risulta innanzitutto essenziale per sviluppare una competenza interculturale conoscere l'altra cultura, con i suoi valori, credenze, norme, rituali ed è inoltre necessario disporre di un atteggiamento positivo verso la conoscenza del diverso, cioè essere di mentalità aperta e curiosi nei confronti della diversità culturale. Questi due elementi (conoscenza e attitudine positiva) sono precondizioni necessarie per poi sviluppare adeguate abilità nell'interpretare e capire i documenti e gli eventi di un altro gruppo culturale. Essi inoltre aiutano a maturare quella curiosità necessaria verso nuovi orizzonti comunicativi e quindi favoriscono un diverso modo di interagire che viene acquisito in base alle nuove conoscenze culturali acquisite. Infine viene attribuita particolare importanza all'abilità di valutare criticamente non solo le pratiche e prospettive della nuova cultura, ma anche della propria. Tuttavia acquisire una competenza culturale non vuol dire essere in grado di comunicare come i nativi di una determinata cultura. Non si tratta di imitare, ma di essere consapevoli delle differenze e quindi saper collaborare e cooperare al fine di raggiungere uno scopo comunicativo.

Affinchè la comunicazione possa essere soddisfacente, i criteri di appropriatezza, efficacia e soddisfazione sono indispensabili. Vengono quindi approfonditi questi tre concetti, per poi sottolineare come la competenza comunicativa sia il risultato di un incrocio tra varie competenze: quella linguistica, sociolinguistica e discorsiva.

Nel terzo capitolo si passa dalla teoria alla pratica: viene qui approfondito il processo della comunicazione interculturale in riferimento ad un caso specifico: quello dell'India. Sebbene parlare di cultura indiana risulta un'eccessiva semplificazione, ci sono delle caratteristiche culturali che possono essere definite generali e che in ogni caso sono diverse da molti altri modelli culturali. Vengono quindi introdotte alcune informazioni sull'India, per poi focalizzarsi sull'Indian English (IndE), sul suo sviluppo storico e uso attuale. Infatti l'interesse per questa varietà di inglese come lingua di comunicazione utilizzata in possibili incontri culturali è di particolare rilevanza in questa ricerca.

In seguito alla breve introduzione sulla lingua e cultura indiana, vengono trattate in questo capitolo le aree che possono causare 'problemi' nella comunicazione interculturale in generale e vengono riportati alcuni esempi sull'uso dell'IndE e su alcuni valori, usi, caratteristiche, credenze della cultura indiana. Vengono analizzate le aree che riguardano il linguaggio, il concetto di cortesia, le tematiche di conversazione, le usanze culturali, il linguaggio non verbale e alcuni concetti come quello di tempo e spazio, non solo riportando esempi già analizzati in altri libri, ma sfruttando anche i risultati raccolti dal questionario che ho menzionato nel primo capitolo. Lo scopo di questo capitolo è quello di evidenziare come al mondo esistano vari modi di vedere le cose e diverse strategie di comunicazione e di dimostrare come ciò che può essere definito problema nella comunicazione può rilevarsi una risorsa di arricchimento nella conoscenza.

Il quarto capitolo, invece, è diviso in due sezioni. Nella prima viene riportata la mia esperienza in India: avendo trascorso quasi due mesi in una città nel cuore di questo paese, ho avuto l'opportunità di osservare e percepire in prima persona le differenze culturali. Questa esperienza mi ha dato modo di offrire un contributo personale alla ricerca. Ho riportato i miei commenti personali su alcune aree che ho ritenuto importanti per la comunicazione interculturale, quali quella del linguaggio, abbigliamento, cibo e buone maniere a tavola, spazi pubblici e pulizia, sistema di guida, simbologia. Inoltre ho riportato alcune considerazioni sull'esperienza a scuola come insegnante.

Nella seconda sezione, invece, vengono messe a confronto le risposte di due casi studio: infatti ho scelto due questionari e ho sottoposto questi due soggetti ad ulteriori domande. Lo scopo è non solo quello di ottenere maggiori informazioni sulle aree della comunicazione interculturale definite 'problematiche', ma anche quello di far emergere le possibili somiglianze e differenze all'interno della stessa area culturale. Ho analizzato inoltre le loro risposte anche da un altro punto di vista: quello del linguaggio. Le parole scelte e la grammatica usata rispecchiano le loro credenze e valori, cioè la loro cultura. Infatti è proprio attraverso il linguaggio che le persone esprimono le loro opinioni, giudizi ed emozioni. Ho quindi riportato i nomi, aggettivi, avverbi e verbi che più sono stati utilizzati, per dimostrare come il modo di esprimersi con il linguaggio rispecchi un atteggiamento legato ai valori culturali.

In altre parole, questa ricerca ha come focus principale quello di capire la complessità del sistema comunicativo nel mondo attuale sottolineando la primaria importanza che risulta avere la negoziazione di identità, di significati e di atteggiamenti. Nella comunicazione interculturale non è necessario capire per imitare, ma capire per negoziare. Infatti lo scopo della conoscenza di un'altra cultura è quello di creare uno spazio neutro, chiamato terzo spazio comunicativo, dove nessuna cultura risulta essere dominante sull'altra. In un incontro interculturale entrambe le culture sono messe sullo stesso livello e risulta necessario accettare modi comunicativi e atteggiamenti diversi. Inoltre anche la lingua viene sottoposta ad un processo di negoziazione: l'inglese viene sempre più usato come linguaggio di scambio negli incontri culturali, ma il livello di competenza di tale lingua cambia da persona a persona, da cultura a cultura. Infatti l'inglese risulta essere oggi una lingua di fondamentale importanza a livello internazionale, in quanto viene utilizzata più come lingua di contatto tra persone che non condividono né la stessa lingua, né la stessa cultura. Questo ha fatto sì che l'inglese non appartenga più solo ai nativi, ma all'intera comunità mondiale. Esso viene utilizzato sempre più spesso come Lingua Franca (ELF) e le sue regole grammaticali, lessicali e sulla pronuncia si stanno man mano modificando: viene accettato un livello sempre più alto di tolleranza quando si commettono errori nella comunicazione interculturale.

