EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS MAJORING IN KOREAN

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Exploring the development of intercultural competence of

UK university students majoring in Korean

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Abstract

This study investigates how first-year undergraduate learners of Korean at a UK university develop intercultural competence. The study employed the following research questions: 1) Do first-year undergraduate learners of Korean develop intercultural competence? 2) How do the learning experiences of undergraduate learners of Korean lead to different patterns of intercultural development over the academic year?

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach with the aim of generating accurate insights by synthesising quantitative and qualitative data. The sample was drawn from 17 first-year undergraduates majoring in Korean or Korean Studies, who also were scheduled to go to South Korea via their university's study abroad programme. The IDI, a psychometric tool developed by Hammer and Bennett (1998), was used as a quantitative tool. In addition, two sets of in-depth interviews were employed to collect qualitative data. The quantitative analysis indicated that statistically significant IC development had not occurred in the group. However, linear regression analysis with four possible variables of IC (past language experience, past living abroad experience, intercultural experience, and learning motivation) confirmed a significant correlation with the IC development over an academic year. Among possible variables, the past language learning experience variable was the best predictor, followed by intercultural experience and having a personal learning motivation. The quantitative data demonstrated that IC development in individuals can be dynamic and multiple key elements are interlinked with each other, yet these elements may also change over time. The representation of the qualitative data revealed more detailed, complex patterns of the students' intercultural development, involving multiple individual factors, personal experiences and challenges. The participants constantly engaged in various learning and intercultural activities on and off campus propelling themselves to a deeper understanding of the language, society, and culture. Also, the process of IC development included

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understanding foreign culture as well as incorporating an understanding of themselves, which developed into improved skills and a deepened cultural awareness. In contrast, the negative experiences of some of the participants led them to create stereotypes or form negative impressions on the entire group level, resulting in less open, judgemental view towards Koreans and Korean culture. Sometimes their perceived stereotypes overshadowed the true intentions of their Korean counterparts, resulting in occasional misinterpretation.

In light of the findings described in this work, this study calls for an institutional level of support for the incorporation of an intensive, appropriately sequenced intercultural sensitivity-focused programme into the University language modules. Furthermore, this study argues for a pre- and post-study abroad programme with a special focus on fostering IC to guide students throughout their entire university language programme. Lastly, this work supports a paradigm shift in teaching culture from teaching-centred to learning-centred practices and proposes the introduction of a process where cultural mentors serve as guides and co-researchers in the culture learning process.

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List of Acronyms

DMIS: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

DO: Developmental Orientation

FL: Foreign Language: FL is used to exclusively to refer to foreign language (FL) learning and teaching

HE: Higher Education

IC: Intercultural Competence

IDI: The Intercultural Development Inventory

KFL: Korean as Foreign Language

KL: Korean Language: KL is used to exclusively refer to Korean language (KL) learners/ students/ education

L2: Second Language

OG: Orientation Gap

PO: Perceived Orientation

Glossary

Intercultural Competence: acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural contexts (worldviews), including one's own, and developing a greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts (Bennett, 2009)

Intercultural Learning: Learning that leads to the development of intercultural competence and increased awareness of one's own and other cultural preferences.

KL learners/ students: This term refers to the participants of this study. Learners of Korean at university in the United Kingdom.

Target language: a language other than one's native language that is being learned.

Target country: a country where a language learner's target language is being spoken. In this study, Korea/ South Korea/ the target country were used interchangeably.

Study abroad: A study program located in a different country than one's home or resident country.

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

This study explores the development of intercultural competence (IC) in UK undergraduate students pursuing a Korean language or Korean Studies major. The study is situated in the context of new perspectives on language learning in the globalised world in which cultural, economic, and social changes shape the learning experience. Along with the global popularity of contemporary Korean culture in recent decades, the field of Korean as a foreign language (KFL) has experienced tremendous changes in terms of student enrolment and demography as well as students' learning motivation. More students are aspiring to study abroad in South Korea to experience its culture and language at first hand. As an educator who has been teaching Korean at universities across Europe and United Kingdom over the last decade, I have found myself asking numerous questions, including:

- What makes one a good communicator of Korean?
- Is effective communication simply a question of linguistic proficiency, complemented by communicative skills and cultural knowledge? ...or are other factors involved? If the latter, what are these other factors?
- What kind of effort do students make to improve their language skills?
- Does studying abroad automatically lead to greater language proficiency and cultural knowledge?
- Why do some students experience greater development in language proficiency and achieve greater intercultural understanding than others?
- What can educators do to best prepare students who are planning to study abroad to make the best use of the programme?

In light of an increasing need for linguistically and interculturally competent undergraduates, focusing attention on the development of language students' IC is meaningful. Specifically, this study seeks to determine whether students studying Korean in the United Kingdom have developed IC after a year of study at university and how each individual factor (i.e. student variable) impacts the different developmental trajectories.

1.1. Proliferation of the KFL outside of South Korea

Over the past two decades, interest in the Korean language and culture has increased dramatically. This new change is generally attributed to the surging popularity of contemporary Korean culture since the late 1990s. The "Hallyu", also known as the "Korean Wave", has enhanced the national image of South Korea, and raised interest in the Korean language worldwide. Considerable literature has been published on the phenomenon of "Cool Korea" (Bremner & Moon, 2002). Some experts have connected this phenomenon with the growth of South Korean economic power and the country's state-led soft power strategies (Lie, 2012). Others have tried instead attempted to understand this phenomenon within the framework of cultural hybridity or an instance of cultural localisation (e.g. Shim, 2006; Iadevito, 2014). Nonetheless, an interest in the Korean language and culture has manifestly spread to a broad swath of the public, a phenomenon evidenced in the number of students undertaking language courses at both private institutes and universities. The literature on the subject suggests a clear correlation between the popularity of Korean culture and the demand for learning Korean. This phenomenon extends to Asian countries, such as Japan, Thailand, and Singapore (Song & Pornsima, 2016; Chan & Chi, 2011), European countries, such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, as well as the United States. In Europe, higher education (HE) institutes have experienced an increase in student numbers and have established new departments and language modules to accommodate the increasing demand (Korea Foundation, 2017). Moreover, Korean literature, previously relegated to the global periphery, has gained increasing attention in the UK and European mainstream literary scene. The new demand for Korean literature has meant that current and prospective students have more career opportunities in translation than ever before.

Historically, Korean language education in the United Kingdom was carried out by a small number of Korean community schools for the benefit of heritage students or children from a multicultural background. The Korean government's establishment of the King Sejong Institute in the United Kingdom to spread Korean culture and language beyond the Korean diaspora is a more recent development. Universities in London and the rest of the United Kingdom now offer non-degree language courses to adult learners via evening classes. Recently, an increasing number of university departments are encouraging their BA and MA students to take foreign language (FL) modules, including Korean, in preparation for the global job market. According to Choi (2016), the increasing trend in the number of

students wishing to undertake Korean as a first or second major began as recently as the late 2000s. Nonetheless, studies relating to the Korean language and culture are witnessing rapid growth in the United Kingdom, and scholarship in the field has also advanced greatly despite the relatively small size and short history compared to such other East Asian languages as Japanese or Chinese.

1.2. Globalisation and Korean language

The global reception of Korean popular culture would not have been possible without the ease of communication and increased mobility brought by technological transformation. Increased physical and virtual mobility has enabled people around the world to interact with each other in ever larger numbers and in a greater variety of ways. The number of Koreans and foreign nationals leaving and entering the country has been increasing rapidly ever since the overseas travel ban was lifted in 1989. In 2017, the number of Koreans going abroad was more than 8 million, a 20.5% increase over the previous year. The number of Koreans living overseas has been estimated at about 7 million, which equals to approximately 10% of the population of the Korean peninsula (Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). Of those, approximately 45,295 are living in the United Kingdom, making the Korean community the 12th-largest immigrant community.

Changes brought by globalisation in HE can be understood as a result of the increasing international mobility among business/educational professionals and students over the past 50 years (Institute of International Education, 2005). The population of students studying abroad has risen globally, increasing annually by an average annual of 10% since 2000, when 2.1 million students studied overseas, and reaching almost 5 million in 2014. This trend is continuing, with the OECD predicting that the number of university students studying abroad will reach 8 million by 2025 (Benson, 2015). In line with the trend, the number of UK students wishing to study abroad is also increasing (British Council, 2015): in the 2013-2014 academic year, nearly 15,600 UK students participated in the Erasmus programme, spending up to a year in a European country, a 115% increase compared to 2007-2008 (European Commission, 2015). Moreover, the destinations for UK students studying abroad have diversified from the previous range of traditional European countries to non-traditional and more challenging Asian countries. The increasing

number of students joining the mobility programme and the growing frequency of cross-cultural encounters has made interacting effectively with people from other cultures, including the ability to communicate in a foreign language, critically important. As people from diverse cultures interact at work, school, and in other aspects of daily life, intercultural competence is becoming essential in the 21st century (Deardorff, 2009).

1.3. Purpose of study, research questions, the significance of the study

The principal purpose of this study is to investigate the development of IC in first-year undergraduate students learning Korean at a university in London, United Kingdom, while determining how this development might be linked to possible variables. The study used Hammer & Bennett (2012) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a reliable and rigorously validated assessment tool to measure IC, and a series of in-depth interviews spun over an academic year to explore the changes in students' IC and how their various learning experiences might be linked to their IC developmental patterns.

Accordingly, this study sought answers to the following questions:

(1) Do UK university students majoring in Korean develop IC in their first year of study?

(2) If such a change takes place, what variables are involved?
- What background factors might influence the students' initial IC?
- What variables might affect the students' level of IC at a later stage?

(3) How do first-year students' different learning experiences lead to different patterns of intercultural development?
- Does a year of intensive language learning facilitate the development of IC?
- Does cultural knowledge gained through the language programme facilitate students' intercultural development?
- Does intercultural experience over an academic year facilitate these students' development of IC?

- Does learning motivation affect the patterns of intercultural development?
- What kind of learner identity do these students develop, and how does it relate to the developmental patterns of IC?

This research contributes to the area of FL learning and teaching in two ways. First, through the empirical data gathered, the study adds to the understanding of the development of IC in KL learners in the UK context. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on learners of English and other more thoroughly researched European languages. Korean learners outside of Korea are often assumed to lack access to the linguistic source and believed to experience no significant changes in their lived intercultural experience because of the perception that the Korean language is little used outside of Korea. This study is unique among studies in the field of KFL in its adoption of a longitudinal approach in investigating the IC of undergraduate students of Korean in the UK context.

Second, this study contributes to the literature focused on studying abroad programmes by offering insight into the case of the pre-departure intercultural experience of undergraduate students majoring Korean. Most of the previous studies have focused on the study abroad experience itself, neglecting the preparation level required beforehand to maximise the benefits (Jackson, 2009; Byram & Feng, 2004; Byram & Dervin, 2009). This study fills the gap by illuminating students' lives and learning experiences before they embark on their overseas studies.

1.4. Overview of the study

Following the introduction that this first chapter provides, the second chapter reviews the topic of learning and teaching culture in FL and KFL classrooms along with the challenges involved. The discussion then turns to explore various definitions of IC and compares different models to answer the question: What does it mean to be an "interculturally competent foreign language speaker"? The chapter will also present a description of core concepts and models as well as empirical research findings connected with IC development. The critical theoretical framework used in the current study is Bennett (2017) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Next, the chapter looks at how IC is dealt with in the field of language education research in Europe and Korea. The second chapter ends by bringing in Anderson's (1983, 2006) idea of "Imagined Communities" and Norton's (2001) concept of "Imagined Identities", which this study has employed in its discussion of the individual IC developmental patterns.

Chapter 3 outlines the study methodology, including an explanation of the research design, instrumentation, research setting, and the demography of the study participants. After a description of the IDI, the current study's main instrument, the chapter proceeds to present the details of two in-depth interviews. The interview protocols and data collection and analysis methods are also included in the discussion. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the study's quantitative data collected through the IDI, along with an assessment of the correlation analysis of each variable and the IDI results. Next, Chapter 5 enriches the foregoing quantitative analysis by adding a qualitative dimension. The chapter follows the participants from their pre-university experience to the end of their first year of their undergraduate programme. This exploration connects every stage of the students' learning experience to their IDI scores and draws attention to the participants' lived experiences, including their narratives about their academic, intercultural, and interpersonal experiences and their identity as language learners.

Chapter 6 is devoted to a closer examination of two case studies that demonstrate different developmental trajectories. This section seeks to illuminate each of the two students' individual, cultural, and environmental contributions that account for variances in intercultural development. Chapter 7 summarises the results and concludes with a consideration of the study limitations before making a few suggestions related to pedagogical improvement, particularly in terms of how the intercultural learning of

language students might be enhanced through the university curriculum.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews relevant concepts and theoretical models for culture teaching and IC in FL/KFL classrooms along with the empirical research supporting them. The literature review begins by introducing the scholarly context surrounding culture-teaching practice in general FL classrooms. This discussion is followed by a review of teaching practices in KFL and the accompanying challenges. The resulting review covers the key tenets of IC conceptualisation, along with the variables influencing this process. Several models and assessment tools that are particularly relevant to the current research on IC are discussed. Next, this chapter expands on how IC is viewed in the context of European and KL education. The literature review concludes by examining the concept of "Imagined Communities" (Anderson, 1983; 2006) and "Imagined Identities" (Norton, 2001).

2.1. Culture in language learning and teaching

2.1.1. The topic of culture in FL/L2 learning and teaching

Teaching culture in the field of FL/L2 learning and teaching has been a matter of considerable interest to researchers and educators, resulting in much written discussion. However, despite the fact that the importance of culture in language learning and teaching has been well established (Byram & Feng, 2004; Byrnes, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013), this issue remains a subject of discussion from different viewpoints as well as a fertile field in terms of generating suggestions and recommendations.

Two primary concepts of culture, representing entirely different approaches, have dominated the practice of culture learning and teaching: culture as factual knowledge versus culture as fluid and variable

interaction between people and society. The former approach views culture as a relatively unvarying and static entity consisting of accumulated, classifiable, and observable – thus, eminently teachable, and learnable – "facts". From this perspective, culture has been perceived as a set of facts transmitted to learners in the classroom. This approach views the language classroom as a space that is rigidly controlled by the teacher and not conducive to language or culture acquisition, only to the learning of rules (Ellis, 1992; Krashen, 1982). Teaching practice guided by this approach treats culture as accumulated knowledge, where the primary focus is on reading cultural notes from the textbook, giving a lecture on a cultural subject, or visiting heritage sites/museums to expose students to cultural artefacts. Making use of cultural comparisons to introduce learners to different cultural practices has been a commonly used method of addressing culture in the language classroom. This approach has its positive aspects in terms of practicality: it can be time-efficient, its outcome is easy to assess, and it adds fun aspects to the academic language classrooms by encouraging participation in the teaching/learning activities. However, FL/L2 classrooms guided by this approach often adopt a "national paradigm" in an attempt to attract students' interest, employing stereotypical views of traditional cultures and highlighting a sharp divide between cultures and nations (Risager, 2006; Kramsch, 2014). Problems can arise when such a culture-knowledge connection is framed as synonymous with national boundaries (Gal & Irvine, 1995; Baker, 2015). Using simplistic images of national culture and identity statements that focus solely on national, ethnical representations (Sayer & Meadows, 2012) as the basis for teaching can easily result in essentialist representations of others and create stereotypes or over-generalisation about other cultures (Byram, 2009; Godwin-Jones, 2013; Koike & Lacorte, 2014). Lee's (2015) study on an ESL programme in Canadian universities found that language classroom practices often took the form of essentialising the processes of cultural comparison. At the forefront of this comparative inquiry was identifying students' "cultural groups", most often distinguishing between the culture of the students and that of the target language culture.

While the culture-knowledge approach is still popular, more recent research has redefined culture as dynamic and variable. According to this approach, the meaning of culture is continuously constructed through human interaction and communication, although community members may display a wide range of behaviour (Lange, 2003). Hence, culture is discussed within a broader perspective, highlighting the necessity of addressing cross-cultural differences such as culturally imposed behaviours (Ho, 2009). This approach shifts from viewing the classroom as a rigid space where information is transferred to an artificial community (Damen, 1987; Mitchell, 1988) to a protective environment where students can feel free to make mistakes without lasting repercussions. In this regard, Kramsch (1993, 2009) advocated that

language classrooms should become a third space (or third culture), which she characterised as a conceptual space where learners are encouraged to experiment with their language, hold a critical stance on traditional cultural categorisation, and understand how their discourse is culturally marked. Going further, Kramsch (2011) asserted that the study of language needs to be conducted with attention to real-world problems, emphasising the third culture should be created in the classroom to better capture the nature of language learners' competence when faced with the changing needs of a global economy.

Many academics and practising educators have expressed the belief that exploring cultures in the classroom is vital (e.g. Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2012; Schulz, 2007). At the same time, scholars agree that addressing culture effectively is an exceedingly difficult task (Byram, 1997; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003). Foreign language teachers regularly admit that culture teaching remains a low priority. Systematically integrating culture teaching into curriculum development and teaching practice is also rare due to a lack of learner interest, curricular support, and availability of suitable materials as well as the fear of dealing with controversy in the classroom (Harris & Lázár, 2011; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Bandura & Sercu, 2005; Driscoll, Earl, & Cable, 2013). Several research findings highlighted that language teachers consistently designed culture curriculum without the guidance of conceptual framework, resulting in their feeling ineffective about the pedagogical choices being employed (Young & Sachdev, 2011). Authors have identified the inability of some language teachers to connect to the target culture, the lack of institutional support, the scarcity of training opportunities and teaching experience, and the dearth of materials as obstacles to the use of culture in language learning (Hadley, 2001; Jimenez Raya & Sercu, 2007; Peiser & Jones, 2014). Schulz (2007) asserted that inexperienced teachers are not provided with enough support to develop their competence in linking practices and products to perspectives. This claim was empirically substantiated by Byrd, Hlas, Watzke, and Valencia (2011), who conducted a worldwide survey of 415 teachers and 64 teacher educators at all levels of languages. The authors found that teachers in training programmes were neither provided with the opportunity to develop the skills needed to examine the perspectives that are inherent in cultural products and practices, nor how to teach students effectively.

Assessment is yet another critical issue adding to the complexities of culture teaching in language classrooms. Scholars and educators have reached no agreement on how culture can or should be defined operationally in terms of concrete academic and instructional objectives. There is even less consensus on whether culture should be formally assessed, and if so, how (Schulz, 2007). Moreover, Wilbur (2007)

observed that despite the teaching of culture being included in most syllabi, guidelines for assessing cultural knowledge were not clearly outlined, noting that this subject area was perceived to be less essential.

2.1.2. Culture teaching in KFL

In the field of KFL, the Korean language and culture have been principally viewed through the lens of nationalistic ideologies. This phenomenon can primarily be attributed to the fact that, unlike European countries with a long immigration history, Korea is typically considered an ethnically and linguistically homogeneous nation by its nationals and non-Koreans (Park, 2009). As a result, Koreans exhibit a deeply held belief in the centrality of the language-ethnicity-territory nexus, leading to the assumption that there is one language, one country, one people maintaining a set of beliefs, values, and behavioural patterns dominant in society (Vasilopoulos, 2009). This nationalistic ideology of language and culture was transcribed into a dichotomy of native speaker/non-native speaker in language learning (e.g. Kramsch, 1997), a view that has created a strong belief among educators of Korean that language learning should aim to achieve native-speaker proficiency (Bae, 2011). Simultaneously, envisioning culture as a tool to enhance learners' understanding of the language and country has served as a pedagogical ground for educational theorists and policymakers to encourage the inclusion of culture teaching in language classrooms. Moreover, teaching Korean culture in language classrooms has contributed significantly to the country's public image by playing a role in enhancing an awareness of the Korean brand in the era of globalisation (Cho and Kang, 2001). The underlying assumption is that one cannot fully understand the language, people, and country without having cultural knowledge. As a result, academics and policymakers in KFL have made a wide-ranging suggestion that creating a list of important cultural artefacts to be taught in language programmes is of crucial importance. The underlying idea is that the establishment must determine centralised cultural items that should be taught to foreign nationals because learners abroad are likely to have less exposure to Korean culture and must rely on instructors and textbooks (S. Lee, Kim, and Lee, 2015). In this process, culture is understood as transferrable

knowledge, selected and arrayed by hierarchical order, and included in coursebooks or language curricula (e.g. Cho and Kang, 2001; Min, 1996; Lee, 2003; Park Y., 2003).

This kind of culture teaching approach places heavy emphasis on the teacher's role as a native speaker as well as a "model Korean". Korean teachers are expected to be experts in Korean culture as well as good language instructors (Wang, 2017). Yang's (2008) examination of the content of teacher training programmes in KFL found that most teacher training programmes focused on transferring cultural knowledge to prospective teachers so that they might inculcate a specific set of cultural facts to students. The result resonated with Wang (2017)'s revelation that KL teachers tended to see their role in culture teaching as information or material providers. Thus, culture teaching practice has been mainly dependent on the abilities of those who were primarily language instructors, putting tremendous pressure on teachers to deliver this additional task (Kang, H., 2010).

While this centralised model of culture teaching has advantages in the sense that it provides a standardised, institutionalised, and time-efficient curriculum, the recently shifting demographic of students in the current era of globalisation has begun to challenge such views (Kang, 2014; Lee, S., 2013). The idea of arraying cultural knowledge according to language proficiency level is based on the assumption that beginners in target-language learning will also be novices in terms of the target culture (Mori, 2011; Kang, 2014). This model also presupposes that adult language learners enter the classroom as empty vessels expecting to be filled with information about the target country. However, this is not the case for most adult language learners, particularly in these times of globalised multimedia. On the contrary, what learners expect from a target culture is the knowledge of the underlying social values of the target society and not merely simplistic trivia (Kim, 2004). To respond to the recent demand, several pedagogical attempts have been made to accommodate the needs of current students and attract future students, such as incorporating Korean popular cultural products into the language curriculum and teaching practice (e.g. Kim, H., 2013; Oh, 2013). However, teaching contemporary culture in formal educational settings appears to face practical challenges in terms of the choice of materials, assessment criteria and methods, and teachability. Another issue with this aspect of the model is that it encourages learners to acculturate and assimilate what is proposed as Korean culture unconditionally (Na & Kim, 2016). This model also presupposes and determine what is "Korean" and what is "non-Korean" and pays less attention to individual learners' intrinsic cultural values and practices (Kang, 2014). However, in the face of the new demographic changes of Korean ethnicity and Korean speakers, such as large diaspora groups across the

world, a growing number of fluent Korean speakers who are not ethnically Korean as well as countless Korean classes being taught outside of Korea by non-native teachers, the enforcement of the view that language and culture are bound together can complicate the experiences of language learners, resulting in the marginalisation of some students and teachers. A growing body of literature has recently reported such issues. Particularly in Japan and the United States, where many heritage Koreans reside, various researchers have explored the struggle of heritage learners over language authority and culture authenticity as well as their conflicts in establishing Korean identities (e.g. Jeon, 2008; Jo, 2001; Mills, 2001; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Chapman, 2007; Kim. H., & Kim, 2017). For instance, Jo (2001) described the language learning processes of Korean American students, revealing confusion and struggle with language authorities such as "standard" forms of Korean speaking and writing.

2.2. Intercultural competence (IC)

This section presents a review of academic research in answer to the following questions:

- What does it mean to be an "interculturally competent speaker"?
- What are the factors that contribute to the development of IC?

This review starts with an insight into the conceptualisation of IC according to the suggestions of multiple scholars. It then proceeds with a description of the models that are particularly relevant to the current research. Next, this section reviews the empirical research investigating the factors associated with IC development. The final part of the section is devoted to how IC has been conceptualised and put into practice in the context of European and KL education. This study is centred on Bennett's (2009) key definition of IC as "acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural contexts (worldviews), including one's own, and developing a greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts" (p. 1). This concept will be explored in detail in section 2.2.2.