Concludendo, questa ricerca ha lo scopo di addentrarsi sulla comunicazione interculturale, sull'inglese come lingua di contatto, e sulle problematiche che si possono riscontrare nella comunicazione con la diversità. L'esempio indiano offre una prova pratica dell'esistenza di diversi modi di comunicare, sia verbalmente che non. Essa serve come base per capire in che modo comunicare con un interlocutore culturalmente diverso e per dimostrare che la comunicazione interculturale non deve essere vista come un ostacolo, ma come una risorsa di arricchimento. Conoscere modi diversi di comunicare aiuta ad ampliare gli orizzonti, a essere più flessibili, ad adattarsi a ogni situazione, e ad interrogarsi sulla propria visione del mondo. La comunicazione interculturale è un veicolo per percepire ciò che è insolito in modo più familiare e serve per mettere da parte le convinzioni etnocentriche e favorire la diversità interculturale.

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1) APPENDIX

SURVEY RESULTS³

Age: 20-23

Sex: 11 MALES / 3 FEMALES

City: INDORE

Nation: INDIA

Religion: 13 HINDUS / 1 JAIN

LANGUAGE: INDIAN ENGLISH

1) Where did you learn English (family, school, friends, etc) and when?

1- I learned English from my school and as I belong to an English medium school I learned it in very early.

2- family and school

3- School, from childhood

4- From School, since I was in school.

5- I started learning English at school in primary classes.

6- SINCE MY SCHOOL DAYS WHEN I WAS GROWING UP.

7- I learned English from my family, friends, school and my playground. At the age of 8.

8- School, I started learning English since 10 years.

9- School and family. Since 3 years old.

10- At School since elementary school

11- Surrounding, in childhood, around 5 years of age.

³ The answers of Case Study 1 correspond to no. 1 of the survey, while the ones of Case Study 2 correspond to no. 7.

12- I started early with English, but it started with school. And i took a natural liking to the language.

13- School and family. From 4th Grade.

14- I learnt english from friends and teachers mostly in school.

2) On which occasions do you use English in your everyday life? With whom? (family, friends, foreign people, etc.)

1- Mostly foreign people and rarely with friends.

2- foreign people, family, friends

3- There is no occasion of using English, it was an international which used again n again by me with my friends, family

4- Occasions: While explaining something somebody. During chatting. During presentations. People: Friends, family and foreign people.

5- As my mother language is Marathi and Hindi, I don't use English for daily conversation but I prefer speaking English when at restaurants, amongst friends or at work place.

6- with foreign people, family and friends.

7- I speak English mostly at my work place with my friends and colleagues it is not compulsory to speak in English with people around but when it comes to foreign people I am always supposed to talk to them in English because it is the only mean of communication with them.

8- With Friends and Foreign People.

9- Friends, school, college, unknown people.

10- Family, friends, foreign people, Professional contacts, Teachers

11- In my work place and with unknown people. Also with Foreigners

12- All the time, with anyone who can understand English.

13- It's situational, depending on the person whom I am talking to & in which language he is comfortable.

14- I use english mostly at work now , earlier in my college and even while conversing with friends , clients etc.

3) How often do you speak English in your everyday life (e.g. twice a day, once in a week, etc.)?

- 1- Daily, around 2-3 times.
- 2- half of the day
- 3- Every day
- 4- At least 15 min a day.
- 5- I use English words in almost every 5 minutes but talk thoroughly in English twice or thrice in day.
- 6- mostly
- 7- Almost all the time when I am at my workfield.
- 8- Twice a day
- 9- Everyday
- 10- Quite frequently
- 11- Everyday
- 12- More than twice a day since all my friends do understand English, I can talk to them in English.
- 13- daily
- 14- I speak english frequently ,like i don't actually count the number to times i speak english. But yes , mostly i speak english.

4) How does the turn talking system work in your culture as regards

- **interrupting;** e.g. In some cultures children are taught not to interrupt and to wait for their turn of speech in any conversation (even within the family domain)
- **overlapping;**
- **use of pauses;**
- **silence?**

What do you consider polite or impolite as regards these areas? If possible, explain each area.

1- In my culture it is very important to listen what other person speaks, so we are not allowed to speak in between and we speak after the person we are talking to pauses or become silent. Polite is being speaking in a respectful way and to listen to the person around, the way of talking of a person is of high importance, people respect those who are more polite while speaking. Being impolite means a person is shouting or being rude, even if a person is speaking the truth in a wrong manner (being loud or rude), he is considered as impolite.

2- NO ANSWER

3- NO ANSWER

4- Use of pauses and Silence

5- In my culture cross questioning elders is considered impolite. We are taught to obey them without questioning, or if any question arises we need to be calm and understand the reason rather than questioning.

6- I find interrupting very impolite. One should wait for their turn to speak up their opinion

7- In my culture, it is ok to interrupt someone of same age while he/she is speaking, but it is consider impolite when you are interacting with someone senior/elder to you. It is a form of giving respect to them, and it is the responsibility of elders to give them chance to speak after they finish.

8- interrupting

9- NO ANSWER

10- Overlapping is considered to be impolite. We respect the speaker in my culture. Silence depends on the condition, while in an argument silence is polite and while in a conversation silence is impolite

11- I take a lot of pauses while speaking.