2.2.1. Defining intercultural competence

Early research on IC was motivated by perceived cross-cultural communication issues between individuals from different cultural backgrounds at a time when the culture was defined narrowly, primarily in terms of "nationality". Within the past 20 years, the concept of IC has been expanded to several disciplines, such as linguistics, communication, business studies, health care, social psychology, and education. Accordingly, research on IC expanded to encompass a broader range of contexts (e.g. international schools, medical training, study abroad programmes, and ex-pat culture) and was subdivided into multiple sectors (e.g. cross-cultural mediation, assessment of intercultural learning outcomes). Furthermore, IC research has evolved and added several new frameworks and assessments to the field (e.g. Fantini, 2009; Hammer & Bennett, 1998; Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Kelley & Meyers, 1992), from simplistic to highly sophisticated and comprehensive.

As IC has generated keen interest of researchers across multiple disciplines, a range of more or less related terms has evolved depending on the discipline's focus. Among these expressions, nomenclature that has commonly appeared in the literature has included intercultural communicative competence (ICC), intercultural sensitivity, transcultural communication, cross-cultural adaptation, and global citizenship. For example, focusing on the communicative aspect of intercultural interaction, communication experts Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) defined IC as "the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioural orientations to the world" (p. 7). In contrast, psychologist Barrett (2013) argued that people are required to use a complex set of values, attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills, and behaviours to respond successfully to intercultural situations. With a focus on the psychological aspect of IC, his research work defined IC as "a complex set of psychological and behavioural characteristics and functions required to deal with the tasks, difficulties or challenges presented by intercultural situations when these occur". Meanwhile, prominent FL educational theorists (e.g. Kramsch, 2011; Byram, 2000; Fantini, 2009) highlighted the importance of knowledge of culturally different others, the role of foreign language in intercultural encounters, and critical thinking to evaluate cultural differences. Fantini (2009) also provided a definition of IC as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p. 12). Kramsch (2011) viewed IC as the learner's ability "to reflect critically or analytically on the symbolic systems we use to make meaning" (p. 365) and the intercultural speaker as a "mediator between his/her own and other cultures through discourse". The author also highlighted the importance of developing IC in FL education. Byram (1997), an L2 education specialist, made a distinction between IC and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). According to Byram, IC refers to the skills and ability that individuals employ to interact with people from another culture while using their native language. In contrast, Byram defined ICC as "the ability to interact effectively with people of cultures other than one's own" (Byram, 2000, p. 297) while using a second language and outlined how ICC focuses on "establishing and maintaining relationships" instead of merely communicating messages or exchanging information (Byram, 1997, p. 3).

Several attempts have been made to overcome some of the murkiness of the definition of IC. For instance, Deardorff (2006) surveyed both intercultural experts and university administrators, seeking agreement on a definition of the term and the key factors on which it is based. The survey results led to a definition of IC as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations

based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff, 2006)." Working from a different perspective, Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) argued that previously suggested definitions and models of IC were conducted in a top-down fashion, subjectively, by intercultural experts. The researchers instead adopted a bottom-up approach by conducting a semantic network analysis of interview transcripts of 37 US and international university students from 14 countries. The research identified ten unique dimensions of IC: heterogeneity, transmission, being other-centred, being observant, motivation, sensitivity, respect, being relational, investment, and appropriateness.

2.2.2. Intercultural speakers: components, models, and assessment

Along with multiple definitions of IC, FL/L2 educators and researchers in various disciplines have devised their concepts and models to answer the question: "What does it mean to be interculturally competent?" While educators and theorists have offered their own unique ideas, there is an "emerging consensus around what constitutes IC, which is most often viewed as a set of cognitive, affective, behavioural skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett, 2008, p. 97).

FL educator Byram (1997) proposed the concept of an "intercultural speaker" and ICC to denote FL/culture learners who successfully communicate across languages and cultures and described the skills and other features that set them apart. According to Byram (1997), being interculturally competent requires certain skills, knowledge, and attitudes, including curiosity, openness, and readiness to see other cultures and the speaker's own culture without being judgemental. Meanwhile, the required knowledge is "of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction" (Byram, 1997, p. 51). Lastly, the required skills to be interculturally competent include skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery, and interaction. Therefore, successful intercultural speakers, according to Byram (2000), ought to be aware of their own cultural positioning, be sensitive towards other people, and see relationships between different cultures. Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) further elaborated that intercultural speaker should serve as mediators who can interact with speakers of other languages on equal terms, respect the latter's

individuality, and maintain awareness of their own identity. Byram's ICC model placed special emphasis on critical cultural awareness, maintaining that it is essential to "critically or analytically understand that one's own and other cultures" and perspective should be culturally determined rather than natural" (Byram, 2012). Byram (2006) also emphasised the importance of teaching both linguistic and cultural competence in the language curriculum and strongly advocated the responsibility of foreign language institutes to develop a critical awareness of the values and significance of cultural practices in other people's and one's own culture (p. 46).

In comparison, Kramsch (1997) argued that the traditional native-speaker model in L2 education, which focuses on the achievement of native-speaker proficiency and assimilation into the target culture, is no longer an ideal towards which learners should strive. The native-speaker model creates an imbalance of power in favour of the native speakers, resulting in lowering learners' self-esteem and negating their social and cultural identity. Accordingly, Kramsch (2011) proposed an intercultural speaker model describing a language learner who understands distinct cultures and perspectives and can act as a mediator in different cultural contexts. According to Kramsch, intercultural speakers have the ability to relate, interact, discover, learn about global issues, and self-reflect on their identity through constant intercultural encounters with native speakers of the target culture. Such hypothetical speakers will develop a critical awareness of issues related to both their own culture and other people's cultures. Moreover, they will manage to reach a "third place" that comprises neither the culture of origin nor the target culture. Building on Kramsch's conceptualisation, Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, and Kohler (2003) proposed a model to describe the process of acquiring IC. According to the model, the learner "begins with a knowledge of the practices of their own first culture and gradually acquires an approximative system of practices, as a result of exposure to new input" (p. 21). Each "interculture" in this progression includes elements from both the first and target cultures as well as unique elements created by learners in response to their role as participants in both cultures. These intercultures represent a movement within a "third place", described by Kramsch (1993; 2009) as "the interstices between cultures that the learner grew up with and the new cultures he or she is being introduced to (Kramsch, 1993 p. 236)."

While FL educators considered an individual's ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds and foreign language proficiency to be a fundamental and integral part of IC, some interculturalists put more emphasis on the process within individuals, where there is inner change resulting from adjusting mindsets/behavioural patterns to communicate with others effectively. For example,

Deardorff's (2009) Process Model of Intercultural Competence demonstrates the ongoing process of IC development, which involves five elements: attitude, knowledge, skills, and internal and external outcomes. The model is grounded in three key factors involving attitude (openness, respect, curiosity/discovery) that are fundamental to the development of the knowledge and skills needed for IC development. The model flow then leads to an internal outcome that involves aspects occurring within the individual as a result of the acquired attitude, knowledge, and skills. At this point, individuals are ideally able to begin to view things from another's perspective and respond to others accordingly, for instance, reflecting how the other person desires to be treated. Eventually, the summation of elements is demonstrated through the behaviour and communication of the individual (external outcome). This model denotes movement from the personal level to the interpersonal level (intercultural interaction) while maintaining the unique element of internal and external outcomes. Additionally, it would be possible for an individual to achieve the external outcome of behaving and communicating appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations without having fully achieved the internal outcome of a shift in attitude.

Bennett (1993, 2009) defined IC as "acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural contexts (worldviews), including one's own, and developing a greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts" (p. 1). The author also developed the DMIS as a framework to explain how an intercultural mindset develops. This developmental continuum model depicts a progression from a less complex experience of culturally based difference patterns (ethnocentrism) to a more complex experience of cultural diversity (ethno-relativism). According to the underlying assumption of the model, as individuals' experience of difference becomes more sophisticated and cognitively complex, the degree of IC increases (Bennett, 2009; Bennett & Bennett, 2004). The DMIS assumes that construing cultural differences can become an active part of one's worldview, eventuating in an expanded understanding of one's own and other cultures and increased competence in intercultural relations (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Through intercultural contact, people discover cross-cultural differences (or similarities) and face challenges that may lead them to question their usual ways of doing things. As they deepen their awareness and understanding of these differences, they may adjust their mindset (e.g. develop an ethno-relative perspective) and employ new behaviours to help them communicate more effectively and appropriately across cultures.

The DMIS is a six-stage model, and each stage suggests a certain worldview composition that typically involves a particular attitude and behaviour. Specifically, each orientation of the DMIS is indicative of a particular worldview structure, with certain kinds of attitudes and behaviour regarding cultural differences typically associated with each configuration. Thus, the DMIS is not a descriptive model of changes in attitude and behaviour. Rather, it is a model of changes in worldview structure, where the observable behaviour and self-reported attitude at each stage are indicative of the state of the underlying worldview (Hammer et al., 2003). The first three Stages that are essentially ethnocentric (Denial, Defence, and Minimization) are thought to be "ethnocentric" in nature in that an individual's experience of their own culture is central to their perception of other cultures. stages involve avoidance of cultural difference through denying that it exists, becoming defensive about any difference, or trivialising its significance (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). In contrast, the last three stages (acceptance, adaptation, integration) represent a shift to "ethno-relativism" where one's own culture is put into the context of other cultures so that other cultures are seen as equally valid (Bennett & Bennett, 1993). Ethno-relative stages involve looking for cultural differences by accepting that they are relevant by adapting to them or by integrating difference into one's own identity (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). This theory holds that those with more ethno-relative worldviews have more potential to generate interculturally competent attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour (Nam & Fry, 2010).

Figure 1: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
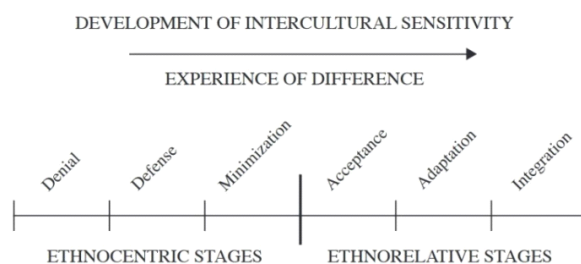
Source: Adapted from (Adapted from Bennett & Bennett., 1993)

Table 1: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) band descriptors

Stage	Stage of development	Brief descriptor
Ethnocentric	Denial	The individual refuses to acknowledge cultural differences.
	Defense	The individual begins to see cultural differences and is threatened by them.
	Minimization	While individuals at this stage do acknowledge cultural differences, they see human universals as more salient than cultural distinctions.
Ethnorelative	Acceptance	The individual begins to accept significant cultural differences first in behaviour, and then in values.
	Adaptation	The individual becomes more adept at intercultural communication by shifting perspectives to the other's cultural worldview.
	Integration	Individuals at this stage begin to transcend their own native cultures. They define their identities and evaluate their actions in terms of multiple cultural perspectives.

Source: Adapted from Bennett & Bennett (2004, p.153-8)

Even though DMIS is a useful theoretical framework for assessing IC, several researchers have raised a number of questions and limitations. The most significant criticism concerns the nature of DMIS, which is a linear model. The DMIS's implication that intercultural development is a progressive, scalar phenomenon leads to the possibility of oversimplifying an individual's reaction to intercultural experiences (Liddicoat et al., 2003). Another criticism involves the universality of the model. Along these lines, Shaules (2007) argued that the DMIS is meant to categorise general levels of intercultural sensitivity and may be less useful for describing the individual reactions of sojourners to particular experiences. He asserted that many sojourners have differing and contradictory reactions to their experience while, at the same time, they denigrate others. Calling this phenomenon, a "mixed state", the author questioned the ability of the DMIS to describe intercultural sensitivity in terms of a single discrete stage of development. Another limitation lies in its link to foreign language ability. Despite Bennett's emphasis on a lengthy immersion in the target culture to attain the most advanced stage (the integration stage), the DMIS does

not address (at least, not explicitly) the relationship between language and culture (Liddicoat et al., 2003). That said, some recent efforts have been made to extend the DMIS to connect foreign language skills with intercultural sensitivity. For example, Hammer et al. (2003) suggested a "typical fit between language proficiency levels and developmental levels of intercultural sensitivity" (p. 255). This work speculated that learners who have an advanced level of target language proficiency are apt to be in an ethno-relative stage of cultural development (e.g. Adaptation/Integration), whereas those who are less proficient in a foreign language are likely to possess an ethnocentric mindset (e.g. Denial/Defence). However, the authors' suggestion was unfavourably scrutinised by several researchers (e.g. Jackson, 2011). Fantini (2012) argued in favour of the inclusion of foreign language proficiency into the tenets of IC, asserting foreign language proficiency is a fundamental and integral part of IC. Similarly, Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) confirmed a growing recognition of the importance of integrating intercultural capabilities into language learning and teaching.

The components and models led to the development of numerous assessment tools and standards to measure the level of IC in both the educational and business fields. One of the predominant assessment formats features a quantitative approach, briefly described as surveys that mainly adopt psychometric tests and rely on self-reporting. For example, the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) was developed to assess individuals' ability to appropriately modify their behaviour when confronted with cultural differences, specifically in reference to individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). The ICSI comprises a 46-item 7-point Likert scale assessment, which requires participants to respond as to whether they would engage in certain behaviours (e.g. disagreeing with others openly) in an individualistic country such as the United States and whether they would engage in the same behaviour in a collectivistic country such as Japan. Similarly, the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) scales, developed in the early 1990s, provide information about an individual's ability to adapt to different cultures based on four dimensions: (1) emotional resilience, (2) flexibility and openness, (3) perceptual acuity, and (4) personal autonomy (Kelley & Meyers, 1992). The CCAI is a 50-item self-report survey using a 6-point Likert scale response format ranging from "definitely not true" to "definitely true". Importantly, this model includes perceptual acuity as a component, referring to the ability to pay attention to verbal and nonverbal cues when communicating with people from different cultures. The IDI is a psychometric tool developed by Hammer (1998, 2003a) and built on Bennet's DMIS (1993). Another instrument, the earlier-mentioned IDI, measures the level of IC/sensitivity across a developmental continuum for individuals, groups, and organisations and represents a capability for perceiving cultural

differences and commonalities as well as modifying behaviour according to the cultural context. The IDI is a 50-item self-assessment using 5-point Likert scales that measure participants' level of disagreement or agreement (Hammer et al., 2003; Paige et al., 2003). In general terms, a survey can be standardised and norm-referenced to make inferences about the IC of both an individual and a group. Furthermore, Likert-scaled measures are versatile tools suited for capturing attitudinal components of IC and declarative knowledge (Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios, & Liu, 2016). However, sole reliance on self-report measures presents several challenges. For example, individuals differ in terms of previous experiences and critical events. As the typical young adult will have limited exposure to multicultural environments and less experience reflecting upon skills and behaviours, items that rely on previous experience may be adversely impacted by a potential lack of exposure. Thus, Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) questioned the ability of participants who have little experience in intercultural situations to self-report behavioural choices in hypothetical intercultural situations. Another concern is that self-reported measures can be subject to social desirability bias, which can be characterised as overreporting of socially desirable behaviours or attitudes when students respond to items based on their most idealistic self. This type of bias can also result in underreporting of socially undesirable behaviours or attitudes on the part of respondents to avoid receiving negative evaluations. Additionally, self-report items may be inappropriate for assessing interaction tendencies and other skill components of the IC (Griffith et al., 2016).

A qualitative approach to assess IC can be conducted by means of different combinations of tasks and formats such as portfolio assessment (Byram, 1997; Jacobson, Sleicher, & Maureen, 1999; Pruegger & Rogers, 1994), reflective journals, projects, ethnographic observations, interviews (Fantini, 2006; Straffon, 2003), performance tasks (Byram, 1997; Ruben, 1976), and critical incidents. However, these qualitative measures can provide more personalised, detailed accounts of the process of IC development that cannot be assessed by quantitative assessments alone; nevertheless, they can be more time-consuming when collecting and analysing direct data. Also, no standard portfolio assessment currently exists, and they can vary across institutions, studies (e.g. Ingulsrud, Kai, Kadowaki, Kurobane, & Shiobara, 2002; Jacobson et al., 1999), and contexts (e.g. foreign language courses, study abroad experiences, general education), making it challenging to standardise the various work products submitted by students and ensure interrater reliability in scoring student work.

2.2.3. Contributors of IC development: Study abroad, language learning, and learning motivation

This chapter sought to identify the factors that contribute to the development of IC. Although a review of the research suggested that several shared factors are associated with IC development, the research findings vary depending on the focus of the study, demographics, educational context, and programme objectives. Therefore, this section examines the four prevalent factors deemed the most relevant to the current study: previous living abroad experience, language proficiency, motivation, and facilitated learning.

Multiple studies suggested that either being a resident in the target language community or being in contact with community members could lead to an increased awareness of the different cultures. The concept, often referred to as the "contact hypothesis" (Allport, Clark, & Pettigrew, 1954), maintains that interaction between two groups reduces the prejudicial feelings between individuals within each group. This hypothesis became the basis for the long-standing belief that studying abroad encourages students to form a more positive view of the host culture, expand understanding of their own and other cultures, and increase intercultural awareness. Bennett and Bennett (1993) suggested that one can "deepen one's awareness and understanding of cultural differences" and "adjust one's mindset" through contact with other cultures and accumulate knowledge of other cultures and people. Multiple empirical studies have supported this idea; research on U.S. university students found that students who had studied abroad and interacted with students from other cultures had positively improved their IC in comparison to those who had not (Carter, 2006). In the same vein, Schweisfurth and Gu's (2009) study on first-year international students in the United Kingdom demonstrated that most international students experienced transformative intercultural learning through a complex set of experiences while studying abroad. Meanwhile, Nam's (2011) evaluation of 46 undergraduate students who participated in a short-term study abroad programme yielded positive evidence of developing intercultural sensitivity, critical thinking skills, motivation related to international affairs (e.g. educational aspirations, global engagement), and personal development (e.g. self-awareness, changes in worldview).

While studying abroad seems like the most effective way to improve IC, some studies suggested that people can achieve a similar outcome without the burden of leaving their home country.

Recommended activities include attending international schools, socialising with people from different cultural backgrounds, or working in a multicultural cooperate environment. For example, Rubenfeld, Clément, Lussier, Lebrun, and Auger (2006) carried out an empirical study on the effect of direct, personal contact experienced by Francophone and Anglophone language learners in Canada. The researchers found that for both language speaker groups, contact and the opportunity to communicate with others led learners to identify with the target language communities, which in turn encouraged them to construct more positive representations of the target culture/country. Similarly, in a study carried out at a Korean university by Jon (2009), Korean students who participated in an intervention programme aimed at encouraging intercultural exchange with international students constructed a more positive representation of other cultural communities and displayed a positive correlation with the development of IC.

A more specific question arises as to whether foreign language learning can be beneficial in enhancing the development of IC. Foreign language learning has always been of great interest amongst IC researchers and educators because intercultural communication, by its very nature, entails the use of foreign languages. Multiple empirical studies supported the benefits of foreign language learning and its positive correlation with IC development. For example, from the results of survey-based research on US university faculty and staff, Lee Olson and Kroeger (2001) concluded that advanced proficiency in one or more foreign languages is related to a higher level of IC. More specifically, based on their findings, the researchers argued that foreign language proficiency is indispensable for developing intercultural communication skills. Similarly, a large-scale survey study involving almost 50,000 young residents of Switzerland, carried out by Grin and Faniko (2012), provided empirical support for the positive effect of foreign language learning. The research revealed that higher foreign language skill was associated with greater open-mindedness, higher cultural empathy, and social initiative. Along the same lines, Yoo's (2017) research on 206 Korean students and 64 international students in EFL classrooms also revealed that participants with high English proficiency tended to exhibit higher intercultural sensitivity levels compared to those with intermediate or low proficiency.

Some researchers have recognised the importance of motivation in language learning and proposed learning motivation and learners' affiliation to the target country as one of the factors of IC development (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013, p48). In general, the motivation of language learners was seen as a driving force behind learning and achieving one's goals (Dörnyei, 2007) as well as grounds for deciding whether to engage with the target language speakers or not (Humphrey, 2007; MacIntyre, 2007). Initially, Gardner

and Lambert (1959) concept of "Integrative Orientation" has long been used to describe learners' interest in a specific language and their desire to interact with the members of the community of that speaks the language. Gardner (1972) saw second languages as mediating factors between different ethnolinguistic communities in multicultural settings. Accordingly, the author suggested, language learners who have integrative motivation would be more successful in learning and have favourable attitudes towards the group, being more open than individuals who did not express such reasons. Csizér and Kormo's (2008) survey of 1,777 Hungarian primary school children aged between 13 and 14 studying English and German indicated that students who were more motivated to learn the language of the target country engaged in intercultural contact more frequently than less motivated students.

The possibility of improving one's intercultural sensitivity/competence through designed learning activities also demands consideration. A few studies suggested that facilitated learning, such as university courses designed to enhance intercultural sensitivity or an intercultural training programme, can result in a positive impact on the development of IC. In particular, the Internationalisation at Home (IaH) initiative, born from a desire to equip all HE students and staff to operate in international, increasingly multicultural domestic contexts, has inspired the endeavour to promote intercultural learning on an individual and organisational level. Measures include integrating intercultural or global perspectives into the university curriculum, supporting cross-cultural student associations, or encouraging both students and staff members to engage in language study (Crowther et al., 2000; Koutsantoni, 2006; Otten, 2003). Several studies have documented the positive outcome of implementing such programmes on an organisation level, including increased intercultural awareness (Brown, 2008; Fischer, 2011), understanding people from backgrounds different from one's own (Hoverman, 2012), cross-cultural adjustment, and the performance of members of international organisations (Zakaria, 2000) and sojourners (Morris & Robie, 2001). Arévalo-Guerrero (2009) reported a positive effect of facilitated intercultural learning in the context of FL learning and teaching. The study demonstrated that attendees of the Intercultural Spanish Course (ISC), a language programme designed to foster cultural knowledge of the target language, enhanced intercultural sensitivity as students gained more in-depth cultural understanding and critical thinking skills.

While multiple empirical studies have provided insightful results, how to identify the factors behind IC development still seem to remain a matter of debate. Even though some research findings have identified a study abroad programme as a contributing factor in developing IC, a few studies have demonstrated contradictory results. Alred, Byram, and Fleming (2003) and other interculturalists (i.e.

Ryan, 2006) considered intercultural contact alone insufficient to bring about interculturality. Some also asserted that the effect of studying abroad on students could differ depending on the aggregate impact of various factors, such as duration of study, preparation, and personal experience. Salisbury, An, and Pascarella (2013) argued that despite the apparent positive correlation between student mobility and IC, it is still quite probable that the diversity of contact in the study abroad experience has little influence on a student's appreciation of cultural differences. Meanwhile, in a study involving 141 medical students at a US university, Ayas (2006) found no significant differences in intercultural sensitivity between participants with international experience and those without it. Drawing on a larger-scale quantitative analysis of the effect of a study abroad programme on the IC of undergraduate college students in the United States, Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2011) reported that the experience of studying abroad did not significantly influence the participants' appreciation of cultural difference or comfort with diversity. This result correlated with Davies, Lewis, Anderson, and Bernstein (2015), in a controlled study involving psychology graduate students who had participated in a short-term study abroad programme in the United States. The study also revealed no measurable growth in IC in the study abroad group compared to students who took the same course in the United States.

Some researchers have suggested that cultural contact does not always lead to a significant reduction of stereotypes; instead, negative encounters may impede personal expansion. Bochner (1982) and Coleman (1996) asserted that learners frequently returned from studying abroad with their prejudices intact; on the contrary, living abroad experiences often reinforced their stereotypes. Similarly, after an extensive four-year investigation drawing on data from more than 1,300 U.S. undergraduates enrolled in 61 programmes abroad, Berg (2009) concluded that "being exposed to a different culture did not, for a very large number of students in this study, prove to be a sufficient condition for advancing their intercultural learning." Furthermore, some scholars have reported that attending culturally diverse universities did not allow students to make significant gains in IC (Hammer, 2005; Lantz, 2014). Lantz's (2014) longitudinal study of first-year UK and non-UK students at multicultural UK universities showed that, despite the reported high level of intercultural contact during university experience on the students' part, neither group experienced a significant change in the level of IC.