12- Interrupting: Yes, children are taught to listen first and then speak. Interrupting is impolite in most areas, it greatly irritates the speaker and makes him lose his focus. Overlapping; It does happen in aggravated discussions Use of pauses; As a country whose language is not English, people do find it difficult to learn the use pauses and

punctuation in a conversation. But the effort is commendable. Silence is a quality not practiced very much, since its a country with free speech.

13- Interrupting: Impolite / Overlapping: Polite / Use of pauses: Polite / Silence: Polite

14- Not interrupting in between of a conversation , waiting for your turn and all the above things mentioned are a sign of politeness. Like for eg -If two elder are talking and you want to keep your view in front of them , then first wait till they complete and then politely seek their permission and express your thought. This way you give them respect as well as you're being polite.

5) On which occasions do you use formal language? Does it depends on social status, role relationship between the interlocutors, age, sex, power, group membership, etc.? Can you explain?

1- I use formal language only with the work related people or with our teachers or strangers, else I am normally casual while talking to my family members or friends, but also I maintain the level of respect while talking to my elders.

2- no it actually doesn't depend on anything.its just that how a person is comfortable with me

3- It depends upon groups

4- Occasions like Going for an interview, office presentations, speaking with some professionals. It does depend on social status. Because we have to see what impact we leave on others while talking. It depends on different things, like if we are talking to our friend, we'll speak informal language, on the other hand while giving a speech in front of your juniors or seniors we have to be formal.

5- I use formal language at work place and in family depending upon the sex, relationship and age.

6- no it actually doesn't depend on anything. Its just that how a person is comfortable with me

7- Yes, using formal language depends on the person I am talking to, if I am talking to my senior, some authority or my customer I am supposed to use formal language. It doesn't depend on the sex. It depends on your seniority and position.

8- The use of formal language is basically with unknown people or ones who are elders in family. Yes it depends on the age of person, we try to be more formal with our elders.

9- I use formal language in place of my work. Also I use it when I am talking to somebody elder or some unknown person.

10- Formal language is used mostly in professional or educational conversations. It is advised to use formal language amongst unfamiliar locators. Not being formal but respectable while talking to the opposite sex, elders or people in authority.

11- I use formal language when I am talking to somebody unknown.

12- Formal language is used in a formal environment. With friends and family informal language is used.

13- I use formal language in my workplace.

14- Use of formal language on all most all of the aspects mentioned above. For eg- - If you're talking to person who is related to your business then it surely has to be a formal conversation. If you're talking to person elder to you, or senior to you post wise, or of an opposite gender, then you have to use formal language to show politeness and respect in front of them.

6) Does your English change according to who you are speaking to? How and why?

1- No it doesn't change. Because here I speak English rarely and to only those who can understand it properly, so either I speak Hindi or English, but there is no change in English while talking to different people.

2- No it does not change.

3- No but the way of replying changes accordingly because the one understand yr words

4- Yes, it does change according to who we are speaking with. With friends we can be totally open and can use language which might sound inappropriate with our parents, teachers, uncle, aunt, etc.

5- Yes, my English does change according to whom I'm speaking to. Like when I talk to my friends there is a mixture of informal language such as a few Hindi words and slangs in it, and when I am talking with my professors then I use formal words.

6- No it does not change.

7- No, English as such does not change according to the person but when I talk to someone who doesn't understand good English I use easy or general vocabulary.

8- Yes, it depends on the person we talk to, if it is a friend then it is more casual and easy. If it is a foreigner, then the tone is more fluent and fast.

9- Yes it changes with the kind of people I talk to. If I talk to someone who is above the designation I hold at workplace, then it is more sophisticated. However with my colleagues I am informal and use slang words while talking.

10- Yes. The level of politeness and language changes according to the situation.

11- Yes my words differ with the kind of people I am talking to. It is general psychology. I know if there is a person who will judge me then I have to use proper English, otherwise I use any kind of words.

12- Yes, it does change according to the listener to make it easier for the other person to understand. The changes may be in the pronunciation, accent, or the vocabulary.

13- Yes it changes with the kind of people I talk to. If I talk to someone who is above the designation I hold at workplace, then it is more sophisticated. However with my colleagues I am informal while talking.

14- Yes, it does. If you're speaking with a person with whom you have a formal relation i.e. work, then you have to use proper words to express yourself. And on the other hand, if you're talking to a friend then use of a little slang would also do.

7) How do you feel about speaking English? Do you consider it to be your own language?

1- No, English is not my language, and undoubtedly I love speaking Hindi. At the same time I find English as a good language and it helps while communicating with people of different countries.

2- i feel good about speaking english. India is the 2nd largest english speaking country,so its ok..

3- I feel good and i would not consider it to be my own language.

4- I feel great and satisfied while speaking English. I do consider as it to be my own language.

5- English is ok. It is most spoken in our country so I am fine with it. I am not sure how do I feel about this language, but yes in India I feel people make a big deal out of it than they judge you how good you speak and how fluently you speak.

6- I feel good about speaking english. Not really my language.

7- At the first sight, i was not comfortable with English but after speaking english continuously for years i am very familiar with it, english is compulsory when i speak to someone new because in India hindi changes as you move to some other region, or different language but english is something common for everybody every region so its more easy to communicate in english, and meeting people outside the country we cannot exchange words with the, without english so, I am very comfortable with english.

8- Yes it is a great and easy language. It is like my second mother tongue, after hindi.

9 - Yes. U consider it as my own language.

10- Yes I'm very comfortable speaking English.

11- Yes I consider it as my own language.

12- Yes, it feels good speaking English. I have been speaking English since i was 5 or 6 years old, so it is much like my native language.

13- Yes, my own language.

14 - Yes moreover use of english has been increasing in day to day life. And I surely feel proud about speaking english.

POLITENESS

8) What do you think about thanking? How often do you use thanking formulas? Is there any difference between thanking an older person, a stranger or a friend?

1- I never miss the chance of saying thank you to any person, I use it quite a few times. We have been taught to thank elders for every small gift and to thank friends for every small favour. Generally I touch the feet of elders while thanking them and a hand shake with a friend or a stranger is good gesture while thanking them.

2- its a very good word that brings a smile on face if used by heart..i use it mostly everyday..i don't think there is any difference,if its there then it should not be there..

3- Thanking is used in my life many times...No matter its an old person, a stranger, or a friend...I use to thank people

4- Thanking is the most wonderful thing we can say to anybody who helped us even for the smallest reason. I use thanking formula every now and then, even if it is to my mom, dad or my best friend. There is no difference between thanking an older person, a stranger or a friend, because I am always grateful to people for helping me.

5- I think that thanking anyone is a good gesture. I usually thank people by say "Thank u so much", "U r so generous", "U r a kind person" etc. on different occasions.

6- Yes,one should appreciate other human efforts. It showcases your manners and values. It's a kind gesture..i don't think there is any difference.

7- I use thanking formula almost each and everyday,while I ask someone for favour, it can be as small as asking someone for side or as big as asking someone for money. Thanking is something that make people feel good,so I prefer using thanking formulas as much as possible.

8- Apart from friends and relatives, Thanking everyone is same. The tone and the gesture remains same.

9- There is no difference when it comes to thanking.

10- Thanking can be as formal as a thank you and as informal as a hug. Yes there is huge difference.

11- When I thank anybody I always do it with gratitude and it is the same for each person.

12- Thanking someone for a favour is good manners. Yes, there are subtle differences in thanking different people. For example, It is respectful for an elder, polite with a stranger and informal with friends

13- Thank you is a golden word and it doesn't matter whom you thank it's always good.

14- No , i don't think there is a difference between thanking a friend or a stranger. Thanking is just a gesture of being polite. And thanking is a way of appreciating the other person , so i don't leave any chance of thanking any person who so ever it be.

9) What do you think about apologies? How often do you apologise? Is there any difference between apologizing to an older person, a stranger or a friend?

1- I am quite reserved in my nature and there are very less chances of me committing a mistake, so I rarely apologise, but also I never avoid saying sorry if I commit any mistakes. And apologizing way is same for any person.

2- a good thing to maintain the relations. if its my mistake. Yes there is difference

3- My father used to say apologising to anybody (an older persona stranger or a friend)does not makes small, poor, stronger, rich...But yes but apologising things become easier...

4- Apologies play a great role in any relationship. I apologise whenever it is my mistake. Sometime I apologise even if it is other's mistake(if it could work the relation).Yes. There is. We apologise formally with older person and stranger while simply with friend.

5- Apologizing for your mistake is good manners. I say Sorry when I feel I have disappointed someone or hurt them or maybe I made a mistake by chance.

6- Yes, apologies are part of one;s life. It doesn't decrease your stature if you apologise to someone for you mistakes. When i feel i committed a mistake, i do apologise. NO there isn't any difference.

7- Apology is same as thanking someone,it can be used for something too small to think and something too big to ask,but again apology make people feel good and it can be beneficial. I use apology as much as I use thank you giving someone regards and respect is something I feel proud doing.

8- I apologize a lot, but not with friends. Yes there is a lot of difference between apologizing a friend and a stranger. The apology is more formal for a stranger.

9- There is no difference when it comes to apologizing

10- Yes there is. Differnt apologies have to maintain different levels of dignity.

11- There is no difference when it comes to apologizing to any person. If I have done something wrong apology would remain the same despite of who the other person is.

12- We apologise whenever a mistake is done on our part. It is always the same as thanking the person.

13- Sorry is a golden word and it doesn't matter whom you apologise it's always good.

14- Again like thanking a person doesn't harm , similarly apologising to any one be it your friend or stranger doesnt make you small. And i dont feel shame in apologising to anyone younger or elder to me.

10) What do you think about offering? How do you offer something to someone?

1- We Indians love sharing, and generally in trains or bus, I always offer food items or newspaper to my neighbours. I simply ask the person in a gentle way to accept my thing.

2- its a great idea but it depends what are you offering.I offer something to someone politely..

3- It normally i offer things to people...I like to help people.

4- Offering should be selfless if we really want somebody to take the thing. I offer somebody by asking them to have it, and if it is a close person then forcing him to take that.

5- I say "Aap kya loge chai ya coffee" which means "what would u like to have tea or coffee". We Indian believe that a guest should never go home with an empty stomach.

6- its a great gesture but it depends what are you offering. I offer something politely.

7- if I find someone around me while I am eating,drinking something I usually offer them,while I am in a queue I offer people to go first if they are in hurry(kindness costs nothing).

8- If it is a friend, we just ask once or twice. If it is an unknown person, we offer him in a good way, in the most decent way we can.

9- I offer something to someone wholeheartedly and happily

10- Offering is considered to be a warm gesture. The mode of offering something is usually verbal or putting forward.

11- I offer something to someone with Respect .

12- With generosity.

13- I offer something to someone wholeheartedly and happily.

14- Offering something to someone is again a gesture of politeness. Be it offering food, offering a lift , offering anything that you think someone else is in need and you have it. It makes you feel happy and on the same time brings a smile on the other person as well.

11) How do you usually refuse an offer? Is it polite to hesitate? Can you provide any examples?

1- I simply says "no thanks" to refuse any offer, and generally I refuse by saying that, "I have it of my own and really thanks to you for offering".