Regarding foreign language learning and its association with IC, various studies have shown that increasing proficiency in the target language only does not necessarily increase an individual's IC (e.g. Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Byram, 2006). Along the same lines, Ingram, Kono, Sasaki, Tateyama, and

O'Neill (2004) and Liddicoat et al. (2003) both noted that evidential support for a causal relationship between language learning and attitude change towards the target culture is relatively sparse, meaning that language proficiency does not guarantee a high level of IC. Moreover, Mantle-Bromley (1995) maintained that students do not become interculturally aware by simply being in a language class. On the contrary, without intervention, students become not more but less favourable towards other languages and cultures after initial exposure to language study. Studies questioning the effectiveness of foreign language proficiency in developing IC have advanced the common view that language proficiency might be one of the variables for successful intercultural communication but is not the only one. Deardorff (2006) asserted that language alone does not ensure one's competence in culture. Languages can act as a vehicle through which individuals understand others' world views, and while crucial to IC development, it cannot alone account for successful intercultural communication. Thus, Jackson (2009) stated that learners could be "advanced" in terms of proficiency in a foreign language yet minimally aware of or barely comfortable with values and modes of behaviour (e.g. communication styles) that differ from their own. Furthermore, some research evidence has suggested that language learning and cross-cultural interactions can have an inconclusive, or worse, a negative effect on intercultural attitudes without guidance (Kramsch & Thorne, 2002; O'Dowd, 2003; Ware & Kramsch, 2005).

In conclusion, while multiple theoretical and empirical research efforts have yielded insightful findings, the literature review has suggested that IC development is a complex process that implies various patterns dependent on educational context, individual variables, and personal experiences rather than demonstrating common patterns and universal factors. Indeed, as Fantini (2006) argued, "Complex of abilities need to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (Fantini, 2006, p. 12). Briefly stated, IC is a complex process that requires a combination of factors; thus, exactly what components are needed and how they interact remain matters for debate and further research.

2.2.4. IC in the European and Korean contexts

The importance of IC in FL learning and teaching in the European setting is clearly illustrated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), designed to provide a transparent, coherent, and comprehensive common guideline for FL instruction across Europe (CoE, 2001). The CEFR recognised the significance of developing interculturality, by which the "linguistic and cultural competencies in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how" (CoE, 2001, p. 43). Interculturality can be achieved by ensuring that all sections of the population achieve "a wider and deeper understanding of the way of life and forms of thought of other peoples and their cultural heritage (CoE, 2001)."

Byram (2003) maintained that multilingualism is a component of both European citizenship and the learning society (Byram, 2003. p. 7). The author further postulated that language education should include teaching learners to explore a sense of belonging and identity in addition to the apparent economic opportunity that language proficiency allows. In response to linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe, the Council of Europe has promoted "plurilingualism" and calls for the inclusion of intercultural dialogue at all levels of education, stressing that "all students should be allowed to develop their plurilingual competence" (CoE, 2001, p. 44). The CEFR described plurilingualism as an approach emphasising the fact that as an individual's experience of language in its cultural context expands from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples, the individual does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact (CEFR, 2001, p. 4). Moreover, the CEFR assumed that individual language learners would become language users, and in the course of this process, they would not only become plurilingual but would also develop interculturality (p. 43). Furthermore, the recently updated descriptors of competence in the CEFR (CoE, 2017) stated "speaker of the target language" as opposed to "native speaker", which marks the goal of IC and indicates a notable shift from the goal of the idealised native speaker. According to a reference study written for the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, if learners are to be involved in understanding other cultures in order to communicate with them successfully, then teachers need training that both prepares them to focus on structures, lexis, functions,

and a few facts about the target country and helps them teach their learners to deal with the complexities of intercultural communication (Willems, 2002, p. 7-10). In the UK context, the report published by British Department for Education and Skills (2002, p.5) has emphasised the notion of intercultural understanding in its National Languages Strategy. British policymakers accept that developing cultural awareness is an essential component of education for all. According to the strategy, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras; they are an integral part of being a citizen in the knowledge society of the 21st century. Also, Kagan SL and Stewart V.'s (2004) UK report for department for Education and skills- *Putting the World in World Class Education* proposed: "Our vision is that the people of the UK should have the knowledge, skills, and understanding they need to fulfil themselves, to live in and contribute effectively to a global society and to work in a competitive global economy" (p. 1). Key points highlighted by the report stress the need for institutions to produce graduates who will become responsible global citizens who appreciate, respect, and engage positively with diversity. Furthermore, in response to recent changes in the EU and the United Kingdom, a recently published paper, *Languages in the UK*, by British Academy (2019), highlighted the importance of language learning and called for refocusing attention on the language skills of UK citizens to forge wider commercial and other types of links with the EU and the rest of the world. The document emphasised the value of creating the mindset of cultural agility by being flexible, adaptable, globally mobile, and sensitive to cultural differences and equipping people with ICC that enables them to navigate their way through multicultural environments to enhance employability.

In the context of KFL, the concept of "multi-cultural" or "intercultural" first emerged as a topic to discuss social integration issues of non-Korean speakers as the result of a sudden influx of immigrants (Park & Lo, 2012). These demographic and social changes prompted a rethinking of culture-teaching practice premised on old models, recognising the shortcomings of the knowledge-based, top-down model of culture teaching, and calling for an understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of the various aspects of culture addressed in language teaching (Kang, 2014; Bae, 2011). Earlier studies tried to explain the concept of "interculturality" from a psychological perspective, describing culture shock, anxiety, and learning stress that language learners experience in cultural socialisation or acculturation in Korea (e.g. Kwon, 2010; Lee, S., 2013). Those studies were conducted under the premise that cultural difference is a variable that causes sojourners in Korea stress or emotional/psychological conflict while adjusting to Korean culture, hence negatively impacts the language learning process. In order to minimise negative affective variables and support learners' cultural adjustment, allowing them to develop

interculturality, the main emphasis was laid on educational practice. This focus resulted in an increased volume of studies highlighting the necessity of fostering interculturally competent language teachers who could provide culturally sensible teachings to students or to provide background data for the implementation of intercultural perspective into language curriculum and teacher training programmes (e.g. Won, 2009; Na and Kim, 2016). For instance, Won (2009) conducted a survey examining the cross-cultural competence of KL educators, which showed that the teacher's teaching years and educational background positively correlated with the instructor's ability to recognise a foreign culture. Similarly, Na and Kim (2016) survey-based study of KL teachers in various institutes in Korea found that teacher training regarding intercultural awareness significantly related to the teachers' level of understanding of intercultural education and their ability to handle in-class cultural conflict. While a small number of research findings illustrated that some degree of attention had been given to interculturality in KFL, a wide discrepancy between academic discourse and teaching practice, particularly regarding promoting IC in the curriculum, remains in force. Furthermore, empirical research investigating the IC of teachers in KFL has been less common than opinion-oriented writings.

2.3. Imagined communities and imagined identity

This section examines concepts of "Imagined Communities" (Anderson, 1983, 2006) and "Imagined identities" (Norton, 2001) to better understand how language learners construct learner identities through learning activities and its relation to the development of IC. The section begins by describing how students' envisioning of the target country (imagined communities) leads to their various attitudes and learning practices. Next, it discusses how the language learners' construction of identity shapes their affiliation to the imagined communities and their engagement with learning, along with how this aspect is linked with IC. Lastly, the case of KL learners in the United Kingdom is considered.

2.3.1. Imagined communities and imagined identities

"Imagined communities" is a term coined by Benedict Anderson (1983, 2006) to describe the processes by which a sense of nationality that exists mainly in the imaginations of national community members is developed. According to this author, a nation is a socially constructed community imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. The spread of mass vernacular literacy, the movement to abolish the ideas of rule by divine right and hereditary monarchy, and the emergence of printing press capitalism have been the main driving force behind the creation of national identities and nationalism. Anderson uses the concept of "nation" to reflect the appeal of a particular form of collective identification achieved through the political/cultural rubric of the nation-state. His work is inspiring in the sense that it explains how a collective affinity towards a specific nation is created, used, and functions in people's everyday lives.

Building on Anderson's earlier conceptualisation, Norton (2001) introduced the concept of imagined communities into L2 educational research to include "any community of the imagination that is desirable to the language learner, whether a community of professionals, sports fans, or comic book readers" (p. 477). According to Norton, imagined communities are a construct consisting of broad ideas and groups of clearly defined and located entities, which can be connected through the power of imagination. Those connections include future relationships or affiliations to the target community that

exist only in the learner's imagination (e.g. nationhood or even transnational communities), and do not necessarily resemble the real community. Kanno and Norton (2003) explained that "imagined communities are no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their current actions and investment" (p. 242). In other words, students engage in learning practices in the classroom by imagining their connections to a broader community, which is the product of their life trajectories, current circumstances, and future aspirations (Norton, 2001). An example can be found in the concept of "English as a global language". In Yashima's (2002) study of Japanese EFL learners, the students described English as an entity that symbolises the world around Japan, and a tool that connects them to foreign countries and foreigners. In the same vein, Lamb (2004) suggested that learners associated English with international culture, incorporating business, technological innovation, consumer values, democracy, world travel, and the assorted icons of fashion, sport, and music rather than geographical or cultural communities.

Language learners might engage in various types of efforts to increase their accessibility to their imagined connections to a broader community. An imagined identity is a way of positioning individuals or being positioned by others in an imagined community. Along these lines, Norton (2000) concept of "identity" described how envisioning language learners' identity in the context of imagined communities shapes their engagement with educational practice. Learners who engage in learning practice do so with the understanding that they will acquire new knowledge and a set of skills that will enhance their connections to the imagined communities. In other words, learners will expect or hope to have a good return on their investment in the target language, which will give them access to the privileges of the target community and target language speakers. According to Norton (2001), an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity – an identity that is constantly changing across time and space. In a similar vein, Kanno and Norton (2003) provided empirical support for the positive effect of constructing identity and the learner's investment to gain affiliation to the imagined community. The authors described a young Japanese man studying fashion design in Tokyo, who was motivated to learn English by envisioning himself as one of the most successful fashion designers in New York. In his imagination, he was a recognised member of an international fashion community, and English was seen as an essential means to gain this future affiliation. A similar example was found in Kinginger (2004) four-year longitudinal study focusing on a female US undergraduate student learning French. In her earlier stage of learning, the American student's imagined France was a place populated with refined, interesting, cultured people who are in turn interested in her. The idealised version of France provided a powerful

motivation to study French, as she believed that gaining access to imagined France could be achieved by learning French. In contrast, Ryan (2006) saw language learners as social beings who imagine themselves as a "real member of an imagined community attempting to square hopes and aspirations with perceived responsibilities and obligations as members of that community" (p. 40). Making an analogy involving a newcomer to a sports team, the researcher explained that the newcomer's legitimate membership needs to be confirmed by the recognition of other members of the community and fulfilling responsibilities as a team member. However, the direct engagement with other community members only occurs in the learner's imagination.

According to Kanno and Norton (2003), learners' imagined identity can impact their engagement with learning practices if the learners believe that current classroom practices help them to obtain necessary resources to draw closer to their imagined communities. Learners align their actions with the shared norms of the classroom communities and maintain or even increase their levels of investment. Empirical evidence in this light can be found in Nam's (2017) research. Nam investigated the dispositions of students who are learning Korean at US universities to identify differences in motivations, goals, and goal attainment expectations between continuing and discontinuing students. According to the author's findings, continuing students had stronger motivation, a stronger desire to interact with Korean speakers, higher expectations of staying in Korea, and a greater ability to imagine themselves as proficient speakers of Korean. In contrast, when learners' imagined communities confront the real face of the community, the perceived discrepancies can affect learners' decision to amend their imagination or lead to a determination to disconnect from affiliation. Kanno (2003) described a Japanese teenager who grew up mostly in English-speaking countries but firmly saw himself as Japanese. To keep his "Japaneseness", he made every effort to maintain his Japanese proficiency. However, upon discovering that the real Japan was far removed from his idealised version, he was so disappointed that he did not want to be Japanese anymore and became demotivated to learn Japanese.

An imagined identity is built on the post-constructivist idea that identity is no longer conceptualised as a given but is constantly negotiated and struggled over (Saint-Jacques, 2002, 2012), and individuals can choose and make an effort to establish their own identity (Kim. Y., 2009). King (2008) demonstrated how identities could be reconstructed by choice by describing the endeavours of three gay Korean learners of English who wished to reach out to the members of their imagined community because they were unsatisfied with their own in Korea. Similarly, Arnett (2002) asserted that people are pressured

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to develop a bi- or multi-cultural identity in which part of their identity is rooted in their local culture, while another part is associated with a global identity that links them to the international mainstream in the new globalised world. Meanwhile, drawing on self-report data from junior high school students in Indonesia, Lamb (2004) concluded that the students' motivation to learn English was partly shaped by their pursuit of a bicultural identity, that is, a global or world citizen identity, on the one hand, and a sense of local or national identity as an Indonesian, on the other.

Recently, in an era of surging global nomadism, cultural hybridity, once negatively characterised as "rootless marginal man" (Stonequist, 1935), has begun to be celebrated as superior cultural intelligence owing to the "advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt, 1997, p. 158). Although cultural hybrids are typically associated with a minority culture, they allow for the possibility of moving beyond one's original identity and integrating at least two cultural identities. Examples include immigrants, missionaries, military personnel, diplomats, and international businesspersons, along with the children born to these people. Perhaps the most widely cited of these is "Third Culture Kid (TCK)", originally coined by the American sociologists Useem, Useem, and Donoghue (1963) to describe children who do not belong to their "first" or ancestral culture, nor to the "second" or "host" culture in which they live but feel a sense of belonging to all cultures they have experienced, thus developing a "third culture" of their own.

2.3.2. Imagined community and identity in the context of KFL

Research on imagined communities and identity in FL learning and teaching has been closely connected to L2 motivation research. In the last two decades, research on KL learners' motivation has flourished as a result of the positive global reception of Korean popular culture. Multiple studies have confirmed that the popularity of Korean culture, which has spread across countries and transcended cultural boundaries, has enhanced the national image of South Korea, leading to an increased interest in the learning of the language. Together with economic development, supported by well-polished, glamorous visual images from Korean dramas and music videos, South Korea has become an attractive place for people to visit, study, work, and live. Jung, Yun, and Kang's (2007) research on KL learners in Japan, and Chan & Chi's (2008, 2010) two surveys carried out at a Singaporean university yielded

empirical findings in support of this phenomenon: most new adult learners attributed their decision to learn the language to their interest in K-pop, Korean movies, television dramas, and Korean artists.

The earlier studies in this area of interest mainly concentrated on the description of the global proliferation of Korean popular culture. Only recently have researchers started paying close attention to how global fans of Korean popular culture view what is socially and culturally "Korean". While the focus may differ slightly depending on the field of study, a common finding is that the interpretation of "Korea as an entity" is subject to individual circumstances. For instance, Lee and Cho's (2017) recent research on KL learners at US universities identified four types of imagined communities relating to Korea: communities of K-pop culture, communities of professionals, communities of Korean family and relatives, and communities of ethnic Koreans. Korea was seen as the birthplace of K-pop for those interested in popular culture or, alternatively, a place where one could build a future career for those who were career-oriented. For Korean heritage learners, Korea was a place where their family/relatives lived. For others, Korea was perceived as a place where ethnic Koreans who were Korean lived. Ju and Lee (2015) found similar envisioning in the narratives of Asian-American fans of Korean drama. They described the participants' perceptions of Korea as a symbolic place where young Asian Americans in the United States could identify their desires as "Americans and Asians" and establish concrete manifestations of the coeval territory of East Asia through utilising popular cultural practices as their sideways entrance into imagined communities, which they would have had greater difficulty accessing in reality. Returning to Lee and Cho's (2017) research on KL learners at US universities, Korea envisioned by KL learners was not restricted to a specific region or an ethnic group but encompassed various populations that were connected via the Korean language. Still other studies have attempted to view Korean culture's global popularity through the frame of global youth's efforts to construct their identities as international, multilingual speakers. For example, Kim and Omerbašić (2017) demonstrated how global youth practised and expressed their multilingual identities as participants of the global social world by engaging in Korean learning practice. By engaging in online discussion forums devoted to Korean dramas and language, the global youth reflected their lived experiences and imagined lives through their participation in these online forums, despite the geographical distances between Korea and their location.

Establishing a definition of what it means to be Korean raises intriguing speculations. For example, Schulze (2013) provided interesting insight into how international fans of Korean popular culture/KL learners identified with the idea of "what is Korean". The researcher analysed the contents of blogs and

message boards on K-drama to investigate how international fans of Korean dramas envisioned their imagined communities. The themes that a K-drama revolves around, like school, kinship, or marriage, were discussed in terms of culture, and the discourse was mediated by so-called "connoisseurs of Korean culture". Also, specific elements in K-drama, whether a gesture, an object, traffic rules, a way of communicating, or a special beverage or food was connoted as being "Korean". Korean culture was an imagined and negotiated product constructed by the audience as a group work through the mediations of interlocutors who were defined as cultural experts. Going further, "Korean culture" is constructed piece by piece based on the possibility of difference, and international fans convert this difference from a non-intelligible into a cultural form. Furthermore, the naturalisation usually includes not only cultural labelling of the other – the "Korean" – but a cultural (in the sense of national, regional cultures), social, or political self-positioning by the viewers themselves. Put succinctly, the practice of defining "what Korean is" prompted international fans of K-drama to reflect their cultural background. In summary, the literature review in this section revealed that the envisioning of Korea as an imagined community resonates partly with Norton's (2001) view, which described international fans/learners of Korean as engaging in cultural/learning practices by imagining their future connection to the imagined community, which is a product of their life trajectories, current circumstances, and future aspirations. Another finding in the literature review is that individuals' perception of being socially and culturally "Korean" is constantly being constructed through their collective activity and highly negotiated among fans/language learners based on their individual and local context.

3. Methodology, Participants, Data Collection, and Analysis

This chapter focuses on methodology, data sourcing, and analysis. First, the chapter outlines the research design and the tools used for the study's data collection. Next, the chapter introduces the IDI, an instrument employed for quantitative data collection, and proceeds with a description of the in-depth interview protocols used for qualitative data collection. Lastly, the statistical and qualitative analysis method is discussed.

3.1. Research design

3.1.1. Mixed-methods

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, designed to provide more robust inferences through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. In their introductory but substantial book on mixed-methods research, Clark and Creswell (2008) defined mixed methods as a research design with "philosophical assumptions and methods of inquiry", which guides and focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative data. Combining these two approaches provides a better understanding of research questions than either approach alone (p. 5). Multiple researchers and interculturalists in FL learning and teaching have endorsed the mixed-methods approach. For example, Dörnyei (2007) argued in favour of using mixed-methods, suggesting that this technique can improve validity through the convergence and corroboration of findings. Quantitative data may be perceived as overly simplistic, decontextualised, and reductionist because of its broad generalisations and failure to capture the meaning that people attach to their lives and circumstances. In contrast, qualitative research is sometimes understood to be too context-specific and to involve unrepresentative samples. Thus, a mixed-methods approach allows for multi-level analysis of complex issues, including both numeric trends and verbal descriptions. Other researchers have also advocated the use of mixed methods. According to the survey result in Deardorff (2006), intercultural experts and HE administrators supported the use of mixed-methods research for assessing IC.

"Both intercultural experts (scholars) and administrators agree that it is possible to assess degrees of intercultural competence, and the mixed methods approach of using both quantitative and qualitative measures is suggested as the best way to assess intercultural competence, including interviews, observation, and judgment by self and others" (Deardorff, 2006).

After carefully reviewing the literature while focusing on the methodology used to investigate the relevant topics, this study adopted a mixed-methods approach with the view that quantitative data could provide a guideline to understand overall developmental changes of IC while qualitative data could add a level of depth in understanding the detailed experiences of participants. The IDI, a psychometric tool developed by Hammer and Bennett (1998), was used as a quantitative tool. In addition, two sets of in-depth interviews were employed to collect qualitative data. Furthermore, this study employed a mixture of sequential explanatory methods, characterised by collection and analysis of first quantitative and then qualitative data as Creswell (2011) recommended. While the quantitative data provided an overview of the developmental changes of IC within the group and possible correlation with variables, the qualitative data provided a detailed understanding of multilateral influences on participants' learning experiences that were associated with their personal histories as well as educational and societal environment. Furthermore, intentional mixing of data obtained from the interview and IDI allowed for a reflective understanding of the theory of DMIS, as informed by Bennett's work (1993, 2008).

Due to the small sample size and the nature of the methodology used in the current study, the quantitative analysis was used only for heuristic purposes and to generate insights and understanding, not for statistical generalisation, following Hirschi and Selvin (1973). For this reason, this study gave more weight to the quantitative approach for the primary purpose of examining the IC development of the participants over a certain period. This approach can be more informative than mere statistical tests and association analyses, such as correlation with variables. This study used the same participants from the first phase, following them into a second phase, a method offering significant and representative results and contradictory cases as well.

3.1.2. Research setting and participants

The research was conducted at SOAS, the University of London, over the academic year 2016-2017. A sample drawn from a single department might not necessarily represent the broader population of university-level Korean learners, even the broader population of Korean learners in the United Kingdom. SOAS offers a BA degree level in Korean-related studies in London and is well known for its diverse, well-structured curriculum, providing students with a high level of competence in all aspects of written and spoken Korean together with an introduction to both classical and modern Korean culture. Moreover, SOAS is unique in terms of being the only HE institution in the United Kingdom specialising in the study of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. For all the above reasons, SOAS was considered an excellent setting for researching Korean learners in the United Kingdom.

Participation was voluntary, and the participants were asked to provide informed consent before the start and throughout the project. Any participants wishing to withdraw from the research were allowed to do so at any point in the process. The participants were first-year undergraduate students whose module choice was either BA in Korean or BA in Korean Studies. The sample cohort was limited to first-year students for the following reasons:

- First-year students have just started a new language learning programme and have not been very much influenced yet by other factors that might affect their intercultural development (e.g. study abroad programme); hence, it would be easier to identify baseline stages of development compared to later development.
- First-years are likely to experience dramatic developmental changes compared to students in later years' groups.

Each year, the SOAS Korean department has received about 40 BA in Korean or BA in Korean Studies students. In the academic year 2016-2017, 38 students enrolled. From those 38 students, 21 students agreed to participate in the research. However, four participants' data were excluded from the final datasets due to missing information; hence, datasets representing 17 participants were used for the study.

Most of the study participants were from the United Kingdom. Notably, many of the British

participants were from diverse ethnic groups/cultural backgrounds (i.e. Philippines, France, Bangladesh, Caribbean countries, Finland). Hence, the participants' cultural backgrounds were diverse and not easily superimposed on stereotypical notions of nationality. Mainly, this diversity is because London attracts many immigrants and students from all regions of the United Kingdom and European countries as an economic, educational, and cultural hub of the nation. Also worth noting, some participants signalled that they moved to London to study Korean because they could not find a Korean programme in their region (or country) of origin.

Table 2: Nationalities of participants

Nationality	No of participants	Details
United Kingdom	12	
European	4	Lithuania, Italy, Hungary. Etc
United States	1	

Most (16 out of 17) of the participants were female; the study had only one male participant. The imbalance in gender ratio in the cohort reflects a recent trend in which a higher proportion of women is enrolled in language programmes, with the study of Korean posing no exception. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 21 years.

Table 3: Gender of participants

Gender	No of participants
female	16
male	1

3.1.3. Educational background: BA in Korean and Korean Studies

The BA in Korean is a four-year programme designed to provide students with the opportunity to achieve the highest level of linguistic competence in modern Korean and learn about the literature, history, and culture of Korea. Students generally concentrate on developing language skills in the first year, complemented by introductory modules on Korean society, history, and culture. BA in Korean students are subsequently required to spend their second year at Korean universities on the study abroad programme, focusing on intensive language training. The third and fourth years are devoted to applying and improving language skills through modules that involve reading and analysing advanced texts and literary works. Unlike the BA in Korean path, BA in Korean Studies is a programme designed for students who wish to combine Korean culture and language at a suitable level with an additional subject of their academic interest. This course requires a shorter period of study (three years) without a year abroad in Korea. The latter module is suitable for students wishing to combine a Korean Studies major with another East Asian language (Chinese or Japanese) with or without a year abroad in China or Japan. Most of the study's participants (16 out of 17 of them) enrolled in the BA in Korean path, with study abroad in Korea. In their first year, 16 students took a ten hours-per-week intensive KL module called "Elementary Korean" that covered the full academic year. Only one participant took a different language module called "Korean", which was a less intensive language module with four hours-per-week contact time. Most of the participants were scheduled to participate in study abroad at Korean universities, with the exception of two participants whose module of choice was Korean Studies. Instead, these latter two were set to attend a month-long intensive summer course in Korea.

Table 4: participants' module choices

Major	No of participants	Other combined subjects
BA Korean (including study abroad)	15	
BA Korean studies	2	History, Music

The intensive Elementary Korean module covers four basic skills of language learning: grammar, speaking, reading, and writing. The focus of the module is to provide students with a good basic knowledge of spoken and written language skills, including phonetics, morphology, comprehension, and translation from and into the language, reading of easy prose texts, and elementary conversation. The module uses a textbook titled *Elementary Korean*.

Assessments in Elementary Korean consist of formative assessment and summative assessment designed to evaluate the four basic learning skills. Formative assessment, which aims to monitor student learning and provides ongoing feedback to staff and students, was conducted under the name of "Continuous Assignments". These assignments, which covered 20% of the total grade, consisted of weekly homework that students needed to submit and a short weekly in-class quiz. In comparison, summative assessment, with the goal of evaluating student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing the students' achievement against some standard or benchmark, consisted of a three-hour written examination taken at the end of the academic year, two listening exams at the end of each term and one speaking exam taken after the written exam.

3.2. Instrumentation

3.2.1. The IDI

This study used the IDI as the primary quantitative data collection tool. The latest version, the IDI v3, developed in 2012, is available online to take with an ID and password. It is composed of 50 statements with which the participant must choose to either disagree or agree on a five-point Likert scale, accompanied by five open-ended context-based questions that individual respondents have an option to complete. The test can be completed in 20 minutes online. After a participant finishes the IDI test, the responses are analysed, and a report is prepared using a specialised computer program. The report generates an in-depth graphic profile of the predominant level of IC of individuals and groups and a detailed textual interpretation of that level of intercultural development and the associated transitional issues.

The IDI provides raw scores for five developmental phases: Denial, Polarization (Defence / Reversal), Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation. Furthermore, the IDI report contains "Perceived Orientation (PO)", which represents the level of IC one sees in oneself, and "Developmental Orientation (DO)", which indicates developmental orientation as assessed by the IDI (actual level of IC). The difference between Perceived and Developmental Orientation is called the "Orientation Gap (OG)". A difference of seven points or more is considered a significant gap, indicating that the participant views him- or herself as more culturally responsive than people from other cultural groups might see the participant. The IDI also shows "Trailing Orientation (TO)", indicating earlier orientations that may be used at times, around certain topics, or in specific situations (often related to stress, if present).

Table 5: *Developmental Stages and its simplified description*

Orientation	Brief Description
Perceived Orientation (PO)	Where one place oneself along the intercultural development continuum.
Developmental Orientation (DO)	One's a primary orientation toward cultural differences and commonalities along the continuum, as assessed by the IDI.
Orientation Gap (OG)	The difference along the continuum between your PO and DO. A gap of seven points or higher indicates a meaningful difference.

(Source: adapted from Bennett & Bennett, 2004)

The IDI, which was designed and validated as a "culture general" measure of IC, asks individuals to respond to the questions in terms of their own culture and other cultures. This means that the IDI is descriptive of a general orientation towards making sense of and responding to general cultural differences within a group. The underlying assumption is that people tend to maintain cognitive consistency in the way they construe cultural differences, both generally and specifically (Bennett & Bennett, 1993). The IDI has been found to have high reliability and high validity; moreover, it scores low on the social desirability scale (Bennett, 2009, 2011; Hammer, 2009a, 2011, 2015; Hammer et al., 2003). Paige et al. (2003) confirmed that analysis of the internal structure of the IDI has demonstrated it to be a reasonable approximation to the theoretical model of DMIS and meets standard scientific criteria for a valid psychometric instrument. Hammer (2011) subsequently completed a confirmatory factor analysis across all groups, corroborating the stage placements of perceived difference as theorised in the DMIS. The study results also confirmed the IDI to be an appropriate tool to measure the developmental orientation scale and perceived orientation scales. The IDI is less susceptible to situational factors because it measures cognitive structures rather than attitudes. Thus, the IDI tends to be more stable and more generalisable than other measures of cultural sensitivity. The IDI has been validated with more than 10,000 respondents across a wide variety of United States and international organisations and shown to be a statistically reliable and cross-culturally valid assessment tool to measure developmental changes of IC (Hammer, 2015). In particular, the IDI has been found to be a helpful tool for measuring pre- and post- changes, such as evaluating outcomes of university degree modules, either long- or short-term programmes designed to foster intercultural sensitivity of participants or measure the effect of the study abroad programme.

Numerous studies and dissertations have used the IDI in a variety of organisational and educational contexts. Thus, the instrument's usefulness has been widely documented by over 70 Ph. D. research dissertations and more than 60 published articles to date (Hammer, 2015).

Although the IDI is a widely used tool in international organisations and academia, some researchers have voiced concerns over its validity. For example, Altshuler, Sussman, and Kachur (2003) argued that the IDI is prone to a discrepancy between self-perception of intercultural awareness and sensitivity of participants and their actual abilities (p. 397). In other words, it is possible that participants might feel singled out by their superiors to undertake the test and answer in a "socially desirable" manner. In response, Hammer et al. (2003) contested the criticism of the IDI in correlation with the Marlowe–Crowne social desirability scale (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972). According to their research findings, responses on the IDI did not reveal any substantial correlation with social desirability, meaning the IDI scale scores did not appear to be influenced by any general tendency on the part of respondents to provide socially desirable responses. The second concern over the IDI was that it sacrifices ideographic data in favour of the nomothetic data necessary for group comparisons. The instrument is not very sensitive to individual differences: it tends to overestimate the "normative" condition (Minimization stage) and underestimate the extent of more ethnocentric or more ethno-relative positions. For individuals, this tendency can be counteracted through individual interpretations, taking into account the distribution of responses on the instrument. However, for a group profile, individual variations are summarised as group data, making it impossible to counteract the over-attribution of Minimization with the IDI data (Hammer, 2011). In order to compensate for its statistical shortcomings, specifically concerning the data of a large group, Bennett (2009) recommended that IDI users consider adopting a mixed-methods approach, that is, collecting qualitative data to be analysed alongside quantitative data. I took all these factors into consideration in selecting the IDI as the assessment tool for this study. Outweighing the criticisms mentioned above, the IDI was proven to be a statistically reliable and valid assessment to measure IC, free from the researcher's subjective interpretation. Since the IDI was the selected assessment tool, the term IC was exclusively used to describe the resultant findings, as this usage would match the same terminology used in the IDI.

Given the IDI's international recognition amongst multinational corporations and educational organisations as the most extensively used tool to evaluate outcomes of international initiatives or study abroad programme, it is surprising that there was little indication of empirical research data related to

using the IDI in KFL. A small number of studies have been conducted in the context of Korean ESL learners in English-speaking countries; however, research conducted in Korea or concerning KFL is almost non-existent. One possible explanation as to why the IDI is less likely to be used to measure IC in KFL might be its inaccessibility to Korean residents. The IDI is a proprietary tool managed by IDI, LLC, which requires individuals to be qualified prior to use. Becoming an IDI Qualified Administrator requires attendance at a three-day qualifying seminar. These seminars are normally held across the United States and Europe, but they have not been held in Asia to date. However, I attended a seminar in Munich in April 2016.

3.2.2. Post-IDI in-depth interview

Hammer (2013b) suggested that when using the IDI to determine the group or organisational levels of IC, interviews (e.g. individual or focus group interviews) could be conducted to assess these same domains of cross-cultural goals, challenges, and critical (intercultural) incidents involving the navigation of cultural differences and commonalities. Following this recommendation, an in-depth interview was designed. Interview questions were created based on the literature review and designed to cover four possible variables (language, L2 motivation, intercultural experience, and L2 learner identity) that are known as variables for IC development. The interview began with a topic concerning languages, such as the participants' first language and past foreign language learning experience before learning Korean. Subsequently, it covered topics related to the learning experience, including motivation and study method if the students had one. The next interview questions were designed to inquire about the participants' intercultural experiences. This section also contained questions about whether students had experienced critical events that enabled them to change their attitude/perception towards the target country and their identity as a language learner. Although the interview questions were drafted beforehand, each question prompt was also intended to be open-ended and semi-structured to invite information from the participants and prepare for unexpected answers. The interview questions were made more inclusive by adding tailored questions in relation to the participants' responses from the previous interviews and supplementing follow-up questions depending on each interviewee's unique experiences.

Table 6: *In-depth Interview protocol (first and second interview)*

Theme no.	Interview theme	Detail
1	Past learning experience	First/ second language, Past language learning experience
2	Learning Motivation	Motivation for choosing to study Korean, Participants' interest related to Korean language and culture
3	Intercultural experience	Past living abroad experience, Intercultural experiences, events, and participants' interpretation regarding intercultural events experienced
4	Learner identity	Construction of learner identity, future goals, and expectations

The interview analysis was conducted in parallel with the initial quantitative data collection/analysis. Findings from the first interview analysis provided a basis for the following interview preparation. Although the second interview maintained a similar format to that of the first interview, several minor changes were made to accommodate participants' developmental, situational, and personal alterations over the period. For example, the first interview question, "What is your main motivation for studying Korean?", was amended to "Last time you said that your motivation for learning Korean was _____" in the second interview. Similarly, new questions such as "Do you find your motivation has changed?" and "If yes, what are other reasons that influenced you?" were added in the second interview phase to reflect altered circumstances over time.

3.2.2.1. Interview theme 1: Past language learning experience

Several researchers (e.g. Lee Olson & Kroeger, 2001) found that proficiently speaking a foreign language other than the individual's first language is related to increased intercultural sensitivity. A number of models and measurements of IC (e.g. Intercultural Competence Assessment; Sercu, 2004) include years of foreign language study and/or the number of foreign languages spoken among their components. Accordingly, questions regarding foreign language learning experiences were included in the interview. However, in developing the questionnaire items, I encountered issues regarding the

definition of language learning experience. More specific questions entailed the implications of the length of study and the kind of proficiency that is meant when a learner says, "I have studied French". Clarifying those grey areas involved creating three loose categories based on the following criteria:

- Bi(multi)-lingualism was defined as an advanced level of proficiency that allows one to communicate with native speakers of a target language without any difficulties conversationally, academically, or professionally. However, each participant's self-report was used as the most crucial clue in deciding whether the individual was bilingual or not. When the participant confirmed that she/he was bilingual, no further question was asked about the participant's degree of proficiency. This system provided a practical solution in dealing with matters concerning bilingualism.

- The term "foreign language learning experience" was used for those who did not recognise themselves as bilingual yet possessed a specific length of/proficiency in foreign language learning. Furthermore, this categorisation system did not differentiate between second language learning and foreign language learning.

- "No language learning experience" refers to participants who had no or a very short or unsuccessful learning experience. In many cases, UK secondary schools offer foreign language courses as a part of their curriculum or as an after-school programme. Hence, it was rather uncommon for the UK participants to have no past language learning experience. Hence, answers indicating a significant lack of learning hours or very low proficiency were labelled as "no language learning experience".

As the last step, questions regarding past Korean language learning were included to lay the groundwork for the next phase of the interview. However, the resulting answers did not carry much weight in the analysis since it was only the beginning of the course, meaning that the participants would have only a vague impression of the language when the first interview took place.

Table 7: 1st Interview question (Language experience)

Theme	Interview questions
Past learning experience	• What is your first language? • Other than your first language, how many languages have you studied?
Korean learning experience	• How do you find learning Korean? • If you have, what was the most challenging thing in learning Korean?

The questions used in the round of second interviews were altered to some extent to encompass the participants' varied learning experiences over time. In the second phase, questions were included that explored the students' perceptions of their learning progress, the primary study method, other learning-related activities, and how the interviewees evaluated their learning experiences.

Table 8: second Interview questions (Language experience)

Theme	Interview questions
Korean learning experience	• How did you find learning Korean so far? • What was the most challenging thing in learning Korean?
Learning method	• What was your primary method of studying Korean? • Did you try anything other than taking courses to learn Korean? If yes, what sort? • Do you think Korean linguistic knowledge gained helped you better understand Korean society/culture?

3.2.2.2. Interview theme 2: Learning motivation

The second section of the interview was designed to identify participants' initial learning motivation and note motivational changes over the academic year, depending on the participant's intercultural development. The question items were drafted based on three hypotheses:

H1: The appreciation of a country's culture will lead to an interest in its language.

H2: Participants will likely travel to Korea and have direct contact with locals since they are scheduled to take part in a future study abroad programme. Therefore, the setting of learning goals, students' future expectations, and affiliation with the members/society of the target country might differ for these students compared to those who are less likely to visit Korea in the near future.

H3: Unlike general foreign language learning for leisure, language degree modules offered at university demand far greater investment from students. Hence, the level of commitment required of the students may lead to a more robust learning motivation compared to those who learn foreign languages for leisure. Table 9 displays the details of the questions on the learning motivation.

Table 9: Interview questions (Learning motivation)

Interview	Theme	Detail of questions
First Interview	Interest in the target community	• Are you interested in Korean culture? • If yes, what aspect of culture are you most interested at the moment?
	Learning motivation	• What is the main motivation for choosing to study Korean language?
Second Interview	Interest in the target community	• Could you tell me your most recent item of interest related to the Korean language /culture?
	Learning motivation	• Last time you told me that your motivation for learning Korean was _____. Do you find your learning motivation has changed? • If yes, what are other motivations that you newly gained while studying the Korean language?

3.2.2.3. Interview theme 3: Intercultural experience

Based on the literature on the relation between intercultural experience and IC development, question items for this section were designed to discover storied details of the participants' intercultural experience. Specifically, this section focused on discovering the kind of intercultural experience that participants had encountered over the academic year, the characteristics of the meetings, how the participants evaluated the events, and critical events worth mentioning. The first question asked whether participants had any intercultural encounters with Korean speakers before attending university. The second question asked about the details of these interactions, such as types of meetings, activities they engaged in with Korean speakers, special experiences that participants had, and their thoughts. Lastly, in order to determine how their intercultural encounters affected interviewees' identification with a particular cultural group (Kramsch, 1998) and how those interactions shaped their views about themselves and the value of their own culture in relation to those of other cultural groups (Kinginger, 2004; Bennett, 2009), the last part of the interview was designed to ask what kind of culture the participants identified themselves with the most as well as how they understood and explored Korean culture in light of their identified cultural groups.

Table 11: Interview questions (Intercultural encounters)

Interview	Theme	Detail of questions
First Interview	Intercultural encounter	• Have you socialised with Koreans before university? • If so, what kind of activities did you usually engage with Koreans?
	The nature of intercultural interaction	• What was the most significant event (e.g., made you think, surprised you, particularly enjoyed, or found difficult) while interacting with Koreans?
Second Interview	Intercultural encounter	• Do you socialise with Koreans on and off-campus? (e.g., studying together, language exchange, casual outings, online-based socialisation) • If so, what kind of activities do you usually engage in with them? • What was the most significant event (e.g., made you think, surprised you, particularly enjoyed, or found difficult) while interacting with Koreans?

	The nature of intercultural experience	• Could you tell me about the cultural background that you feel the most comfortable with? • Do you find Korean culture different from your own? • If you do, could you describe Korean culture compared to yours in terms of commonalities and differences?

3.2.2.4. Interview theme 4: Imagined identities and imagined communities

Based on the literature review concerning "imagined communities" and "imagined identities", this part of the interview aimed to explore participants' L2 identity, their anticipation of their future as language learners, and how the learning of language influenced the students' L2 identity and development of intercultural awareness. The questions were based on the premise that the participants were located geographically and culturally far from Korea, which would allow them only a limited amount of indirect contact (e.g. from media, Korean sojourners in the United Kingdom, or occasional family members) during their study. The first interview explored participants' initial impressions of Korea/Korean culture and inquired as to where they had first encountered information about Korea. The second interview examined whether their view on Korea/Korean culture had changed over time. The next part of the interview included questions about participants' expectations about learning the language. Because it was necessary to avoid vague descriptions and encourage participants to envisage their future in detail, the interview prompts asked participants to imagine and describe themselves in three years, specifically shortly after completing their university education.

Table 12: Imagined Community and Identity (first and second interview)

Theme	Interview questions
Imagined communities	• Could you describe your first impression of Korea/Korean culture? • Do you find your view towards the Korean language/ culture changed compared to when you first started? Could you elaborate in detail?
Learner Identity	• How do you see yourself in 3 years, after completing the course?

3.3. Data collection

3.3.1. Data collection and timeline

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected by the IDI and in-depth interview. In addition to 50 general items with a Likert scale that respondents can choose from, the IDI includes context-based questions that encourage respondents to describe their intercultural experience regarding a) their cross-cultural goals, b) the challenges they have faced in navigating cultural differences, c) critical (intercultural) incidents they have encountered around cultural issues, d) differences during their study abroad or sojourn, and the ways they have navigated those cultural differences. In the current study, the answers selected by the participants were integrated into the qualitative data collection.

Leaflets requesting participation in the study were given to first-year Korean/Korean Studies students on orientation day (during the welcome week) at the start of the academic year. Subsequently, emails with IDI usernames and passwords were sent to those who had voluntarily agreed to participate in the project. When all the participants had completed the IDI, they were invited to take part in an interview. Interviews were carried out individually once each session of the IDI result was available for retrieval. The first phase of data collection, including the IDI report and the post-IDI interview, was completed in October 2016. The second invitation email was sent in mid-April 2017. Second emails with new IDI usernames and passwords for each participant were sent in early May 2017. The second post-IDI interview was carried out in late May and completed in mid-June 2017.

Table 9: Timeline for Data collection

The first wave of the data	The IDI Online 1	September 2016
	First Interview	October 2016
The second wave of the data	The IDI Online 2	May 2017
	Second Interview	May – June 2017

The data collected for this study consists of 34 IDI report papers and two sets of post- IDI interview recording lasting approximately 34 hours in total. Initially, 20 voluntary participants were recruited, but the data of 17 participants were used for analysis, as two sets of IDI report were found to be incomplete, and one participant withdrew from the second In-depth interview after completing two IDI sessions. Hence, only fully complete datasets were used for the research project, resulting in 17 out of 20 initial datasets. The length of the first interview ranged between 40 and 60 minutes, with an average of 45-50 lasting minutes per session. The second interview was longer than the first, ranging between 50-60 minutes, on an average of 50 minutes. The interview data was recorded, then transcribed.

3.3.2. Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted in three parts. First, all individual and group IDI reports were retrieved from the IDI server and stored on a password-protected personal computer. Next, each transcribed interview script was stored under a pseudo name with an interview date and given a participant number. For analysis, all the transcribed documents were reviewed to obtain a big picture of the data, then verified individually and grouped by each participant's background information, including demographic variables, number of foreign languages, living abroad experience, and intercultural experience before attending university. While basic demographics such as the participants' gender, age, and education level were collected from the IDI data, more detailed information was collected from the interviews. Then data analysis was conducted using the R statistics program. Finding the most relevant answer for the research questions involved choosing a different analysis approach as the best fit for the nature of the individual data in each analysis session.

For qualitative analysis, all the interview scripts were edited in a separate document with themes established by the interview questions for the purpose of coding. In the process, interview questions were used as a guiding theme for the analysis. For example, under the heading of the question "What is the main motivation to study Korean?", the 17 participants' individual answers were aggregated for NVivo analysis. An inductive grounded theory approach was used to understand the data rather than the more conventional hypothesis-first deductive approach because the data was open-ended and data-driven instead of hypothesis-driven. In grounded theory, all relevant textual, ethnographic, and other qualitative

data are gathered and recursively analysed for themes and common elements, leading to the formulation of a theoretical structure that organically fits the data. This approach usefully avoids the pitfall of selecting and shaping the data to fit the theory. In practice, grounded theory is both inductive and deductive, as questions are refined and focused in real-time by the concepts emerging from the data as it is collected and analysed. New codes were also created as new themes emerged from the interview data. The analysis also employed dialectical inquiry that paid close attention to the content of what was said as well as the tone in which it was said and the reaction and interaction of other participants as recommended by Wilkinson, 2004). However, the patterns that emerged while coding progressed led to grouping similar codes under the general theme. For example, sub-themes such as K-pop, Korean movies or Korean drama were sub-grouped under the general theme of contemporary Korean culture. As the coding system developed, codes were revised and elaborated alongside. New categories continually emerged, and others were categorised as the correlation between each code was better understood.

4. Quantitative findings

This chapter presents the analysis of quantitative data collected through the IDI. The main research questions guiding the data analysis are a) Do first-year UK undergraduate learners of Korean develop IC (as measured by IDI)? b) What student variables correlated to the initial and later stages of IC development? To answer the questions above, this study conducted a descriptive statistical analysis of two sets of Perceived Orientation (PO) and Developmental Orientation (DO) collected.

4.1. First and second IDI scores

4.1.1. The first and second group and individual IDI scores

The IDI generates several numerical scores for individual and group intercultural development. First, Perceived Orientation (PO) reflects where a group as a whole/individuals place itself along the intercultural development continuum. The Developmental Orientation (DO) score is the group/ individual's overall score which indicates primary orientation toward cultural differences and commonalities on the developmental continuum. In other words, PO indicates the level of IC one perceives oneself to be and DO indicates the actual score measured by the IDI. Since DO represents the actual level of IC, the DO is considered to be the primary dependent variable of this study.

The first IDI analysis result indicated that the group PO was 119.55 and DO was 87.43. The Orientation Gap (OG) between PO and DO was 32.12 points. According to the instruments' developers (Hammer et al., 2003), a gap scores of 7 points or higher can be considered a meaningful difference between where the group perceives it is on the developmental continuum and where the IDI places the group's level of IC. Therefore, an OG of 32.12 points can mean that the group overestimated their ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures.

Figure 2: Developmental Continuum (PO and DO of the first IDI group report)
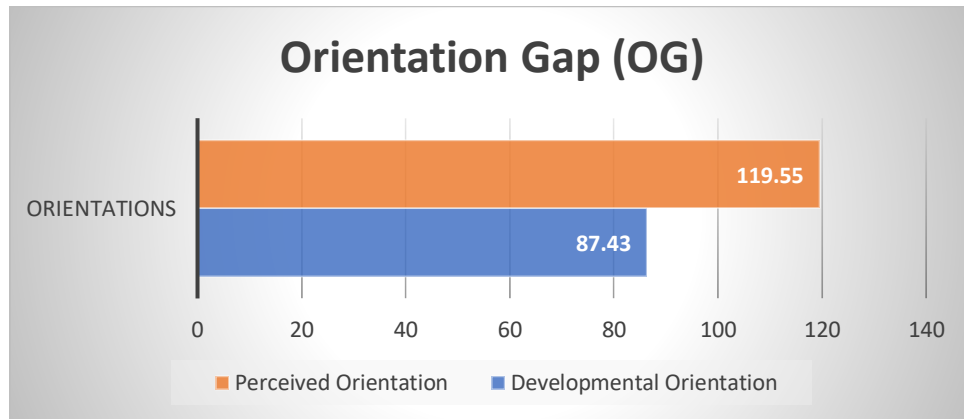
The first IDI result showed that the highest DO was 104.37, which is a higher band of Minimization, the lowest DO was 64.37, which fell into Denial. About 60% of participants fell within the Minimization range, 13.3% were within the range of Polarization, and 13.3% was within the range of Denial, which is an orientation that recognizes more observable cultural differences (e.g., food) but may not notice a more profound cultural difference (e.g., conflict resolution styles) and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences. Of those in Polarization, 61% were included in Defence, indicating an uncritical view toward one's own cultural values and practices and an overly critical view toward other cultural values and practices. 39% was in Reversal, an overly critical orientation toward one's own cultural values and practices and an uncritical view of other cultural values and practices.