2- if the offer is not upto my needs and i rarely refuse an offer. Eg: i got an opportunity to work in a firm but i refused it politely as i was not comfortable with the work.

3- it s about being practical...if I dont like the offer i will simply refuse it politely by giving reason of my practicality.

4- I give explanation. I do not hesitate if I have a valid reason. For eg: If somebody asks me for going for a movie and I am already busy then I convey the reasons.

5- If I have to refuse an offer I try to make an excuse rather than rejecting it and hurting that person's sentiments. Ex: If someone offers me a cup of tea, I say "Thank u so much, but I don't drink tea"

6- if the offer is not upto my needs and i rarely refuse an offer.

7- Refusing an offer with a apology is good,I can not always take a offer if in am not comfortable with something or I can use thanking formulas instead. e.g. I don't eat sandwich,if someone is giving me offer to eat sandwich I would add THANK YOU with NO.

8- I refuse offers many times, but i try to do it in a decent manner so that the person does not feel bad or something.

9- I do not like refusing to offers. If I have to refuse I procrastinate the refusing.

10- Refusing an offer could be perceived as impolite by some individuals. Yes it is polite to hesitate.

11- I refuse an offer politely.

12- It is courteous to hesitate.

13- I do not like refusing to offers. If I have to refuse I procrastinate the refusing.

14- I refuse an offer only if either i don't want it actually or its not as per my needs. For eg- When you get out of the airport , the cab drivers offer you a ride. If you have your car standing already, then you can politely refuse and say a "NO".

12) How do you usually express agreement and disagreement? Think about typical expressions and gestures you use.

1- I generally show my disagreement in personal and not in public unless and until it belongs to any important issues or discussion. And I agree with a big smile and generally I appreciate the point of the person if I am in agreement with his point.

2- the expressions and gestures i use are helpful for me and others..

3- "oh yess i agree"

4- Agreement: with joy and charm, complimenting. Disagreement: stare directly into the person's eye, so he could understand that the thing is not good enough.

5- I express agreement or disagreement by shaking my neck or saying "hmm... sure / exactly / true" if I agree and say "Nahi... No... Maybe we can try something else" if I do not agree.

6- the expressions and gestures i use are helpful for me and others.

7- I usually express agreement and disagreement both with a genuine smile,if I agree something I would smile if I disagree something I would smile. Agreeing is usually not considered rude but disagreement to something is rude but it is not compulsory for me too agree all the time so will elaborate a convincing & genuine reason with a smile and apologise because I disagree.

8- The gestures basically used by Indians is the head movement,we agree and disagree by shaking our head in different directions.

9- NO ANSWER

10- It is usually verbal with respecting the other locators. We do use gestures like nodding.

11- When I have to agree I nod my neck. When disagree i turn it left to right.

12- expressions and gestures you use. It is always done politely. Like i am sorry but i don't agree with you or yes i do agree with your premise.

13- If I agree I directly say yes & if I disagree I would give supporting facts for the disagreement.

14- There is always a proper to agree or to disagree to someone's thoughts or opinions. If you're not agreeing with someone then you can politely express you're disagreement. But by showing improper gestures is not a wise way to show your disagreement. I prefer not express my disagreement through gestures and instead SPEAK out my views.

CONVERSATIONAL TOPICS

13) Do taboo topics exist in your culture? Can you explain?

1 - No.

2- NO ANSWER

3- NO ANSWER

4- Yes. It is because of what old people use to think and do different things. Actually there is always a scientific reason behind each and everything, but people aren't aware of that till date.

5- Yes, Of course taboo topics exist in my culture. India has a vast cultural diversity and to retain the old costumes taboo techniques are used. Eg: we are always told to cover our head by a scarf or stole while praying.

6- YES, it exists in every culture. A country comprises of various people with different perspective and opinions. SO there is always a difference on certain subjects.

7- Yes, there exists lot of taboo's in my culture but according to the law, implementation of taboo is not compulsory, we have independence to do anything we have right to speak.

8- Yes there are lots and lots of taboo topics which still exist in my culture. Like sex selective abortion, suicide, homosexuality , child marriage and many more.

9- Yes somehow in our culture when it comes to talking about sex it is a taboo partially.

10- Yes. Dowry, child marriage

11- Yes talking about sex and pornographic things is a taboo

12- Yes, they do exist. Sex is one of them. It is always discussed in hushed tones.

13- no

14- Yes they do exist, but amongst a very small group of people. As people are educated these days , so the scenario has been changing. For eg- Abortion - terminating a pregnancy / Adultery - having sexual inter course with someone other than your spouse

14) What formulas do you use in your culture for small talk⁴?

1- I generally say “Namaste” which is Indian way of saying hello and a small question like “is everthing fine?” for small talks.

2- Ans: How are you?

3- hieeee, Hello, How r u?, R u busy?, okiee, gotto goo, byeee , tc

4- Small talk: sound happy when asking or saying something, look interested, smile.

5- We say “Hi!! Kya haal Chaal?” which means “Hi!! How are you?”

6- NO ANSWER

7- There is no such formula for small talk we can talk anyway, but if someone is talking in english the we initiate conversation by saying excuse me.

8- Just asking normally that how are you or greeting someone and asking how is the health.

9- For small talk I shake them on their shoulder and then start it.

10- A casual talk about a person’s being and then talking business

11- For small talks I ask them to excuse and then talk

12- There is no particular formula for it, but asking a person;s current whereabouts and well being are ways to start off.

13- I directly go up to them and start the conversation by saying Hey, wassup..?

14- By avoiding answering all the questions , or politely asking person to excuse you.