Figure 3: Range of Developmental Orientations (The first IDI group report)
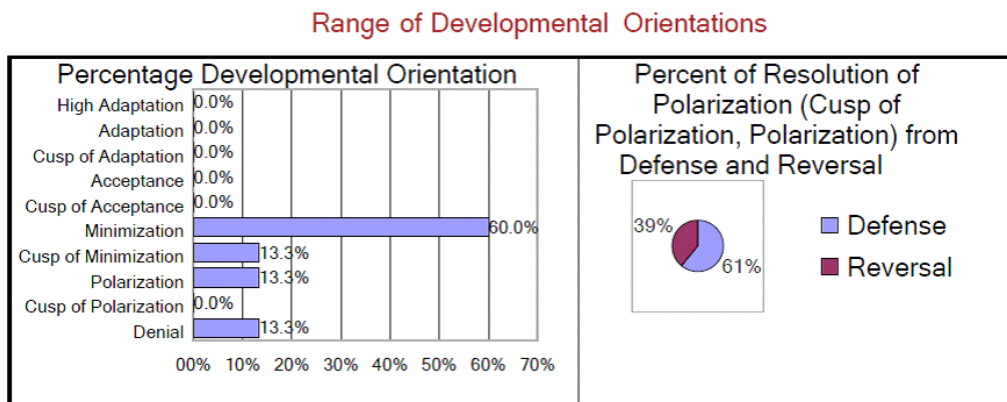
4.1.2. Second IDI

The second IDI was taken place at the end of the academic year. The analysis of the group report showed that the group PO and DO indicate 119.76 and 90.58, respectively. The highest DO indicated 115.09, which is an earlier band of Acceptance, the lowest DO indicated 68.15, which falls into the Denial stage. The Orientation Gap (OG) between the PO and the DO was 29.18. Compared to the OG of the first IDI (32.12), the second group OG marked a slight gap decrease, but still, it showed the group overestimated its ability to communicate interculturally.

Figure 4: Developmental Continuum (PO and DO of the second IDI group report)
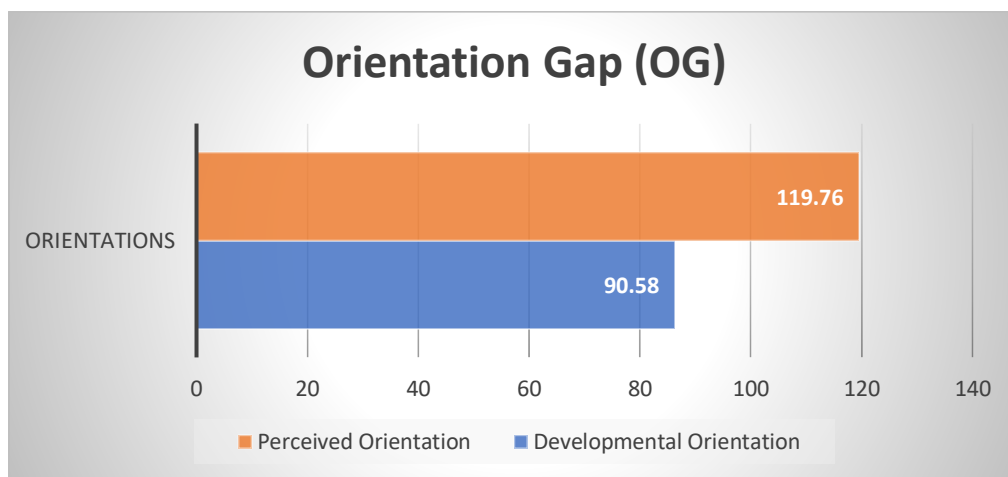
In terms of seeing each score in the frame of the developmental continuum, one participant (6.3%) was included in the cusp of Acceptance. 68.8% were placed within the cusp of Minimization, while one participant at the cusp of Polarization, and another one was placed at the cusp of Denial. The proportion of each lower orientation decreased, but a higher score, which is an earlier boundary of Acceptance, has appeared in the second IDI. In other words, the second DO showed that participants in the lower band of DO move up to the higher cusp of orientation, resulting in a decreased number in the Polarization/ Denial stage. Also, it showed an increased number of participants who are in the Minimization and a participant who indicated the Acceptance stage.

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Figure 5: Range of Developmental Orientations (The second IDI group report)
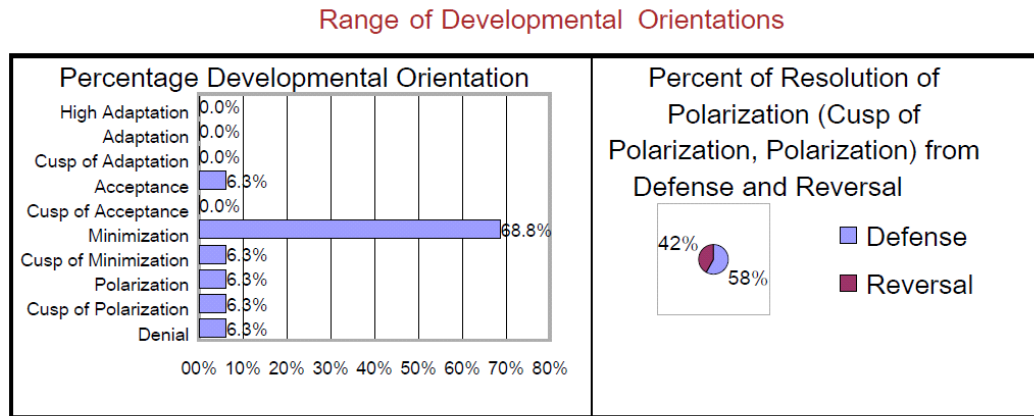
4.1.3. The developmental changes

The analysis of two average DO scores revealed that the group started their academic year at a median of 87.43 (lower cusp of Minimization). The highest DO was 104.37 (higher cusp of Minimization), whereas the lowest DO score was 64.37 (Denial). The second IDI showed a slight increase in DO (90.58) but still at the lower cusp of Minimization. The highest second DO was 115.09, indicating the earlier band of Acceptance, and the lowest DO score of 68.15, which indicated the Denial stage. Table 10 below shows a simple comparison of DO 1 and DO 2.

Table 10: Simple comparison of two DO scores

First DO (mean: 87.43)		Second DO (mean: 90.58)	
Low	High	Low	High
64.37	104.37	68.15	115.09

Table 11 and Fig 6 below show quantile summary of both DO scores and their visualised interpretation.

Table 11: Data summary of the first and second DO

1. Summary (data$First_IDI)					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
63.47	81.75	86.82	87.43	98.82	108.72
2. Summary (data$Second_IDI)					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
59.25	87.53	90.12	90.58	95.57	115.09

Figure 6: Quantile Distributions of DO: The first IDI (Blue)-The second IDI (Red)
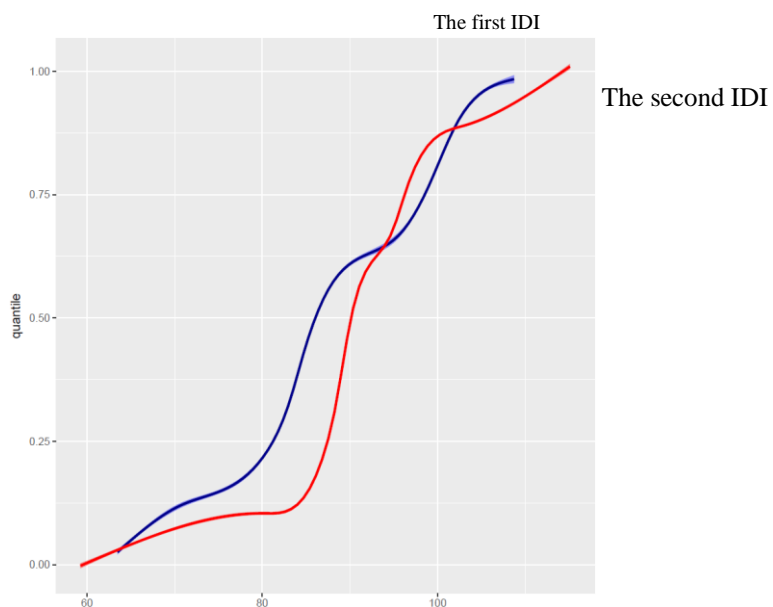
A simple visual analysis of the quantile summary of two DO demonstrated a few things. Firstly, the visual analysis showed that the mean of second DO has increased on a marginal scale (86.82 to 90.12). Also, the first quantile and median have increased to some degree. However, the third quantile of the second DO indicated a slight decrease. Secondly, the range of the second DO showed that the individual DO has been widely distributed compared to the first DO. This can be interpreted that, while overall developmental changes moved toward the higher scores at the low to mid-level, the bottom and top scores experienced a more noticeable change, thus making the gap wider.

To determine whether IC development has occurred, the statistical analysis between the first and the second DO was conducted. Firstly, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted to evaluate the normality of data distribution. The result showed that the data was not normally distributed (W = 0.95702, P-value = 0.5762). Figure 7 below shows the density plot of the first DO scores.

Figure 7: Density plot of the first DO
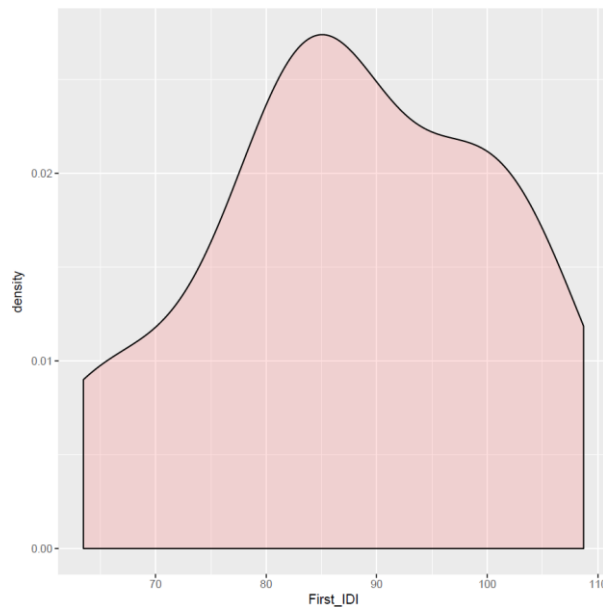
The same Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted on the second DO. The result showed that the data is not normally distributed either (W = 0.92267, P-value = 0.1638). However, the second IDI data showed fewer outliers than the first IDI, indicating that the second DO is more normally distributed, as the P-value (P-value = 0.1638) is more significant than the first DO (P-value = 0.5762). Fig 8 below shows the density plot of the second DO scores.

Figure 8: Density plot of the second DO
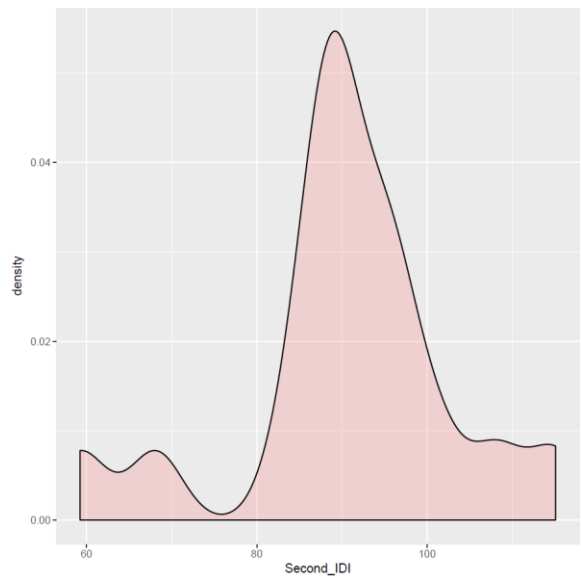
Table 12: Normal distribution of PO or DO score

2.4%	13.5%	68%		13.5%	2.4%	
55	70	85	100	115	130	145
Denial	Polarization (Denial/Reversal)		Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	

(Adopted from Hammer (2013a), A resource guide for effectively using the intercultural development inventory (IDI). Berlin, MD, USA,
IDI, LLC.)

Table 12 above indicates the normal distribution of DO scores suggested by Hammer (2013b), which was initially validated with a sample of 766 respondents and then several times later with samples of over 4,000 respondents.

Table 13: Normal distribution of DO in comparison with Hammer, M. R (2013)

Developmental stage	Denial	Polarization (Denial/Reversal)	Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation	
scores	55	70	85	100	115	130	145
Hammer (2013a)	2.4%	13.5%	68%		13.5%	2.4%	
The first DO	13.3%	13.3%	60%		0%	0%	
The second DO	6.3%	12.6%	75.1%		6.3%	0%	

The first DO showed that participants were more concentrated in the Denial/polarization stage (26.6%) compared to Hammer (2013a)'s data (15.9%) and showed no Acceptance and Adaptation compared to Hammer (2013)'s data (15.9%). The second DO indicated more resemblance, but it was more concentrated in the Minimization stage, indicating 18.6% Denial/polarization stage compared to Hammer's (15.9%) and 75.1% in Minimization compared to Hammer's (68%) and 6.3 % in Acceptance, compared to Hammer's (13.5%).

The Wilcoxon rank-sum test, a non-parametric test to analyse data that are not normally distributed, was used to compare the two DOs. The result found that there was no significant group difference (W = 118, P-value = 0.3753). This analysis result indicated that the DO scores did not increase over the academic year. This result can be interpreted that the IC development of the group did not occur over the academic year. Keeping that in mind that no significant change was seen in the two DO comparison, the correlation, and multiple regression analyses were used to see if there were any variables that might be associated with the individual changes in the DO.

4.2. Correlation with Variables

Based on the data set obtained from two IDIs and in-depth interview, several potential variables related to IC development were identified. The IDI test contained questions concerning the intercultural background of respondents, such as total time lived in another country, the number of countries visited in the last five years, the number of languages studied other than the first, the number of languages spoken fluently other than first, and the number of languages read fluently other than first. However, as the data obtained from the IDI was rather partial, more detailed data regarding four variables (experience of living abroad, motivation for learning Korean, intercultural experience with Korean speakers before the university and during the academic year) were extracted from the interview.

4.2.1. Past living abroad experience

To find whether there was a correlation between the experience of living abroad and the overall indication of intercultural development, a linear regression approach, which is a way to model the relationship between a scalar response and one or more explanatory variables, was used. The IDI online test asked the total amount of time that participants had lived in another country in the form of pre-selected answers participants can tick. However, the questions were unclear about whether 'spending some time abroad as a part of holiday' also can be qualified as 'experience of living abroad'. So it was possible that participants might add up all the holidays to the total period of living abroad. Although spending a short time abroad might foster IC by learning about the culture and customs of the country, this study limited living abroad experience to a temporary sojourning experience only, as an experience of living abroad with family or working or attending a course in the region while interacting with locals. Table 14 indicates the result and related DO scores. Among this, 7 participants reported that they had an experience of living abroad, and 10 had not. Those who had lived abroad scored DO of 91.42 in the first interview and 95.3 in the second interview respectively, showing a slight overall increase. The average DO of participants without living abroad experience was 86.08 and showed a slight increase in the second IDI (88.16).

Table 14: Experience of living abroad and DO scores (First and Second)

	No.	DO 1	DO 2
Experience of living abroad	7	91.42	95.3
No experience of living abroad	10	86.08	88.16

A linear regression analysis was used to find out whether past living abroad experience has influenced the initial DO of participants. Analysis between the living-abroad variable and the initial DO indicated that the correlation was not significant (P-value = 0.314)[1]. The result can be interpreted that

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[1] # Variable 1: Experience of living abroad

> model.lm <- lm(First_IDI ~ Abroad, data = data)
> summary(model.lm)

Call:
lm(formula = First_IDI ~ Abroad, data = data)

Residuals:
 Min   1Q   Median   3Q   Max
-21.172 -6.252 -1.722   9.967 19.728

Coefficients:
                      Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   91.423   4.997   18.296 1.14e-11 ***
AbroadNo past experience -6.781   6.515 -1.041   0.314

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 13.22 on 15 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.06735,   Adjusted R-squared: 0.005177
F-statistic: 1.083 on 1 and 15 DF, p-value: 0.3145 (NOT SIGNIFICANT)

those participants who had lived abroad before university did not score higher DO compare to those without the experience of living abroad, measured by the IDI.

4.2.2. Past Language Experience

When asked how many languages participants had studied other than their first language, all participants except three replied that they had studied at least one or more foreign languages. Furthermore, a few participants disclosed themselves to be bilingual speakers from bi/multi-cultural backgrounds. For instance, one participant described herself as Finnish/English bilingual growing up in a Finnish/British/Jamaican ethnic and cultural background. Many participants in the study were from multi-cultural backgrounds, ranging from European to some (East/South) Asian. The majority of the participants studied Indo-European languages such as French, German, or Spanish at previous schools. However, many participants reported that they did not achieve similarly high level of proficiency in foreign languages as their first or heritage languages. Figure 9 below shows the two DO scores of participants with/ without past language learning experience. Students with past language experienced achieved higher initial DO scores (90.53) compared to the group without language learning experience (70.27). The second DO also showed that participants with language recorded the higher score (94.08) than those without (71.81).

Figure 9: IDI and past language experience
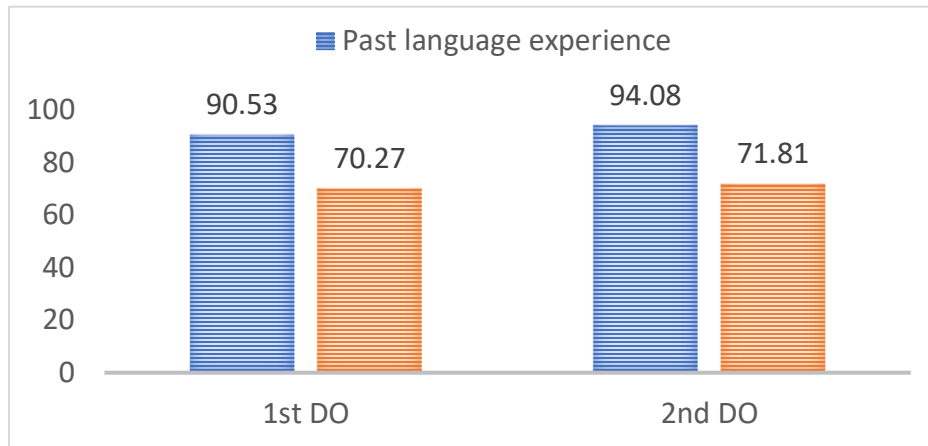
To determine whether language learning experience influenced participants' initial level IC, linear regression analysis on the two groups and first DO was conducted. The result found out that there was a robust and significant correlation between the two groups (P-value=0.008241)[2], which can be interpreted

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[2] # Variable 2: Past language learning experience

> model.lm2 <- lm(First_IDI ~ Language, data = data)
> summary(model.lm2)

Call:
lm(formula = First_IDI ~ Language, data = data)

Residuals:
    Min   1Q Median   3Q   Max
-18.681 -6.807 -3.841 7.719 17.609

Coefficients:
                        Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   91.111   2.877 31.665 3.74e-15 ***
Languageno Past language -20.834   6.849 -3.042 0.00824 **

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

that past language learning experience was a strong predictor for the initial DO. This result led to the following question: 'Would past language learning act as a strong predictor of the degree to which IC is developed?'. To determine whether participants with the past language learning experience demonstrated an increase in their DO scores over the academic year, a linear regression analysis of the 2nd DO of the two groups was conducted. The result showed significant correlation (P-value=0.008518) [3] between the

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Residual standard error: 10.77 on 15 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.3815,   Adjusted R-squared: 0.3403

F-statistic: 9.252 on 1 and 15 DF, p-value: 0.008241 (SIGNIFICANT)

[3]

#Variable 2: Past language learning experience

Scalar Response : Second IDI -> explanatory variables : First IDI, Language

summary(model.lm5)

Call:
lm(formula = Second_IDI ~ First_IDI + Language, data = data)

Residuals:
```
   Min     1Q  Median     3Q    Max
-14.756 -5.896 -2.284  2.584  19.147
```

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	
(Intercept)	78.8324	21.7678	3.622	0.00278	**
First_IDI	0.1731	0.2371	0.730	0.47740	
Languageno Past language	-19.1828	7.9992	-2.398	0.03098	*

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 9.888 on 14 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.4938,   Adjusted R-squared: 0.4215

past language learning experience and IC development. The result can be interpreted that there was a high probability that participants with past language learning experience significantly developed IC over the academic year compared to those without past language learning experience.

4.2.3. Intercultural interaction with Korean speakers

Before finding out whether participants' intercultural experience with Korean speakers influence their IC development, some points had to be carefully considered. Firstly, it was necessary to build the concrete definition of intercultural experience for this study. This study defined intercultural experience as an extra-curricular or leisurely activity of participants engaged with Korean speakers on and off-campus, regardless of the language being spoken in the process. Students who replied in their interview that they have never met any Koreans/ had no Korean friends were categorised in 'No intercultural experience group'. Whereas, when participants answered that they had communicated with Koreans, they were put into 'Intercultural experience group'. A simple table (Table 15 below) was made to figure out whether past intercultural experience with Korean speakers before the learning of Korean has helped participants' initial IC.

Table 15: Intercultural experience before the university

	No.	DO 1
Intercultural experience	8	84.49
No intercultural experience	9	90.05

The first DO showed that participants with no past intercultural experience scored higher DO (90.05) than participants with no intercultural experience (84.49). This result indicated that intercultural

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F-statistic: 6.828 on 2 and 14 DF, P-value: 0.008518 (SIGNIFICANT)

experience with Korean speakers did not necessarily contribute to the participants' initial DO. Table 16 illustrates reports made by participants at the end of the academic year, along with the second DO scores. The number of participants who had intercultural experience increased from 9 to 14 persons. Also, their second DO increased to 93.45. Students who reported not having intercultural experience with Korean speakers showed 91.43 in their second DO.

Table 16: Intercultural interaction at the end of the first-year

	No	DO 2
Intercultural experience	14	93.45
No Intercultural experience	3	91.43

Figure 10: Intercultural experience with Korean speakers and DO
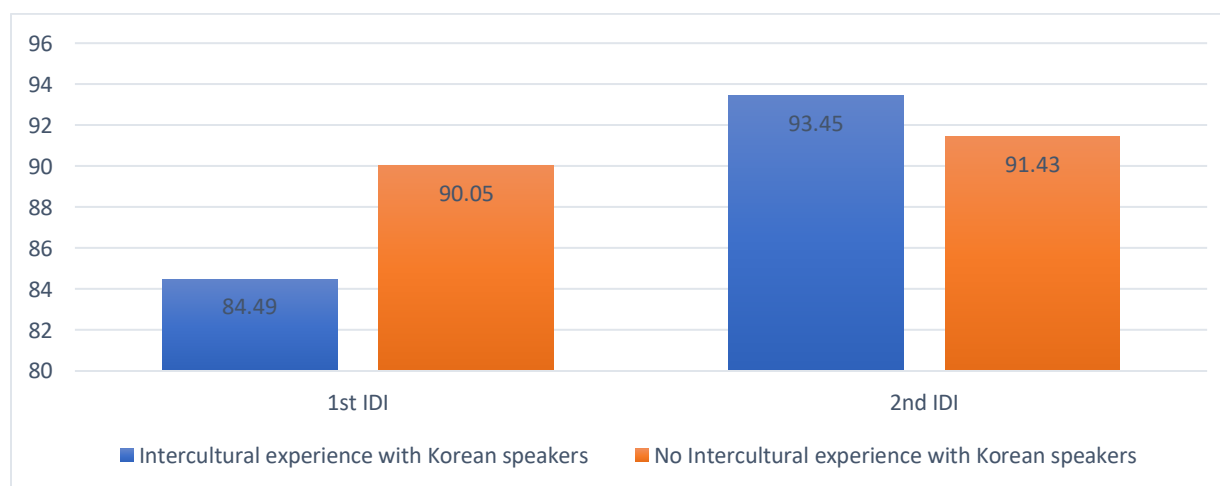
Interestingly, a simple visual comparison of first DO showed that the participants who reported to have past intercultural experience with Korean showed the lower DO (84.49) scores than those who had no intercultural experience (90.05). However, the group with intercultural experience showed a greater

increase in the second DO (84.49 to 93.45) compared to the no experience group (90.05 to 91.43).