⁴ **Small talk** is an informal type of discourse that does not cover any functional topics of conversation or any transactions that need to be addressed. Small talk is conversation for its own sake. It is usually used at the beginning or end of conversation and to avoid silence. e.g. How are you? / Have a great weekend.

BEHAVIOURAL HABITS

15) Is there a particular kind of food that you do not eat? If so, what is the reason?

1- I don't eat non veg, I don't support killing of innocent animals by just giving a baseless reason of maintaining the biological chain. I don't think that any person while eating a non-veg thinks about the cycle, all he knew that he find non-veg more tasty, and this is wrong in my eyes.

2- non veg...because I m always kind with animals.

3- I am vegetarian and i would not eat non vegetarian food.

4- Yes. Non-veg, because I don't like hurting animals and then eat it with fun.

5- In my culture we never eat beef because we worship cows.

6- NO, except beef, because it is against culture in India, due to religious beliefs.

7- Yes, I do not eat non-vegetarian food & that has nothing to do with the culture because most of the people around me like my family, friends etc, eat non vegetarian. I do not eat because I have a emotional heart and killing animal to eat is cruelty according to me.

8- Yes, we do not eat beaf. Because cow in india is considered as god. She is the one who gives us milk and many more things. So killing and eating a cow in india is not allowed .

9- I do not eat Non vegetarian food, because I feel I should not hurt animals and eat them.

10- I eat every kind of food except pork, I don't like the taste. While my culture restrains me from eating non-vegetarian food.

11- I am a foodie. I eat everything.

12- No, although beef is prohibited in my religion so haven't eaten it yet.

13- No. I eat every edible thing.

14- I don't eat green vegetables , Because i don't like the colour and their smell.

16) What is the typical Indian dining etiquette?

1- Originally it was to sit on some sheet on the floor and to squat, it is not allowed to waste even a small bit of food. But now days more use of dining tables can be observed in India.

2- having it with family and a prayer before eating.

3- eating all together . Sometimes mom use to feed by her hands.

4- We eat in silence. That gives us satisfaction.

5- In India we practice that all the family members must dine together so that we can interact and share their daily experiences. It is also taught to us that we must never waste food.

6- having it with family and prayer before eating.

7- Typical indian dining etiquette is washing your hands and mouth before going to the table and we close our eyes remember our god offer him the food,then we start eating.

8- The whole family sits together. We pray to god for giving us food, and the family discusses how was the whole day during the dinner.

9- Indians eat with their hands, without using forks and Knives.

10- Dining etiquettes in India vary diversely. In the south eating with bare hands is ok but in north its considered to be impolite. Discard your plates and cleaning the dining place is what I believe remains uniform to all cultures.

11- Indians when hungry do not think anything and can start eating from the serving bowl.

12- Talking while eating is discouraged, the whole family should eat together and most families prefer eating on the floor.

13- Indians eat with their hands, without using forks and Knives.

14- Their many typical indian dining etiquette's like firstly it doesn't involve much use of spoon and fork instead use of hands is more. You wont find any non vegetarian food being served on the dining table.

17) What do you usually wear? Do you use typical Indian clothes everyday or just for some occasions?

1- I use typical Indian dress during any function or festivals only, normally I prefer wearing western clothing styles for daily usages.

2- western clothes.no i wear it on some occasions..

3- t-shirt and jeans (civil), and in some occasion formals.

4- Jeans, tops (western in short), kurti and leggings. Typical Indian clothes are worn on special occasions.

5- I usually wear western casuals and choose to dress typically Indian on special occasions like for going to temple or a family gathering or a festival.

6- western clothes. No I wear it on some occasions..

7- I have no such restriction of wearing indian dress all the time,it depends on the place I am going and occasion ofcourse.

8- No we use typical Indian clothes only in some occasions, we do not wear them everyday.

9- I wear western clothes. I wear Indian clothes only on specific occasions.

10 - Some occasions. Our daily wear outfits are westernised.

11- I wear western clothes. I wear Indian clothes only on specific occasions.

12- Casual clothes. Tshirts and jeans with sneakers. Indian clothes like kurtas sherwanis are for special occasions.

13- I wear western clothes. I wear Indian clothes only on specific occasions.

14- These days the youth prefers to wear casual jeans and t shirts in day to day life. But as you know indian culture is full of festivals , so yes on all the main occasions traditional dress is preferred, like kurta - pyjamas for male and lehenga's for females.

18) Imagine the situation in which you are in the street and you are eating something (e.g. chips). Where do you usually throw the wrapping and why?

1- I personally search for a dustbin, but most of the time I have to keep it with me and throw it later after coming to home, because dustbins are quite rare on Indian streets.

2- i'll throw it in dustbin because i dont want it to be eaten by any animal and i dont want to pollute anything which causes harmful diseases..

3- obviously we throw the wrapper in the dustbin, because this is my country and as a citizen, it's my responsibility to keep the city/country clean

4- I always throw the wrapper in dustbin, even if I have to wait for sometime because I like cleanliness and this way my country looks clean.

5- I throw the wrapper in the dust bin.

6- i'll throw it in dustbin because one should keep his surroundings clean for maintaining a good hygiene.

7- I throw the wrapper in the dustbin around because its unhygienic for others and we should keep our's or others city clean. And if I do not find any dustbin around I will keep it with me till I find a dustbin to throw it.

8- We try to find a dust bin, or else we put it in a corner, so that the man or the worker take it while cleaning.

9- I throw the wrappers only in the dustbin. I do not like littering around and making my country dirty.

10- India is growing on the sanitation facilities but there's still a lot to do. I try to find a trash bin and if not discard it at a heap of trash.

11- I throw the wrappers only in the dustbin. It is for a clean city and a clean country. Less pollution.

12- In a dustbin. Small steps such as these help a great deal in keeping the city clean.

13- I throw the wrappers only in the dustbin. I do not like littering around and making my country dirty.

14- To be honest , i'd throw on the foot path only because that is convenient to me. But then now scenario is changing and people have started more use of dustbins to dispose the garbage.

19) What do you think about free animals in the streets?

1- Normally we have many organizations to help such kind of animals, but if they are unable to help them, I generally serve the left-over food of my house to dogs of the streets. And I pray to cow, so it has been a routine in our family since always to serve the first chapatti to a cow, if sometimes we don't find any cow, we keep the chapatti to serve it to the cow later.

2- give them something healthy to eat and drink..

3- provide shelter and food

4- Free animals should be given proper food, water and shelter by the Municipal Corporations of different states.

5- I pity on them because these poor animal do not have anything to eat, no shelter and no one to love them and care them.

6- Good enclosure and should be provided for such animals.

7- Animals are creation of god, they are the part of our society they can go any where, but since animals lack traffic sense we should do something about their security so that they don't get in to trouble.

8- They are not good. They are a cause for lot many diseases. They should be kept in a animal shelter and not allowed to come in the streets.

9 - It is okay if they are free, they should not be caged atleast.

10- It's ok. I'm used to it.

11- Free animals should be taken care of.

12- We have grown up watching them roam in the streets, so it doesn't offend us much.

13- It is okay if they are free, they should not be caged at least. Untill & unless they are not attacking others.

14- I strongly oppose on this issue. Animals shouldn't be left free on roads. There is a place called zoo for them. This usually causes accidents , traffic problems. I personally have been victim of an accident just cause i was saving a life of an animal.

20) What do you think about crying? Is it impolite to cry in public?

1- Generally in India, people are very helpful to the person who is crying, I never cry in public and also I don't want to judge crying in any circumstances.

2- its good to remove stress and bad feelings and to feel lite..yes it is impolite to cry in public..

3- crying is no solution...and crying in public gives u no sense

4- We can cry whenever we want but at the same time we should be polite in public, because it is quite immature.

5- I believe that crying is good because some times it's hard to resist some emotions and crying makes to feel better.

6- its good to remove stress and bad feelings and to feel lite. yes it is impolite to cry in public.

7- crying is something very natural and emotional we can cry anywhere. Considering crying impolite is impolite.

8- No it is not, everyone is allowed to express his or her emotions in front of people.

9- It is okay to cry in public.

10- No it isn't.

11- It is somewhere considered as a bad omen in our Indian society

12- No, Crying is just an emotional outburst and like every outburst, it is very difficult to control.

13- It is not okay to cry in public.

14 - No not at all. You dont have control over your emotions completely. And everyone may not be strong , so a burst out in a public place is not being impolite in any case.

NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE

21) When you speak, do you usually gaze directly at the other interlocutor's eyes? Why/why not? If not, where do you look?

1- Yes, I do, I think that it makes them think of me as a more confident person. It is quite helpful while talking to a girl.

2- NO ANSWER

3- when you talk to anybody, junior or Senior...I always look in their eyes

4- Yes, I do. It shows the confidence you bear during your conversation and reflects a positive personality.

5- When I speak I look at the person's forehead or at the ears or maybe somewhere else because I think a lot while speaking.

6- NO ANSWER

7- Yes, I directly look at the person's eye if he/she is not senior to me because in my culture it is rude to look directly at your senior's eye. While I can look at others' eye while talking to them that shows my confidence of knowledge and independency.

8- If it is a friend, we look into eyes and talk. But in case of an elder, we do not do the eye contact, to give him respect. We look a bit lower.

9- Yes while conversing I look in the eyes of the person. It builds trust of me in that person.

10- Yes I do. It ensures active participation in the conversation and ensures the interlocutor's perceptibility.

11- I do not really look in the eyes. I look to their left or right side and talk.

12- I look into the eyes of the listener to gauge his attention level.

13 - No, I slowly look into the eyes when both of us are comfortable enough.

14- The proper way is to look into the eyes of the person with whom you are conversing. But some people lack confidence or don't have command over their language, which leads to people looking here and there. And this is not a good thing as well. Earlier I used to hesitate while talking. But with time I have improved.

22) Is any kind of body contact required in some specific situations? If yes, give me some examples.

1- Not necessarily, but I find it good to hug a person while providing emotional support. And also touching the feet of the elders on their arrivals and before they leave is very frequent, I also do the same, it is a way of showing respect to the elders.

2- yes.. Example: to greet someone,to have sex for the birth of the child,to make someone feel lite,to kiss someone etc...

3- to help the helpless

4- Yes. Shrugging of shoulders says: I don't know. Patting somebody's back says: You are proud of him/her.

5- Yes, for me it is important when I am overwhelmed. I need to hug or hand shake with the person whom I am talking to.

6- Ans. Yes.! For example while greeting someone.

7- Yes,in my culture we touch feet of the elder people,and we hug friends and siblings,we shake hands if we meet someone professionally.

8- Yes, like a formal meet requires handshake and meeting with friend requires a hug.

9- No there is no specific body contact required.

10- While parting a hug works. While meeting a handshake is good.

11- no

12- Mostly to console or show your affection.

13- No, not necessarily.

14- Yes obviously , there are many times when you have to hold hands , or hug someone in some odd situations etc to express or convey somethings which is completely normal. For eg -if you're friend is really hurt and feeling bad about something , then you can give him/her a tight hug to make them feel better.

23) Do you use specific or typical gestures when you speak or in some particular occasions? Explain.

1- Nothing is specific or typical for me in this case, I have many gestures for different occasions.