A linear regression analysis of the first DO and two groups showed that it was not significant (P-value= 0.6634).[4] This result can be interpreted that those participants with past intercultural experience were not interculturally more competent. To see whether intercultural experience with Korean speakers over the academic year had increased the level of the second DO, a linear regression analysis of two DO scores of two changing groups was conducted. The analysis result showed that correlation between intercultural experience and IC development was relatively significant, although the correction was weak (P-value =0.05685)[5]. This can be interpreted that intercultural experience with Korean speakers during

---

[4]

Variable 3: Intercultural experience with Korean speakers

> model.lm3 <- lm(First_IDI ~ IC_Koreans, data = data)
> summary(model.lm3)

Call:
lm(formula = First_IDI ~ IC_Koreans, data = data)

Residuals:
    Min   1Q   Median   3Q   Max
-22.5833 -7.2375   0.7667 12.5267 19.7325

Coefficients:
                                                        Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   86.053   4.533 18.982 6.72e-12 ***
IC_KoreansIntercultural interaction with Koreans_duplicated_2   2.934   6.609   0.444   0.663

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 13.6 on 15 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.01297,   Adjusted R-squared: -0.05283
F-statistic: 0.1971 on 1 and 15 DF, p-value: 0.6634 (NOT SIGNIFICANT AT ALL)

[5]
Variable 3: Intercultural experience with Korean speakers

the academic year attributed to the increase of participants' IC, to some degree, but not great enough to show statistical significance.

4.2.4. Motivation

To identify whether the language learning motivation was related to the participants' initial DO, responses from the first in-depth interview were categorised into three groups. The first learning motivation was Korean popular culture. This group included answers related to an interest in modern

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> model.lm8 <- lm(Second_IDI ~ First_IDI + IC_Koreans2, data = data)
> summary(model.lm8)

Call:
lm(formula = Second_IDI ~ First_IDI + IC_Koreans2, data = data)

Residuals:
    Min   1Q Median   3Q   Max
-23.968 -6.641   2.259   7.476 17.393

Coefficients:
            Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) 49.8392   19.5163   2.554   0.0230 *
First_IDI   0.4842   0.2171   2.230   0.0426 *
IC_Koreans22 -6.7748   6.5819 -1.029   0.3208

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 11.32 on 14 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.3361,   Adjusted R-squared: 0.2412
F-statistic: 3.544 on 2 and 14 DF, p-value: 0.05685

Korean music, movies, drama, and entertainment shows. The second motivation group included responses such as having Korean as a family member, personal relationship to be the priory reason to study Korean. The last group included career-related motivation.

Table 17: Motivation to study Korean and the first DO scores

Group		No	DO 1
1	Korean popular culture	8	86.13
2	Personal reasons (family or personal relationships	7	88.595
3	Job prospective	2	88.605

Correlation with the initial DO, and motivation to study Korean was the least significant (P-value=0.9373)[6] among all variables in the study. This meant that different motivation variables did not

---

[6]
Variable 4: Motivation

> summary(model.lm6)

Call:
lm(formula = First_IDI ~ Motivation, data = data)

Residuals:
    Min   1Q Median   3Q   Max
-22.655 -4.936 -1.625 10.215 22.595
Coefficients:
              Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   86.125   4.987 17.271 7.78e-11 ***
MotivationPersonal   2.471   7.300   0.338   0.740
MotivationJob interest 2.480   11.151   0.222   0.827

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

contribute to the initial level of IC. Therefore, no further analysis was needed regarding the motivation variable.

4.2.5. Multiple regression with all variables

Subsequently, as a final step, multiple regression analysis with the first DO with all the variables (past living abroad, past language learning, intercultural experience, motivation) was conducted to identify the model's overall fit and determine the relative contribution of each of the variables. The multiple regression analysis on the first DO with all variables (living abroad, past language learning experience, intercultural experience with Korean speakers, motivation) showed no significant correlation at all (P-value: 0.1072)[7]. Furthermore, the positive correlation that past foreign language learning experience

---

Residual standard error: 14.1 on 14 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.009213, Adjusted R-squared: -0.1323

F-statistic: 0.06509 on 2 and 14 DF, p-value: 0.9373 (LEAST SIGNIFICANT)

[7]

#Multiple regression with the first IDI

Call:

lm(formula = First_IDI ~ Language + IC_Koreans + Motivation, data = data)

Residuals:

Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
-13.688	-7.770	-1.739	9.571	14.571

Coefficients:	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	
(Intercept)	97.947	7.862	12.459	3.18e-08	***
Language_no Past language	-26.707	9.029	-2.958	0.012	*
IC_Koreans	-2.891	7.480	-0.387	0.706	
MotivationPersonal	-8.938	8.290	-1.078	0.302	
MotivationJob interest	-6.451	9.656	-0.668	0.517	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

showed on the initial level of DO did weaken when other variables were included in the model. This can be interpreted that none of the variables influenced the level of participants' initial DO.

However, multiple regression on the second DO revealed a dramatic turn. The second DO analysis result showed a significant correlation (P-value: 0.002755)[8] with all variables, suggesting that each variable contributed to the total IC variance. The past language learning experience variable was the best

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Residual standard error: 11.4 on 12 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.445,　Adjusted R-squared: 0.26

F-statistic: 2.406 on 4 and 12 DF, p-value: 0.1072

Not significant (p-value: 0.1072)

[8]

#Multiple regression with the second IDI

lm(formula = Second_IDI ~ Abroad + Language + IC_Koreans + Motivation, data = data)

Residuals:

　Min　　1Q Median　　3Q　　Max

-9.0350 -4.5895 -0.9664 3.1741 10.9901

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	
(Intercept)	111.916	5.455	20.515	4.07e-10	***
AbroadNo past experience	-2.796	4.377	-0.639	0.536097	
Languageno Past language	-32.060	6.463	-4.960	0.000429	***
IC_Koreans	-15.730	4.902	-3.209	0.008322	**
MotivationPersonal	-17.741	5.434	-3.265	0.007533	**
MotivationJob interest	5.764	6.855	0.841	0.418341	

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 7.472 on 11 degrees of freedom

Multiple R-squared: 0.7729,　Adjusted R-squared: 0.6697

F-statistic: 7.487 on 5 and 11 DF, p-value: 0.002755

predictor, followed by intercultural experience and having the personal motivation to learn Korean. It is surprising that the intercultural experience variable and personal motivation (i.e., family or personal relationship) variable, which had no significant influence on the initial DO, became substantial variables at the end of the academic year (P-value= 0.007533).

4.3. Summary of quantitative analysis and conclusion

The first DO indicated that the study participants started their first undergraduate year in the developmental stage of the lower end of Minimization (average of 86.35). The highest DO was 104.37, which can be categorised as being in the upper half of Minimization, and the lowest DO was 64.37, which fell into the Denial stage. The average of the second DO, measured at the end of the academic year, revealed a slight increase of 4.23 points (90.58) while remaining within the low end of the Minimization stage. The highest DO was 115.09, which showed an earlier level of Acceptance, while the lowest DO (68.15) fell within the stage of Denial. A nonparametric test to examine whether IC development occurred in participants showed no significant group differences (P-value = 0.3753). In other words, the degree to which IC developed in the students who were learning Korean was relatively minor and not statistically significant.

Although the changes in the individual DO scores from the two IDIs were not statistically significant, examining these scores provides a different aspect of the data. Specifically, while about 70% (12 out of 17) of the students experienced an increase or decrease of DO to some degree, some students showed a dramatic regression in the second IDI. Figure 11 below displays the individual data.

Figure 11: Individual DOs and their changes
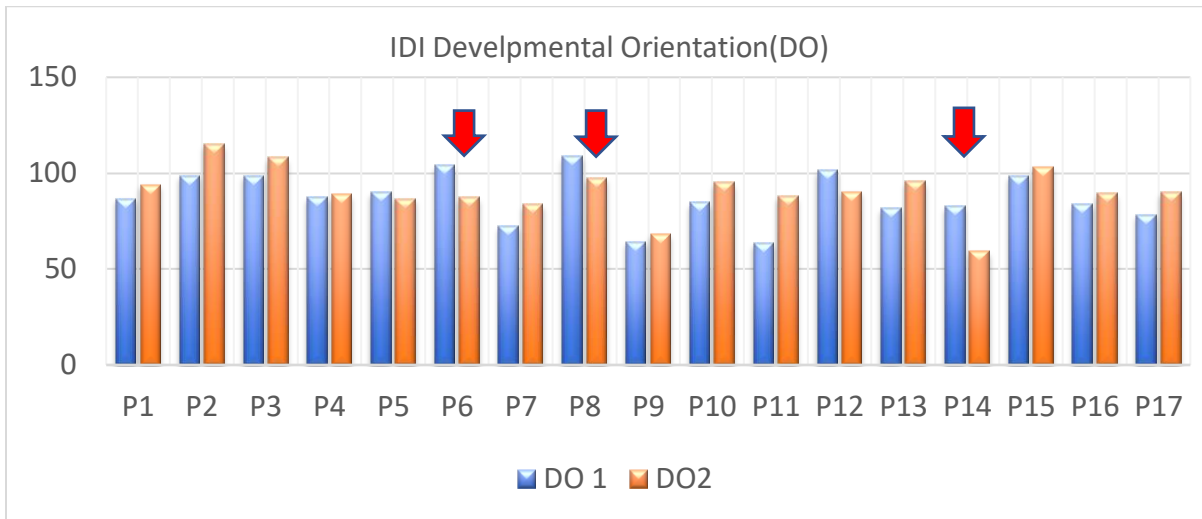
The question thus arises as to why some students experienced a significant decrease in their second DO. Possible explanations might point to some influential experience during their study or even an error in measurement. A linear regression analysis with several variables (past language experience, past living abroad experience, intercultural experience with Korean speakers, and motivation) confirmed a significant difference in the initial level of DO between those with the past language learning experience and those without (P-value = 0.008518). This result can be interpreted as indicating that particular students' past language learning experience facilitated their initial development of IC. Additional linear regression confirmed that participants who had past language learning experience exhibited a significant increase in their second DO score (P-value = 0.008241), suggesting that their past language learning experience supported IC development even later. Results for the variable "intercultural experience" were slightly different. This variable did not impact the participants' initial DO, but it did impact the second result to some extent (P-value = 0.05685). Strictly speaking, such a P-value is not statistically significant, which might suggest that having an intercultural experience with Korean speakers did not contribute to the development of IC. However, it is possible that this factor might explain the sudden regression that some participants displayed.

In contrast, the "experience of living abroad" variable did not correlate to either the first or second DO score. This result meant that students who had lived abroad before their university study were neither

interculturally more competent than others nor achieved higher DO scores at the end of the academic year. Initial linear regression with the motivation variable and the first DO showed that the scores of all subgroups were similar, and none did better than other groups. This outcome can be interpreted as indicating that having a certain motivation to study Korean did not contribute to the development of a participant's initial level of IC.

Lastly, multiple regression analysis revealed an interesting character of overall developmental changes of IC. The multi regression analysis on the first DO with all variables (living abroad experience, past language learning experience, intercultural experience with Korean speakers, motivation) yielded insignificant results (P-value = 0.1072). Plausibly, those changes in the predictor (above-mentioned variables) were not associated with changes in the response (the first DO). Moreover, the impact of past language learning experience on the participants' initial DO weakened when other variables were considered. On the other hand, multiple regression analysis on the second DO score showed a significant correlation (P-value = 0.002755) between variables. In other words, the variables (predictors) greatly contributed to changes in the second DO. Having experience of language learning was the best predictor, followed by intercultural experience and having a personal motivation to learn Korean. In the latter case, it was interesting that the motivation factor (personal reason) that was not significant in linear regression showed a significant influence in multiple regression analysis. This outcome may indicate that students who had a personal (intrinsic) motivation rather than interest in K-pop or a career were likely to exhibit a higher DO, showing them to be more interculturally competent, as measured by the IDI.

Observing and comparing individual data provided additional findings. For example, while quantitative data results indicated that past language learning experience strongly correlated to the students' IC development, being from a multicultural background apparently did not necessarily lead to being fluent in their heritage language or more interculturally experienced. Individual data observation revealed that while participants who were bilingual or fluent in second languages yielded high DO scores in both the first and second IDI sessions, some participants in the bottom DO range were also from a multicultural background. This finding indicates that IC is not automatically gained by being in a multicultural environment but through voluntary effort, such as learning the language of the culture.

In summary, comparison of the two IDI scores demonstrated that overall IC development did not occur in the first-year undergraduate learners of Korean over their first academic year. Past language

learning greatly affected both the initial and second DO, as did intercultural experience and personal motivation, though these latter two variables had a less significant impact. Additionally, those who showed a large regression in their second DO scores are worth noting. While the second DO for most of the students showed a mild or significant increase (or decrease), few participants experienced a severe regression in their DO scores. Keeping that outcome in mind, the next chapter turns its attention to quantitative analysis of the data, closely looking at the participants' narratives.

5. Qualitative Findings

Chapter 4's examination of the study's quantitative data provided a glimpse into the changes of IC that the participants experienced over their initial academic year. However, considering IC as a "skill" and dichotomising this value into competent and not-so competent groups by the simple comparison of scores would be too simplistic. This chapter further builds upon the quantitative aspect of IC development by drawing attention to the narratives of individual participants. The chapter analysis focuses on exploring how the participants' personal accounts of academic and intercultural experience shaped their motivation for learning the language as well as their perception of the target country. Furthermore, this chapter delves into the participants' personal stories of their intercultural experiences over the academic year, along with each one's construction of identity as a learner of Korean.

This chapter includes textual analyses of interview transcripts and written text from the IDI context-based questions, which had an open-ended format. Bennett's (1986, 2013) DMIS was used as a primary theoretical framework for the analysis of the qualitative data. Thus, the study attempted to weave personal stories into the theory by exploring how personal stories regarding learning and intercultural experience reflected DMIS mindsets representing the developmental stages. The analysis included consideration of the following topics of interest:

- How significant variables found in the quantitative analysis aligned with the themes found in the qualitative analysis.
- How best to explain possible significant themes that arose from the interview that quantitative analysis failed to yield.

5.1. Language learning

5.1.1. Past language learning experience

Two in-depth interviews with each student included questionnaire items regarding language learning experience, the student's main method for studying Korean, and the question into relationship between linguistic and cultural knowledge. The first question sought to identify details of the participant's past language experience by focusing on the student's first language and whether bi/multilingualism was involved. The research setting was a university in the United Kingdom; therefore, any participants whose first language was not English meant their having previously learned English as a second language to the highest level of competence. Accordingly, bi/multilingualism was an essential identifying point because its implication was that the participant had been exposed to the long-term influence of two or more different languages and, possibly cultures. Logically, this factor was likely to be another indicator of a naturally high level of IC.

In the first interview, 14 out of 17 participants reported that English was their first language (Table 18). Italian, Hungarian and Lithuanian were the first languages of those participants whose first language was not English. However, as all these non-native speakers of English were attending a UK university, it was safe to assume that all the study participants were highly proficient in academic English.

Table 18: First language of participants

No of participants	First language
14	English
3	Italian, Hungarian and Lithuanian

Out of all the participants, 24% (4 /17) disclosed themselves to be bilingual. The languages other than English were Portuguese (1), Finnish (1) and French (2). Distinguishing between the number of languages spoken and the number of cultures a participant "was from" was necessary, as being monolingual did not necessarily mean being from a monocultural background. That said, roughly 59% of

participants (10/17) were from a multicultural environment. Only 40% reported being fluent speakers of the language of the environment they had been exposed to. The other 6 out of 10 participants reported that they were unable to speak or had minimal knowledge of the language of the other culture.

Table 19: Bilingualism and multiculturalism

No. of participants		Bi/ Multilingualism
4		Native speaker of more than two languages (Bi/multilingual)
13	7	Able to speak one language only, from a homogenous cultural background
	6	Able to speak one language, but from a multicultural background

More than 80% (14/17) of the participants reported that they had learned one or more foreign languages in the past. Of those, four participants learned multiple languages and identified themselves to be language learning enthusiasts. Most of the participants had learned a foreign language at school for GCSEs or studied on their own as a leisurely pursuit. Most of the students (10/14) reported having a low level of proficiency or a lack of interest in the languages they had learned. Three participants reported having no language learning experience and indicated that Korean was the first language they had chosen to learn as a foreign language.

Table 20: Language learning experience

No of participants	Language learning experience
4	learned more than 2-3 languages and achieved a high level of proficiency
10	Learned 1-2 languages at school but low proficiency or lack of interest
3	No previous learning language experience

As for foreign language experience before entering university, most of the participants reported that their language learning had involved major European languages. French was the most common, followed by Spanish, Latin, and Chinese. Overall, participants said they had not been very keen on the language modules offered at their secondary schools. The following comment was indicative of the typical narratives of those who reported low interest in second language learning at schools before beginning their university education.

"My first language is English. I can speak French but not fluent enough. I did French for five years in high school. I didn't take language learning that seriously in high school."

The interview results revealed that Japanese to be the most popular language learned outside of school among the participants. Of those 14 students with language learning experience, 7 participants reported that they had previously studied Japanese or were currently studying that language. Self-study was the most common approach because Japanese was not formally offered at the participants' schools. Similarly, self-study was the common method for anyone who had studied Korean before entering university. Interestingly, some participants commented that they transitioned from learning Japanese to Korean because the Korean alphabets looked simpler to understand. Many participants pointed out that the simplicity of Korean letters compared to Japanese characters (Kanji) was one of the merits that attracted them to learning Korean.

"I got into Japanese, and I bought few books but I kind of moved to Korean. I think perhaps for Korean writing is simple, simpler. Somehow, I switch to Korean" (Hollie, 1ˢᵗ interview).

"I studied French in secondary school. Currently I am studying Korean, and in my free time, I tried to study Japanese. In some ways it's quite similar, but in a way, Hangeul is much easier" (Ashley, 1ˢᵗ interview)

5.1.2. A year of learning Korean language and culture

In answer to an interview question that sought to determine their methods for studying Korean, all participants answered that they used a coursebook as the primary material. Most of the participants favoured writing down coursebook material repetitively and memorising vocabulary/expressions with the help of prepared flashcards/mobile apps as their primary method of studying Korean. Typical answers included "writing everything over and over again", "I would read my textbook from cover to cover" and "write everything out in my textbook. I would write as much as I could to improve my handwriting."

"My main method was just writing everything over and over. We had homework, but I would do other homework that was not assigned for us. If we completed the lesson, I would write down the whole vocabulary. I would highlight them going over and over, trying to remember them. As well as the patterns, I would write them down and trying to exercise. I tried the pattern, sometimes to Koreans" (Julia, 2nd interview)

The reason behind all the participants used a coursebook as their primary study material could relate to the fact that they had enrolled in a credit degree language module. Thus, the students were obliged to study the coursebook material in order to complete regular coursework and prepare for exams. Moreover, some participants emphasised that Korean non-textbooks were at too high a level for beginners. The students extensively used audio-visual materials, such as Korean dramas or television entertainment shows to complement their study. Many students mentioned that watching/listening to materials spoken in Korean (e.g. Korean drama or entertainment shows) had helped them improve their listening skills and obtain knowledge of phonetics and colloquial expressions that were not attainable from formal classroom settings. Online streaming websites often provided English subtitles, which enabled students to gain handy Korean phrases that they might find useful in the future.

"Watching Korean dramas was really helping. Internet dramas, Asian drama websites I tend to watch a modern comedy that has language that is useful to me. I have been watching Korean dramas even before learning Korean. Now I focus on more of what they are saying, these websites have a lot of subtitles. A lot of times, they also have Korean subtitles. If I hear a sentence, and I see it in English. 'Oh, that's the useful sentence' then I switch to Korean subtitle, and I write down (Alice, 2nd interview)

"I watched Korean drama with English subtitles, so I would listen to Korean to match up with the English. Sometimes I will try to ignore subtitles, trying to figure out what they are saying. That is different from how I used. It made me happy when I understand without subtitles. Feel like I progressed" (Hollie, 2nd interview)

A few participants mentioned that practising speaking with Korean friends was the most effective way to develop their oral skills. As Justin illustrated in the following interview excerpt, the multicultural environment of metropolitan London provided the KL learners more opportunities to meet with Korean speakers onsite. For instance, Justin, who had self-studied Korean in his hometown where no Korean speakers could be found, said that studying at a university in London considerably facilitated contacting Korean speakers.

"Because I self-studied Korean, speaking was the hardest. Because where I live in my hometown, 99 % white British people, there were no one studies Korean or speaks Korean. Basically, I had to speak to myself pretty much. Most of the time, I just studied reading and writing. The biggest improvement was, I've made a bunch of Korean friends. Nowadays, most of my friends here are Korean, at least half or probably more. Just like using them more often, think it is a good way to study, if I don't understand, I will just ask them, and they will just explain it" (Justin, 2nd interview)

In progressive terms, many participants reported that their learning activity became a process of endless interplay between constructing, revising, and elaborating linguistic hypotheses. These KL students constantly acculturated themselves by acquiring linguistic and communicative rules and applying them to practical use. The students mentioned that they gained confidence when they successfully incorporated newly learned Korean expression into real-life conversations or received feedback from Korean speakers when they were less than successful.

"I tried pattern to my Korean friends; sometimes they would look at me, "what are you saying? It's kind of weird". Other times they would say "It's okay," other times "Maybe it's better to say this way" because it sounds more comfortable to say it" (Julia, 2nd interview)

Many students highlighted the advantages of having a conversation in Korean with Korean speakers; nevertheless, some expressed fear of speaking in Korean. While the latter acknowledged the importance of verbal practice, they described themselves as "shy" and "afraid to make mistakes".

"I found speaking; I am really shy when it comes to speaking, my Korean friends, we've been friends for 5 months, she's never heard me speak before. I am so shy. I do not want to make mistakes. I am terrible when I had an oral exam. Oh, my goodness, I was so nervous. That was my first time that I ever spoke Korean to someone else ever" (Rebecca, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Most of the students (16/17) commented that the linguistic knowledge they had obtained from the classroom had given them a deeper understanding of Korean culture. In response to the follow-up question asking them to provide examples, some respondents mentioned "respect culture" and "honorific form" as the most distinctive characteristics of Korean culture reflected in the language. Noticing "honorific form" and different "speech levels" marked the beginning of the KL students' perceptions of the cultural and societal aspects of Korean society that were deeply embedded in their everyday language exercises.

Although some students had already gained some knowledge about respect culture and Korean speech levels reflect age, social rank, or degree of intimacy, the concept of honorific form became more relevant to them while learning about it in the classroom and paying extra attention while interacting with Korean speakers outside of the school. In other words, creating conscious connections between their learning and their lives has made the students' learning experience more meaningful.

"One thing that made me more aware is before learning Korean was…. before I knew about the hierarchy system, respect system, I was like, 'I've never seen it.' But I started making Korean friends. If you are younger than them, you have to respect others, and they vow lower. If you are older, just nod the head, I have seen that a lot more" (Ashley, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"In terms of respect, you know, in Korean, they have different levels of speech, different formalities.
My cousin always spoke differently. It was literally different words and different endings. Learning in a formal environment in a classroom was helpful because I never really understood it when I was younger. You do not really have that in English. So, I guess studying helped me understand a bit more about that: respect and honorific, and all. I tried to explain to my mother, and she was like, 'I don't understand that. You have to be in it, and you have to

be around people operate in that way to understand it fully because that's the way I understood" (Sarah, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

One participant specifically placed being able to use the honorific form to the level of "understanding and appreciating the culture of the target country", commenting that failure to use an appropriate honorific form can offend the culture as a whole. In the following response, Stephanie emphasised that failure to use the honorific form when communicating with Koreans can be a sort of cultural mistake:

"When you learn a language, you see the way some grammar structure, you understand how they are thinking. Especially honorifics, that is a huge society. You cannot go without honorifics. You cannot just take away learn a language without understanding what the honorifics are for. Since I am a foreigner, maybe I would not need to use the honorific. But the more I learn, the more I understand that if I do not speak honorific, I would kind of offend not only the person but culture as a whole because that will show that I do not know what is important to them. Because a simple mistake, like the future, saying a word in a wrong way or grammar is not good is one thing it means your language skill is not good. But if you do not use the honorific, it means that you are kind of offending everyone. It's kind of a cultural mistake" (Stephanie, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Some participants also pointed out that linguistic information gained from television shows or lectures in the classroom allowed them to think about how language reflects on society, helping them to be more culturally aware. However, not all participants believed that they had developed cultural awareness after a year of learning. One participant in the Denial stage mentioned that her linguistic knowledge gained in the classroom did not enable her to understand the culture. An individual in the Denial stage is likely to recognise more observable cultural differences (e.g. food) but may not notice the greater cultural difference. In the case of this participant, the student tended to understand the culture in a simplistic way (e.g. fashion or rankings) and failed to heed the cultural implications hidden behind icons.