2- NO ANSWER

3- no

4- I use specific gestures. Like when I am happy I dance around, when I am sad I keep quiet for an hour or two, when I am excited I clap my hands.

5- No, I don't think so.

6- NO ANSWER

7- Yes, I usually use my hands and facial expressions while speaking that has nothing to do with my culture, it is the way I express myself better, and it shows my participation.

8- no

9- Yes we join hands when we greet each other religiously. We show a hand to the other person when we want to slap them. We show finger to point at them when we are angry.

10 - NO ANSWER

11- Yes while talking about things and I am excited I move my hands frequently while talking

12- No, not much, but using your hands while speaking to emphasise your speaking is something that I do.

13- I move my hands while explaining something.

14- Yes, I do. When I think my words are not enough and I need help of my gestures to express or explain something to someone. Like if you want to explain something to a kid then sometimes you got to use typical gestures to make them understand, because words are just not enough.

24) What kinds of gestures do you use when you greet a person?

1- Handshake with friends and touching the feet of the elders and saying "Namaste" is a general gesture while greeting a person. Hugging close friends and family members is also common for me.

2- with a smile

3- i am happy to meet everyone, smiling face

4- I make a handshake with a polite smile.

5- I wave hand, shake hands or hug them with a big smile.

6- smile

7- Smile is the very general gesture I use when I meet someone, it shows my happiness of seeing his/her face and I consider it very kind.

8- We say him namaste, which is a greeting in india. And we have a formal Handshake

9- We join our hands and greet them.

10- A warm smile. Indian culture is to bow and touch feet of elders or a casual Namaste would do.

11- We join our hands and greet them.

12- Namaste for elders and shaking of hands for strangers or acquaintances and hugs for friends.

13- Handshake or Namaste.

14- Mostly joining hands and saying "Namaste". Or just by saying a "hello".

CONCEPTS

25) How do you feel about punctuality?

1- I am not at all punctual regarding my studies, other than that I am really punctual regarding meeting any friends and going for playing. I believe punctuality is an important virtue.

2- people should be punctual but sometimes i fail to be punctual..

- 3- Punctuality is most in day to day life... Punctuality discipline reflects you personality.
- 4- Punctuality should be the MOST important thing in any kind of relationship: whether it is professional or non-professional. It shows a person's sincerity towards people.
- 5- Although, I try my best to arrive a bit early or at least be on time. I am always last by few minutes.
- 6- people should be punctual but sometimes i fail to be punctual..
- 7- It is always polite to reach on time ,I always keep time in my mind, and I always try to do all the things on time if ia m not on time I will report the person my situation that why I am not on time etc.
- 8- Punctuality is really important, some times not using punctual marks can really change the meaning of the sentence, and the person doesn't understand what are we saying.
- 9- I am punctual
- 10- Indian culture lacks punctuality but we do appreciate punctuality.
- 11- It is a quality everyone should have
- 12- It is a quality that i appreciate very much. Although i am not very punctual myself but i do try not to be late, most of the times.
- 13- It should be in built attitude in everyone.
- 14- Punctuality is the need of the hour , and its lacking the most in the youth. Being punctual is a quality as well as an advantage for you.

26) Do you think there should be a physical distance in a conversation between interlocutors?

- 1- Depends with different people, personally I don't like setting any rules for it, only thing which should be noticed is maintaining the comfort level of the person whom you are talking to.
- 2- NO ANSWER
- 3- NO ANSWER
- 4- Yes, and it depends on the relation you have with the person.

5- That completely depends on the relationship, and sex, but I surely avoid body contact.

6- Yes, a bit

7- Yes there should be a standard distance, to avoid communicable bacteria's etc. and it is sober to maintain some distance.

8- Yes, there should be a distance of about one hand , so that the conversation is smooth.

9- The two people should be atleast 25 cms away while talking to each other.

10- no

11- Yes it is required.

12- The physical distance between the interlocutors should be as much that they can perceive each other clearly, both visually and listening wise.

13- Yeah, until they are comfortable & know each other.

14- Yes a proper distance should be maintained between two persons while conversing. You should give the person his space and let him speak so that if he/she wants to use some hand gestures to explain things then he has that space.

27) Which areas of Indian culture do you think might be considered strange to someone from another culture?

1- Many areas! But I found a very proper reason of each and every religious beliefs, also there are some false practices which doesn't belong to any religion and are being practices in many rural areas of the country. But other than many areas of Indian culture are different and better than other culture.

2- backward areas..

3- See for a person of different culture vl have strange feeling always if he look s into another culture. The things vl be new to him/her .

4- Areas including South part of the country that is a total different culture. We just can't understand their language. and they don't understand ours. Though it is one of the most beautiful part of the country. But their English is good, highly educated people.

5- I feel extreme diversity and castism is quite strange for someone not from India.

6-RURAL AREAS and its culture, where they have various strange tradition. For example they sacrifice goat in front of goddess during festival to offer their prayers and many more.

7- Not any particular area, Indian culture is different in many things than any other country, or any generalised thing. India differs in food, dress, relationship, independence. We have rules that are not official but are kept in everyone's heart.

8- The food may be strange to some people. The Indian marriage is one of the major things that will be strange for many people. And the worshipping way of so many gods is also a strange thing for people.

9- The touching of feet while we take blessings from elders can be considered strange to them.

10- NO ANSWER

11- That we scratch our head while thinking something.

12- Worshipping animals, loud processions on roads, bright colourful clothes, barefeet people etc.

13- Untouchability & making comparison between girls & boys.

14- Firstly the language, because Indian culture is the only culture through out the world having so many languages. Secondly the food here is completely different, sometimes very sweet and most of the times spicy. In all Indian culture is the most diversified culture.