5.1.3. Summary of findings: Language learning and intercultural development

The study's exploration of KL students' language learning experiences was also designed to evaluate whether their language learning experience enabled them to be more interculturally aware. The participating KL students' learning experience unfolded in two distinct settings: in the classroom and out of the classroom (real-life). In their classroom learning, the KL students primarily used textbooks as their study material. They read and wrote down vocabulary and expressions from the book to facilitate memorisation, submitted weekly coursework to the lecturer, and prepared for the regular exams. Although some students reported using mobile apps to supplement their vocabulary learning, most of the students focused on studying the coursebooks. Arguably, the KL students focused on coursework because they took Korean as a credit module that required an examination at the end of the course. In learning phonetics and speaking skills, students adopted materials based on real-life settings into their learning environment. The KL students also used audio-visual materials such as Korean dramas or television shows to complement their studies; students watched and listened to real-life materials to familiarise themselves with Korean sounds and learn practical expressions. As part of the process, these subtitled materials also helped them identify words/grammar/expressions that matched English. In their speaking practice, their newly acquainted Korean friends acted as language partners. Thus, the KL students expanded their pool of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and expressions while socialising with Korean friends.

Regarding cultural aspects embedded in the language use, the KL students highlighted that "honorific form" was the most distinctive linguistic aspect that reflected Korean society. Although many students were aware of the concept of respect culture in Korea, the idea became more relevant and meaningful to them as they learned about in a practical sense and put the learned linguistic rules into practice while interacting with Korean speakers outside the classroom. Consequently, their learning activity became a process of endless interplay between constructing, revising, and elaborating linguistic hypotheses. The KL students constantly acculturated themselves by acquiring linguistic and communicative rules and tested the learned rules in a real-life situation whenever they could. This acculturalisation process included not only cultural aspects (in the sense of national, regional cultures) but also social and political positioning.

In terms of cultural awareness, the KL students indicated a deepening understanding of society,

cultural practices, and communicative practices. The data from the first and second interviews showed a markedly different pattern in describing Korean culture: while the KL students described Korean culture in terms of simple, often stereotypical cultural icons (e.g. food, fashion, or unique elements in television shows) in their first interview, the second interview showed that they displayed heightened sensitivity of meaning in language and culture. This alteration was possible by linking their knowledge obtained in the classrooms to real-life experiences.

5.2. Motivation

5.2.1. Motivation for the learning of the language

This section focuses on the KL students' learning motivation. The in-depth interview questions were designed to identify the students' initial motivation to study Korean and navigate their motivational changes, scrutinising their primary drive to sustain learning and achieve their goals. The first interview data demonstrated that Korean popular culture contributed greatly to drawing initial attention to the learning of the language. Most of the participants were introduced to contemporary Korean cultural products such as K-pop, television drama, and films. As one participant (Julia's case) indicated in the interview excerpt below, in many instances, friends or family members who happened to be consumers of Korean popular culture introduced it to their friends. However, the KL students sometimes accidentally came across Korean cultural products regardless of their initial intention (excerpt below).

"It started all when I was very young. I had a Chinese friend who introduced me K-pop and K-drama, and I found it very interesting because they sounded very different from American and European pop" (Julia, 1st interview)

"It was by accident; I was looking for something else, I was looking for a movie trailer on YouTube, then a Korean music video came up. I was not really aware much of Korean culture then. So, I saw automatically, because they were Orientals, the first thought in my head was there were Chinese people because the person on the TV was very attractive, I just fell in love and then I started to research more into it" (Jessica, 1st interview)

Most of the participants' descriptions of Korean popular cultural products included the observations "unique", "different", and "exotic which won't work in the United Kingdom". For instance, Hollie (excerpt below) noted that the general plot idea found in Korean drama differed widely from American or British TV series. Therefore, Hollie thought that those plots would not work in UK television series.

"I watched dramas, and I was introduced to the whole kind of culture because it was really different, different the way the dramas work, the storylines were very different from the ones you find in American ones. Those dramas would not work here in Britain. That was really interesting" (Hollie, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Interestingly, many students reported that they had gained access to Korean popular culture through the medium of Japanese culture. Several students mentioned having had access to Japanese popular culture such as drama or animation, then described their interest expanding (or shifting) to Korean popular culture. In the process, their interest in the language grew as well.

"*Before I was introduced to Korean, I was obsessed with Japan. I watched a lot of animation. My friend showed me Korean, and I found it really appealing. Suddenly my times watching Japanese videos switched to watching Korean show variety shows, drama, just everything"* (Rebecca, 1ˢᵗ interview)

As the interview data have shown, Japanese culture served as an intermediary in the shift to interest in Korean culture for many of the study participants. This finding reflects the fact that a remarkably high number of KL students were casual learners of Japanese. The result also supports the conclusion that an interest in Japanese culture prompted the students' interest in the Korean Language and culture (or possibly vice versa).

Some students reported that they gained a favourable view towards Korean culture when they accidentally discovered similarities to their own culture. For example, one participant, Stephanie (excerpt below), who was originally from Lithuania, showed a keen interest in political relations between South and North Korea. Although the initial motivation that prompted her study was K-pop culture, she felt closer to Korea when she discovered that Korea shared a similar history with her own country. She expressed her emotional bonding with Korea, saying, *"Okay, that's my country"*:

"Reading about Korean history, since it has a lot to do with communism, because of the division of the north and south, I was like...Okay, that's my country. It was so amazing. I just did more than I had to because it was so interesting. I am interested in 20th-century modern history. The main interest is the relationship between the North and the South. K-pop is still a huge part" (Stephanie, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Perceived cultural similarity could stimulate these students to study the language. For instance, Heidi (excerpt below) explained she became interested in Korea as a young person when she learned that Koreans eat rice as a staple food.

"I had a book when I was six years old; it was by UNICEF, it was called 'Children of the world.' They went around the world and took pictures of children and asked about their lives. And the Korean page was the twin boys in Hanbok. I liked the little boys in their little costumes. And in the interview, they said their favourite food is rice. I was like, 'Me too!!' Because I am Brazilian, I eat a lot of rice, and England people don't really eat rice. I was like 'Me too'" (Heidi, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Heidi's narrative indicates that fundamental aspects of life, such as childhood memory or food, can strike a chord with people and lead them to develop an interest in the specific culture/language. Contrariwise, stark cultural differences could also spark students' interest in the culture. For instance, Jamie (excerpt below) originally developed an enthusiasm for Japanese popular culture; later, her interest expanded to Korean. Interestingly, Jamie denied that her initial interest in Japanese culture led her to an interest in Korean. Instead, according to her narrative, Jamie was intrigued by exotic cultures that differed from her own. She reasoned that learning something foreign was an exciting experience, saying:

"I am kind of interested in kind of individual style of Korea as well. It is not just based on Japan that I went for it. I was interested in Korean for a different reason; it has got very different culture here. I think anything that is foreign it's quite exciting and interesting" (Jamie, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Another participant, Sinead, initially chose to study Japanese because she wanted to learn something different from the European languages she had learned at school. Her sister had studied Korean and made friends with a Korean girl, and the three girls became good friends. After that time, Sinead had gone to Korea on holiday and had gained positive experiences at her holiday destination, which prompted her to switch her language of interest to Korean.

"I think, at school, I was a bit bored learning French, so I wanted to learn a different language. I chose Japanese because it looked quite exotic, with all the Chinese characters. It was quite fun to learn. Because my sister actually studied Korean, and she made a Korean friend. And I became friends with her too. She cooked for me. She would

tell me about Korea. I became quite interested, and I went there for a holiday. It was so much fun, so I thought I had to learn Korean (Sinead, 1ˢᵗ interview)

5.2.2. Motivational changes

Although their initial motivation to learn Korean might have differed depending on each individual's situation, a common feature in all the interviews was that the KL students underwent a series of motivational changes over time. Thus, while each participant's overall motivational profile remained relatively similar, every student's short-term motivation (i.e. subject of interest, plan for the near future) was susceptible to considerable change. The first noteworthy change was a diversification of interest within the same subject: the participants' field of interest branched out, expanding from a simple interest in K-pop culture or Korean friends to more specific academic fields of study, such as modern Korean society, modern/ancient history, and others in politics.

"The motivation really has changed. Before, the way I got into it was obviously through the media. Now, learning a bit more about culture and history, I find almost, not completely moved away from it, but not as interested in the same thing as I was. For example, music is not that important to me anymore. It still is interesting, but I begin to learn widely about culture and society. I am looking forward to the coming year focus more on other aspects, culture, society, I am looking for a kind of taking more of culture, society, history" (Hollie, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"Korea came in with pop culture but then, it kind of switched to the historical aspect of it, and old Korea really interested me. Ancient and all the different dynasties. That has always been my interest in most countries. When I wanted to know about them, I have always been kind of going at it from the historical point of view. Korean culture that has been the first culture that hasn't been from history it has been from pop culture, but it changed over" (Sarah, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

In particular, many of the KL students expressed a newly gained interest in Korean history. They commented that learning about history as an academic module enabled them to understand more about modern Korean society and the kind of life that Korean people had led in the past. For instance, Sylvia

(excerpt below) commented that her perception of Korean history had changed a great deal after a year of study, even though she already knew a lot about Korean culture through Korean shows she had been watching for some time already:

"I knew that Korea had a sad history before, but after studying extensively, I really understand what the country has had to go through. My perception has changed. The way that Koreans are now today because I know more about the history, I understand it a little bit better. Why they had to do that, why things like that happened. (Sylvia, 2nd Interview)"

Establishing friendships with Korean speakers enabled some participants to continue communicating using authentic Korean beyond the classroom. As the KL students accepted their new Korean-speaking acquaintances as friends, they began feeling uncomfortable about not being able to communicate fully in Korean. These experiences provided a stronger impetus to learn Korean. As shown in the following comment, Sarah compared herself with her Korean friends and regretted that she could not speak Korean as fluently as her friends could express themselves in English. She hoped to talk in Korean with her friends in the future without needing to switch to English.

"I feel like I made Korean friends. I feel like I am more motivated because most of them can communicate fully in my language, but I can't fully communicate with them in their language. I want to be able to speak to them in Korean all the time. If I want to speak Korean, I do not want to have any problems" (Sarah, 2nd interview)

However, it seemed that as the students' expectation rose, so did their anxiety. For some students, having many Korean friends became a source of frustration in their expectations that they should be able to communicate fully in a foreign language. In such cases, the occasional dissatisfaction they faced while communicating with their Korean friends transformed into their learning motivation, as illustrated below in Sylvia's case:

"I really want to be fluent. I want to be at a point where I can understand everything and speak naturally. That is my motivation. It can be really frustrating because I have many Korean friends, but I always find a block, not being able to express myself" (Sylvia, 2nd interview)

Another observable change was in some KL students' attitude towards the idea of studying abroad. In the second interview, most of the participants expressed intense anticipation for their upcoming study abroad opportunity in Korea. Although spending some time in the country where the target language is spoken might be perceived as a natural next step for language students, the study findings were unique in the sense that these KL students tended to express the determination to stay in Korea for a longer term and had a clearer vision of what they wanted to do in the future in the target country. Furthermore, a year of linguistic/academic learning about the target country helped them gain confidence and made it possible for them to envision and plan to live in that foreign country. For instance, Alice (excerpt below) pointed out that the confidence she had gained from increased language skills made it possible for her to visualise herself living in Korea:

"What pushes me now is that I realized that I am good at Korean, which is always a good motivation. I've been to Korea 5 times; I can really visualise myself living there. Now I have these skills. I want to learn Korean so that I can get a job in Korea. That is my main motivation for studying, living there" (Alice, 2nd interview)

Some KL students said that they felt that they could live in Korea longer term when visiting that country in the past for non-study purposes. For instance, Stephanie (excerpt below) thought that she could live in Korea when she visited on holiday for the first time.

"Last winter, I was in Korea for two weeks. When I was landing, I got the feeling that this is the country that I want to live in. Maybe not the whole my life, but I was thinking, I really want to study more in-depth, maybe a Master's in Korea? Really want to be fluent in Korean" (Stephanie, 1st interview)

Although all of the KL students expressed interest in relocating to Korea, each one's purpose, intended length of stay, and degree of desire to integrate into the society differed slightly, depending on their future plans. Below, Stephanie's and Justin's narratives shows different plans regarding their future life in Korea.

"Now my goal is to go to Korea for master's, I do not know if I had the same goal before, but now I am certain that I want to go to Korea for master. So, I am trying to learn it as soon as possible because I want to study in Korean. I don't want to go to Korea and study in English" (Stephanie, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"I am interacting with a lot of Korean. The motivation is I want to interact with them more. My plan is to...after I graduate and go to Korea, Japan, or China, I travel around, teach English for a couple of years and come back here and do master's, either applied linguistics or teaching English, and I want to work in a foreign university. Korea is my favourite country so far...I will probably end up being there. So that's kind of my future" (Justin, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Jessica (excerpt below) described how the driving force behind her will to study Korean changed dramatically. This student had initially defined her motivation predominantly with reference to Korean popular culture and the entertainment business. However, her interest began to focus more on her living experience when she went to Korea on a study abroad programme. Jessica saw study abroad as an opportunity to gain experience in terms of living on her own, away from her parents, and being independent, making decisions for herself. By putting herself into an unfamiliar environment, Jessica believed that she could challenge herself as an independent being:

"Before, my motivation was music, but now it's just able to experience in a new place in general.
I have not lived anywhere by myself. I have always been dependent on my parents, always been told what I need to do. This course can give an opportunity to go to a whole new area to experience new things meet new different people chance to be more independent. I really need that because I have been sheltered. There are so many experiences that I haven't experienced" (Jessica, 2ⁿᵈ Interview)

Regarding study abroad, feeling like a foreigner in Korean society was a commonly mentioned theme when certain participants described their motivation to study further. These KL students anticipated that they would not be fully accepted as members of Korean society and would be treated as "foreigners", independently of how long they might commit to living there or how knowledgeable they would be about the country. Alice illustrated this sentiment fully in the following comment:

"In Korea, here you learn about the culture, and you are learning the language. You still, I know that I will never be viewed as a Korean. I think I realized that more and more even if I married to a Korean and have mixed kids. I don't think I will ever be viewed as a part of their culture" (Alice, 2nd interview).

However, they also speculated that an excellent command of the language would compensate for their feeling of "being foreign" and enable them to become involved in the community, at least to some degree if not wholly. Almost all participants believed that linguistic ability would open the door to understanding and integrating into Korean society.

"I want to go to Korea and see, and obviously I will always be a foreigner, but I want to be able to go somewhere and speak Koran, and there will be no other issue. 'Wow, you speak Korean. How did you manage that? Living in England?'" (Sarah, 2nd Interview)

Lastly, one participant's take on motivation is worth noting. Rebecca's current goal was to live in Korea and integrate into society as much as possible. This student (excerpt below) believed that having good language skills would enable her to integrate into Korean society because she already knew the culture. By equipping herself with the final tool in the toolbox (language skill), Rebecca believed that she would be fully ready to understand community happenings and recognise and abide by the social rules that the community set out for its members. Only then, she thought, would she be able to live freely and happily as an accepted member of society. To Rebecca, language skill was the essential key to understanding and integration into society.

"I feel like once I speak the language, I will be fully involved in Korea as a whole, as close as I can be. Because I am still a foreigner, in my mind, when I learn Korean, I will be more like a Korean. I know about music, food, fashion and will be able to speak. Even if it's daily life, I would like to live in a society where I am not able to speak freely and fully happy. Also, be abiding by the rules since I will understand it more deeply" (Rebecca, 2nd interview)

5.2.3. Summary of findings: Learning motivation

In all, various motivations spurred the participants to study Korean. While learning motivation might have differed in terms of each participant's personal experience and goals, a common finding was that Korean popular culture provided a gateway to the learning of the language. The KL students were introduced to K-pop, television drama, or films through recommendations from friends or relatives or by coming across these cultural examples accidentally. The participants routinely followed dramas, entertainment shows, and news online. They also joined online forum groups to get information, discuss subjects of interest, or attend occasional K-pop-related events. Some of the participants were active members of K-pop music and dance communities. Notably, quite a few students had their first contact with Korean culture through the medium of Japanese culture. In their interviews, several participants commented that their interest in Japanese culture had led them to develop interest in Korean culture. Along these lines, Choi (2014) coined the term "cultural glide" in an attempt to define the cultural transfer from Japanese to Korean. According to Choi, global youth who have started from an early childhood absorption with Japanese popular cultures (e.g. video games, trading card games, manga, and anime) will exhibit a cultural appetite for exotic yet high-quality culture beyond Japan that has grown correspondingly. Thus, the relevant finding in the current study partially supports Choi's (2014) argument in the UK context. Another factor involved some of the KL students' personal relationships with family members or people close to them at an early age in relation to Korea, which these participants also cited as a contributory factor to their initial learning motivation. In other words, early experiences related to Korea positively influenced KL students in developing a familiar and favourable view of the country.

The follow-up interview findings illustrated the dynamic and evolving nature of learning motivation, revealing how several vital elements interlinked. Although the patterns of motivational change might have differed among individuals, the data that emerged from the second round of interviews showed that a year of academic learning experience contributed significantly to the change. The linguistic knowledge that they obtained in the classroom enabled the KL students to gain confidence and a deeper appreciation for language. Furthermore, related subjects such as politics and history provided excellent opportunities to discover, refresh, revisit, or correct the students' previous perceptions of Korea. As a result, some KL students began expanding their field of interest to other subjects while maintaining interest in contemporary Korean culture. Their academic learning experience also enabled the KL students to build

a concrete idea of life in Korea. As a result, they began forming a more solid idea of what they wanted to do in the future in terms of study and career. These ideas included studying abroad for a short or longer term, pursuing a higher degree in a Korean university, or working in Korea. Also, international friendship with Korean speakers emerged as a positive factor in maintaining and boosting some of the KL students' learning motivation. Specifically, they created an environment with Korean friends where they were encouraged to speak practical and authentic Korean, which motivated the students to improve their language skills. Occasionally, some of the KL students felt uncomfortable or frustrated when they perceived a discrepancy between what they meant to deliver and the actual language skill. However, as their friendship positively influenced KL students, so did the feeling of anxiety.

Regarding living in Korea, the general assumption among these KL students was that they would not be fully accepted as members of Korean society. Specifically, the KL students were worried that they would not be fully integrated into the community and would be considered "foreigners" because of their non-Korean appearance. Thus, in seeking a compensatory solution to the anticipated problem, the KL students speculated that an excellent command of the language would help them to tone down their "foreignness" and allow them to be included in society, at least to some degree if not entirely. Despite their specific concerns, they could negotiate their position to become close to community members by speaking the language at a near-native speaker level and abiding by the community's unspoken rules. In this way, they predicted that their linguistic ability would open the door to understanding and integrating into Korean society.

5.3. Intercultural experience

5.3.1. Intercultural experience with Korean speakers

This section focuses on the type, and nature of intercultural experiences that KL students had over an academic year, and finding out whether their respective experiences had contributed to the development of IC. Two interview data found that while only a few students had intercultural experience with Koreans before university, almost all participants made Korean friends by the end of the year. A small number of students (2/17) did not find Korean friends. However, the reason mainly was that they were unable to find a channel to find Korean speakers rather than unwilling to make friends. The general agreement amongst KL students was that it was relatively easy to find Korean speakers due to many young Koreans living in London. There were several channels available to socialise with Korean speakers, both online and offline. Participants could meet Korean speakers by using web-based language exchange applications (e.g., Hellotalk, Meetup, or online PenPal service), attending cultural exchange events, or approaching Korean speakers directly in the library or school housing. Although it may seem a good idea to join the Korean Society at the university to meet Korean speakers, participants commented that either those societies are inactive or felt an invisible barrier to approaching them. One of the participants commented that the society seemed exclusively for Koreans even though it was said to be open for anyone who wishes to join.

Many KL students commented that speaking in Korean to Korean speakers at school or Korean restaurants allowed them to gain an instant favour from Korean speakers, which occasionally led to a long-lasting friendship in many cases. Sometimes, KL students became friends with Koreans via introduction by classmates who were already friends with the Koreans.

"Some friends are through mutual friends that I had, but the way they made friends were online, so language exchange app, also there are general Koreans around at school. Because they are Korean, I just try to go up to them, pretty much. But there were few language exchanges I went to. They were quite fun; it is a nice way to talk to new people about Korea and their experiences as well. I live in the dormitory, and I made Korean friends that as well living in the same space" (Sylvia, 2nd interview)

"I have a lot of Korean friends; I met some friends through a language app. I have a lot in Korea. I was in Korea over my Easter break. I met new friends through the app. I did not meet anyone through school groups, Korean

groups in the university are not very active, so I made an effort to go out. I met some older Korean friends through my dance class, middle-aged Korean ladies (Ajumma), they are really nice" (Alice, 2nd interview)

Utilising online messenger/ chatting applications was a common way to communicate with Korean friends. Although those online encounters did not necessarily lead to actual meetings due to geographical issues, some casual online meetings developed into regular meetings. Some participants used Korean mobile messenger to communicate with the Koreans more conveniently and improve language skills, as Ashely (excerpt below) suggested.

"The way to interact with Korean people was online- things like language exchange apps. There was Hellotalk which we use a lot, that when I start talking to them, then I would get their Kakaotalk.
When I get to talk to them, I get Kakaotalk, and we talk on them as well. Get then to talk to them in Korean, so quite improved...There are a couple of friends I meet regularly. They were introduced by one friend who met there on Hellotalk, and then we all become friends. (Ashley, 2nd interview)

One unique way to meet Korean speakers, reported by the participants, was to attend a cultural event hosted by a private education agency. Many participants said that they had an opportunity to talk with Korean speakers by attending bi-weekly cultural exchange events. The original aim of the cultural event was to allow Korean speakers to learn English. However, it also served as a channel for KL students to establish a friendship with Koreans, which turned out to be beneficial for both parties in the end. Although the intercultural meeting started in a rather formal setting, soon, it spun off a something casual and informal. Many participants reported that the friends they made through social events became genuine friends with whom they can share personal experiences, as one of the participants described: *"We met once, and we decided to meet often because they were nice people."*

"There was an agency for Korean students in London. It's quite close to school. Me and my housemates we would go every other Friday to meet Korean students in London. We have like cultural exchange lessons, and we go drinking and sing karaoke afterward, so we became friends. We meet frequently. We drink mostly, sometimes, we have meals together. A lot of times we go to the singing room (Noraebang) together. We meet well. We will talk on Facebook" (Heidi, 2nd interview)

"I go to this sort of cultural exchange thing in a little... it's a company that helps international students. Most Fridays, they run a Korean culture exchange thing. I go there quite a lot; I made friends through that. That was really useful. Getting to know people. Then we just kind of get together for drinks, away from the thing as well. Also, I have met my boyfriend through that. He's a Korean, so practice with him something like that" (Hollie, 2nd interview)

At first, the communication between participants and Korean speakers was conducted mainly in English. However, this tendency has slowly moved to use more Korean as participants accumulated linguistic knowledge, becoming more confident to challenge themselves. In this process, Korean speakers took the role of language companion, encouraging KL students to try out more Korean and a proof-reader by giving feedback and correcting mistakes that participants made with more appropriate expressions. In return, KL students took the part of English proof-reader and a guide to London by giving information on where to visit in London or taking them around the city because most Korean speakers were temporary sojourners/short term students in London.

In terms of the nature of the meetings, some participants highlighted that quite frequently, the weight of activities was more towards trying something 'Korean.' The social outings with Korean speakers mainly centred on food-related activities, such as going to Korean restaurants, playing Korean drinking games, or having a conversation at the café. Many participants mentioned that going to Korean drinking establishments or singing rooms (*Noraebang*) were their main activities when they meet with Korean friends. (Excerpts below).

"General normal friend thing, a lot of time, I do more of Korean culture thing with Korean friends. Like I go to a Korean restaurant, and I play Korean drinking games, and they teach funny vocabulary. General friend thing. Go to the park, get food, just hang out, we study together. A lot of time, they help me with my homework which is very helpful" (Sylvia, 2nd interview)

"We meet frequently. We drink mostly, sometimes, we have meals together. A lot of times we go to Noraebang together. We meet well. We will talk on Facebook. There is a couple of Noraebang restaurant in Holborn and Tottenham Court road sometimes, or we just go to accommodation and drink. Sometimes we go for a meal. Sometimes we go to each other's houses just to hang out and barbeque. There's always food and drink, inevitably" (Heidi, 2nd interview)

Some KL students mentioned that they have become familiar with Korean-style drinking sessions, which usually include a large amount of drink consumption and drinking-related games. These social meetings have become an occasion where both parties share their curiosities about each other's country and cultural understandings, as seen in Sarah's narrative (excerpt below).

"I drink, because of them, I was fine, and I met them. Korean drinking culture, too much. Although I am getting used to that, but when I first drank, I was like, dead. They were pouring faster than I could drink. I was like, 'Wait! Let's slow down'. We taught them an English drinking game. We teach each other. Normally, the more you drink, the more you get confident. They ask a lot of questions" (Sarah, 2nd interview)

Not all social outing was about having a good time. The friendship was academically beneficial to both parties. The dynamic in their relationship was equal and reciprocal in a way that Korean speakers helped KL students with homework and speaking practice, and KL students helped their Korean friends with English.

"We usually do some language exchange at the beginning we go to café, I would speak in English. Afterward, we go for food, go to the theatre normal…hanging out stuff. It was nice because their English was really limited, I had to speak Korean, and I prefer that. Because it is better for both of us as well. I had quite a lot of chances to practice. A lot of them are passionate to learn English when they come here, so it's like a good trade" (Alice, 2nd interview)

Although the relationship with Korean speakers was casual and reciprocal, some participants felt it challenging to talk with Koreans about certain topics openly: those mostly related to a sexual relationship or social taboo. These perceived restrictions on issues sometimes made KL students feel a cultural distance between them and their Korean friends.

"*I feel like there are some instances that I feel it's a bit different. With my non-Korean friends, we talk about relationships. But with Koreans, it is not easy, not a big thing to talk about. But when it comes to Korean people, sometimes I feel awkward talking about it. it's not something that easily approachable" (Ashley, 2nd interview)*

As Julia's comment below described, When Julia came across the situation where one of the Korean friends tried to avoid talking about certain things, Julia was rather surprised to see a Korean person living in London would act differently than she expected. Julia speculated that 'being in London' would change people's attitudes. According to her, talking openly about any subject was what people who spent enough time in London would do, and avoiding talking about certain topics was not. Julia was unsure whether it was her Korean friend's personality or 'general Korean trait' to avoid specific topics.

"Once, I was speaking with my friend's friend. He is 24 years old. So, we were having this conversation while we were drinking, it came out with a sort of sexual topic. I was surprised…You would expect that…if someone lives in London, their mind will change a bit, or we expect that from them? All I see it, as soon as we touch the subject, he became all red and 'No, no, no let us not talk about this' However, other Koreans, 'No, it is fine, let's talk about this, we are all adults'. So, it was like two different sides. Maybe I am not sure; it might also be the personality, like very shy. So, they do not like talking about that kind of that topic? But others I see them very comfortable about the topic, everything but not that topic" (Julia, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

5.3.2. Finding differences and similarities

While getting together with Koreans at social meetings, some participants came across several occasions that made them recognise different communication styles, social and cultural practices, or value systems. Those experiences of finding different, unique, or similar things allowed KL students to establish specific categorisation systems on Korean/Korean culture in general. The most remarkable cultural difference that KL students perceived was the different communication styles. KL students mentioned that Korean speakers who were not fluent in English tended to communicate in a straightforward fashion, using greeting expressions such as "Oh, you look so prettier today than yesterday" or "You look like you have lost some weight!", which seemed to sound inappropriate from participants' viewpoint. In describing Korean speaker's communication style, some used the word *'blunt,'* as Nadia commented below:

"I am not trying to generalise, but many Koreans are quite blunt with their words" (Nadia, 2ⁿᵈ Interview).

It is possible that Korean speakers translated Korean phrases directly into English, as those greetings are considered casual compliments that young women exchange in Korea. Also, it is possible that Korean speakers did not recognise that they unintentionally created inadequacy according to British social communication standards because many of them were not fluent English speakers. Although many KL students mentioned that they have become used to it later, it was certainly an event that required KL students' extra effort to understand and adopt fully. Occasionally, those experiences provided KL students empirical evidence to confirm stereotypes about 'typical' Koreans frequently depicted on TV, movies, and social media. For example, Sarah (excerpt below) describes her previous intercultural experiences with Korean speakers; Sarah commented that she has always known that Koreans can be quite blunt with words, although she has not experienced them personally yet. When Sarah met a Korean, who said something thought to be inappropriate in the British sense, the event gave her solid empirical evidence to confirm and solidify her theory on Koreans.

"Korean people can be quite blunt. I've always known that, but I haven't experienced it. All the Korean people I have been around, just say what they think, was kind of 'wow'. There was… I went to the agency thing. They were like, 'You look so much prettier than before.' I was like, wow…I didn't take it as an offense, but I was like, 'Yeah, English people wouldn't say that.' It was quite blunt, like straightforward. 'You gained the weight.' 'You lost weight.' We do not. We are not that open. English people are not open. I picked that up now, but at the first time, I was like, wow…I always heard, 'Oh, Korean people are quite blunt. They just say something, don't take offense, how they are, how they speak', but the first time I experience it was like wow… (Sarah, 2nd Interview)

Participants sometimes perceived that Korean speakers display their emotions differently. They felt the nature of their relationship with Korean speakers to be more affectionate, cordial, and expressive compared to the 'distant' nature of the interpersonal relationship in their culture. Also, they perceived that one's emotion is more openly expressed in a verbal form, both in friendship and romantic relationships.

"I feel Koreans are very expressive. My friends are always holding my hands and friends and always holding me. And there are a lot of Korean faces that are cute, like over-action. My friends are really expressive, I think it's really adorable, but it's definitely different. We're not as….I feel like there's a stereotype in the west, not just

Koreans but East Asians being cold and not affectionate, but I think it's totally the opposite. They are much more affectionate with their friends than we are" (Alice, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"Just sort of, in terms of more acceptance of being, it's a bit more distant in England. If you are dating, it seems to be normal to ask what are you doing, that quite be seen quite normal in relationships in Korea, whereas in here it's overbearing what are you doing, it's kind of too much. Actually, I think..social distance, just unspoken differences" (Jamie, 2ⁿᵈ interview).

Some believed that expressive communication style was reflected in the use of language as well. For example, Julia (excerpt below) concluded that Koreans are expressive in their emotion when she listened to recorded audio files in the textbook: she discovered the actor's tone of voice changes depending on the context given.

"Korean can be quite expressive with their emotions; especially I learned through language learning when we started learning some language patterns, like surprised, it's better to act in a surprising way if the situation is a sad situation. You would exaggerate. I never understood why but apparently, it is to emphasise more with the people that you are speaking to? I found sometimes Koreans can be very expressive" (Julia, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Additionally, some participants reported that Koreans put a lot of importance on familial relationships compared to theirs. Interestingly, there was a difference in describing family values depending on which cultural group the participant identifies with. Participants who identify themselves with British or Caribbean culture described Korean family culture as something different from theirs own (Hollie, Rebecca-excerpt below). In contrast, participants who identify themselves with Asian/South Asian culture described the same Korean family culture as something that is 'similar to their own' (Nadia, excerpt below).

"I feel like, for example, family is a really big thing in Korea. Still a big thing in Britain. As an observer outside of Korea, I have noticed that families and those things" (Hollie, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"Very different. We do not really have that many family orientations. Korean people love a family to live for the family. We are not like that. Everyone can be very independent in Caribbean culture. Not necessarily a good thing. That is how they are" (Rebecca, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"The whole Hyoung, Nuna, Unni thing is quite similar to Filipino culture. I see that similarity, and then there is the whole collective Asian culture, which a lot of Asian countries share. It's like certain things you do at home. Take off your shoes when you get into the door, greeting your parents, when they come in, that usually the whole. There are always similarities between Asian cultures. I notice that reflect, that translates my culture. 'Oh, I do that in the same way. Not with the same words, but we do it" (Nadia, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Lastly, some participants commented that they felt confused when their Korean friends insisted on paying the food bills. The perceived cultural difference in bill-paying practices usually happened when KL students met with older Koreans who are more relax on the money, or sometimes the opposite gender. For example, Sylvia (excerpt below) described her conflicted feeling when she came across a situation where her Korean friend (who happened to be the opposite gender) insists on paying the restaurant bill. She felt uncomfortable because she wanted to pay, but she did not want to offend her Korean friend by rejecting his kind offer.

"Sometimes, in Korean culture, it's more common for men to pay or want to pay. But I want to pay, but then again…I don' want to offend them…and then I do not realise what I am doing…that can be difficult" (Sylvia, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Sometimes KL students experienced occasions where what was perceived as a 'Korean thing' turned out to be something else. For example, Alice (excerpt below) described her embarrassment when she had mistaken her Korean friend's intention when he started paying the restaurant bills. She assumed that it was a simple warm gesture Korean friends would regularly make. But when Alice discovered that her Korean friend started developing romantic feelings towards her, she felt embarrassed for having not understood the cue behind her Korean friend's friendly gestures.

"He would pay for everything; I think that's really different. I was aware after a while. Maybe it was something more. In the west, usually, you split everything. You just pay for yourself. The guy who liked me started paying me. I thought just things Koreans do, but he actually meant it as a nice gesture. I realised pretty quickly, maybe him paying everything means something. Then again, also in Korea, even friends pay for everything, which for me was really uncomfortable because I feel like I owe them something. But they are really like 'No, No, No' this is Korean culture we pay for everything whether it was romantic or not, so I could tell that he would be getting frustrated for me I would be really interested in 'No I would pay for myself' offended them sometimes, why won't you let me?"
(Alice, 2nd interview)

5.3.3. Communication challenge

Not all intercultural events that participants had with Korean friends were happy moments. There also were several occasions perceived to be challenging. Although most of them were minor misunderstandings, there was one event which was labelled as a negative intercultural experience by many participants. Below is a brief description of the event in which a group of participants and their Korean friends were involved, which could have led to a physical conflict if there was no intervention.

Nadia (Pseudo name) was standing outside of a Korean establishment that offers drinks and karaoke rooms located in New Malden. New Malden is a suburban area in the south of London where many Korean establishments such as supermarkets, restaurants, and bars are concentrated and casually referred to as 'Korean town' because of the high density of Korean shops. In front of the restaurant, Nadia bumped into a couple of Korean men she mistook for her Korean friends. But soon she realised they were not her friends. Nadia said to them, "I am sorry," and one of them replied, "What are you sorry for?" Then he insulted her in a Korean phrase referring to her body figure, which she understood instantly.

"Obviously, I am foreign, so he didn't think what he was saying. I turn around, and I said 'I understand you all 나다 알아요' Then he said, "I wasn't talking about you" I told my friends that the guy was being really rude" (Nadia, 2nd interview)

Nadia believed that the conflict she had with the Korean person roots in different linguistic and cultural exercises between United Kingdom and Korea. She mentioned that "Saying I am sorry even if

one is not acquainted with the other person is a very British thing to do". She exercised the British practice, which her Korean counterpart misunderstood and took it as an offense. As a person representing British culture in the situation, Nadia also backed her argument by saying, *"I get a lot of stuff saying you're acting very British."* (Excerpt below)

"In my opinion, maybe that is where the rooting comes from. He doesn't understand British culture. I get a lot of stuff saying, 'You're acting very British,' bumping into someone, so in that situation, maybe he didn't understand. This is very British of me to apologise to someone I've never met before. That is the idea of cultural rooting (Nadia, 2nd interview)."

Nadia also speculated the reason behind the conflict originated from Korean drinking practice different from British one, which she labelled as *'intense,'* and different communication styles, which she described in her interview, *'Koreans are blunt with words.'*

"I know that Korean drinking culture was very intense, so maybe his amount of intoxication, or just situation of the day there are so many facts. It was a Korean establishment if he was Korean, and he said that in a rude way, quite bluntly, which I know. I am not trying to generalise, but many Koreans are quite blunt with their words. So, I felt like…maybe it is just his way of speaking, but the fact that he said it and being cowardly about it made me upset, I didn't feel good about it" (Nadia, 2nd interview)"

Interestingly, the same incident was viewed from a different angle by another participant present at the scene but not directly related. Heidi, who witnessed the conflict Nadia had, reported that she was rather surprised by how Korean friends reacted when the incident occurred (excerpt below).

"There was one incident that we went to New Malden. There were some Korean men in the smoking area, and they called my friend 'fat' in Korean. They assumed we did not know Korean. We were angry, then we were going to let it go, but Korean friends were really angry. They were ready to fight and have a word; it was very heated. I didn't expect them to be so defensive, so ready to have an argument. But I don't know why I didn't expect them to be angry; I just thought they would let it go Because I supposed it wasn't directed at them. It was directed to one of the English girls. They did not know us well. That was our 2nd and 3rd meeting. When they heard that the girl was upset, they

were ready to fight straight. I didn't expect them to feel so close to us, so ready to defend her after a short time meeting" (Heidi, 2nd interview)

When Heidi was asked in the interview why Korean friends were so eager to help KL students, she replied:

"Maybe because we were girls, and they were guys. Then, they also said that we do not want you to know that all Koreans are like that, and we want you to know that we don't care about beauty standards. But it was more interesting to me to see how my friends reacted" (Heidi, 2nd interview)

Heidi's story points to several cultural aspects: first, Heidi did not expect her newly acquainted Korean friends to defend participants since they hadn't known each other for long. Heidi thought they had no obligation to help participants because they were not close friends. However, Heidi was rather surprised when the Korean friends stood up for the KL students, defying their native Korean speaking group. On the other hand, her Korean counterparts interpreted this event from a different point of view. Korean friends knew of the stereotypical perception of harsh beauty standards imposed on people in modern Korean society. It seemed that they were upset and worried that their foreign friends, who only started getting to know Korea, might have a negative impression of Korea. At the same time, Korean friends justified themselves by saying that they do not judge their friends by their looks, unlike some people. That can be found in their statement, "*We don't want you to know that all Koreans are like that, and we want you to know that we don't care about beauty standards.*"

5.3.4. Summary of findings: Intercultural experience

Two in-depth interview findings revealed that the participants had little trouble finding Korean speakers with whom to build international friendships. They met their Korean friends through language exchange or social meetings or by casually initiating conversation at school or in school housing. Over time, those loose networks of friendship became more interconnected, expanding as participants and

Korean speakers introduced their friends to other classmates or groups of friends. In this process, a shared interest (learning Korean for KL students and English for Korean speakers) allowed them to enjoy each other's company and help each other academically. The two parties regularly met to try out new Korean food, Korean bars, and Karaoke singing rooms. The relationship dynamic between KL students and Korean speakers was equal and reciprocal, and their relationship developed into genuine friendship.

While socialising with Korean friends, KL students came across several occasions which might be perceived as cultural difference. In their accounts, many KL students described Koreans as expressive in their emotions, talking in a straightforward fashion, emphasising familial relationship, and sometimes insisting on paying restaurant bills for friends. Many KL students casually believed that the Korean speakers they met were representative citizens of the country. Specific elements that they noticed while socialising with Korean speakers, such as the way of communicating, different behavioural patterns, or personal value systems, were singled out and labelled "Korean". Occasionally, those experiences became supporting evidence to confirm pre-existent stereotypes frequently imposed by TV, movies, or social media. Although some KL students commented that they felt their Korean friends were not much different from their local friends, a certain degree of restriction remained present in topics as well as misunderstandings in terms of communication and behaviour. Furthermore, some of the difficult moments that participants experienced indicated that the intercultural experience between the two groups continued to face challenges. In dealing with the intercultural situation, albeit positive or negative, both KL students and Korean speakers tended to interpret the problem in terms of culture. The KL students' positive experiences or impressions of Korean friends generated a more open, friendly, eager-to-learn attitude towards Koreans and their culture. In contrast, the negative experiences of some of the KL students led them to create stereotypes or form negative impressions on the entire group level, resulting in less open, judgemental view towards Koreans and Korean culture. Sometimes their perceived stereotypes overshadowed the true intentions of their Korean counterparts, resulting in occasional misinterpretation.

5.4. Imagined community and identity

5.4.1. Korea as Imagined communities

This section explores how participants' envisioning and affiliations of the target country shape divergent intercultural experiences and learning attitudes. What kind of impression did KL students have on the target country before the study of language? Has a year of study changed their perception of Korea? Where do KL students place themselves between their culture and target culture? The first in-depth interview questionnaire was designed to identify what kind of perception KL students had before university. The second interview focused on looking at the changes that participants experienced over a year.

Initially, almost all participants were fans of Korean popular culture, and they regularly consumed cultural products such as music, drama, and television shows. Their source for information was primarily online. The participants checked YouTube or online forums/blogs that specialise in providing the newest information on the Korean entertainment industry or television series.

"I am very into music because ever since I was young, I was always into music. K-pop was very interesting to me because everything is different compared to other countries. Other countries their own way of doing, each country has its own sound, but nothing like K-pop has a mixture of everything." (Jessica, 1st interview)

"I listen to everything that comes out of K-pop. I know many things about K-pop. It's just 8 years of research, YouTube, sometimes my friends tell me. Mostly through YouTube, and then I download the music online. I read allkpop.com. They have reviews of dramas. There is a website where you can download Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese dramas and I scroll around" (Stephanie, 1st interview)

The primary perception of Korea reported by KL students was a collective construct of images powered by perfectly choreographed K-pop videos and beautiful people in K-dramas. While those glamorous images are predominant, negative aspect of Korean society such as extreme competition, long

schooling/ working hours, or harsh beauty standards, social presses were also cited as the images of Korea. The most commonly cited topic by the participants was 'harsh beauty standard in Korea'. KL students frequently mentioned beauty-related issues in all interviews. Those topics included people's obsession for a slim body, the proliferation of beauty-related industry, and plastic surgery. For example, Zara's case (excerpt below) provided an interesting portrait of how media shapes one's perception of the country: Zara's main interest was Korean traditional music (*pansori*) which she accidentally came across on YouTube. Ever since she listened to traditional music, it became her passion and the main reason to learn the Korean language. Not only did she have no previous knowledge of the language and contemporary culture, but she had few chances to meet Korean speakers due to hectic work and study, even after an academic year of study. Zara was the only participant who had few intercultural experiences in the cohort. As a student with no prior knowledge of Korea as a society, she started looking into general information on the country while learning the language at university, mainly using online research. Zara borrowed some books, found a couple of blogs, followed certain Korea-related Facebook pages. She regularly visited blogs to find information to revise things she learned in the classroom. As she researched the target country further, she came to realise that Korean and Hungarian (Zara's cultural background) cultures share many similarities. The finding stimulated her curiosity and she researched more about the country.

"I was interested in the course first, my interest started from the music, and I got more into everyday culture thing. I found similarities between Hungarians, and I thought it's really interesting, when I heard, interesting, fascinating" (Zara, 2nd interview)

As she researched further on, her initial interest and fascination somehow turned into something different. She came across multiple online contents that described the other side of Korean society. The article about harsh beauty standards prevalent in Korean society she read made her concerned about future life in Korea. In response to the second interview question asking whether there were any changes with respect to perception of Korea were, she replied:

"Somehow, I became a little shyer toward Korean. I heard few things, might not be true, maybe just a big stereotype. Obviously, you cannot generalise people. But I heard appearance is important. I heard that people get plastic surgery, crazy diet, just trying to be accepted. I am not that type of person. So, for example. A little bit more overweight, make me not accepted? If I go there, how would they approach me? If they do, at all? That's one of the reasons that I wouldn't approach someone because I might be scared that they have a negative opinion toward me?

Not everyday thing, it's not for everyone, when you hear things like that. First of all, we did this class, and education is really important, your looks are really important as well. And I follow some blogs on YouTube. You have interviews with Korean people" (Zara, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

A piece of information supposedly from a credible source such as lecture, books, or interview videos with Korean speakers, has influenced Zara's understanding of Korean culture. Although she has never been to Korea, the information Zara gained made her concern about whether she would be welcomed in the apprehensive Korean society. Similarly, most KL students' initial understanding of the target country underwent a series of changes to different directions. In fact, the most significant contributory factor in the shift of perception was the personal relationship that KL students build through frequent interaction with Korean friends. For instance, Heidi (excerpt below) commented that before making Korean friends, she was afraid of making mistakes and worried that Koreans might judge her by their harsh beauty standard: *"I thought Koreans were the scariest."*

"Definitely, there was a change, I do not want to say I was afraid, but I was a bit apprehensive. Because of the generalisation, I have heard, 'Oh, In Korea, they are very uptight about beauty standards.' If I meet Korean people, they will judge me, silly things like that. What if they are polite and I am polite? Do we not become friends because of the politeness barrier? I was always afraid of making mistakes. Now having made some Korean friends, I am not as apprehensive…I realised that I did make a generalisation in the beginning. Not everyone is going to hate me because of the beauty standard. Because I made a mistake when I made mistakes when I introduced myself. Koreans were the scariest; I thought they were (laugh)" (Heidi,2ⁿᵈ Interview)"

Sarah (excerpt below), who has no experience of meeting any native Korean speakers before university, reported that she had idealised Korean culture as highly positive. Sarah had a cousin who was a half-Korean who had influenced her positively. She also had an immense enthusiasm for K-pop culture, which led her to the idea of studying Korean. The idea of Korea that Sarah created before the university was an imagined and romanticised construct of entities from K-pop world. However, after a year of studying and socialising with Korean friends, Sarah commented that her idealism in Korea had become more *real*.

"A bit less intimidated, no, not intimidated. That's the wrong word, um, because I haven't been Korean culture outside of my cousin; obviously relationship dynamic between us is different. Being around people the same as me, potential friends have kind of made me comfortable in Korean culture, wanting to learn things. Maybe idealism in Korean culture. Because when something is new and different, then you kind of are super positive. Everything is a perfect kind of viewpoint, but we have more similarities than we have differences. I feel like my view on Koran culture has been humanised, I kind of understand more human level now. Kind of being around Korean people made it feel like a real thing that I want to learn about. (Sarah, 2nd Interview)

Similarly, Justin (excerpt below) reported that having a positive experience with a group of people from a specific community could bring changes to one's stereotypes. As he commented, *"One can transcend culture by giving them positive impression by being nice to them,"* illustrates, Justin thought learning the language and culture as well as having positive intercultural experience with Korean friends enabled him to modify stereotypes he previously had.

"It's kind of; obviously, you can't help having stereotypes about things, especially when you didn't have any interaction with anyone from that part. But like since studying Korean, learned about history and culture, having like Korean friends, like a bunch of them. Then it sounds like really cheesy, but you kind of realised that it looks like people are people. I am like everyone.
I think that.. kind of moral level, just kind of being a nice person, just trying to be a good person. I think that kind of transcends cultures; I think everyone is trying to do that." (Justin, 2nd interview)

Some students reported they have become less excited about learning Korean and felt a discrepancy between what they initially imagined and what they felt after a year of study. That sentiment tended to be more salient among students who have considered themselves to be devoured fans of Korean popular culture. When the glamourous and exciting K-pop world that students imagined was confronted with the unglamorous and banal quotidian life of studying Korean and meeting non-celebrity Koreans, some participants felt that the idealistic world they imagined had been brought down to the reality. Korea is not an idealistic place, nor are Koreans superior. Those sentiments were expressed in some participants' statements, such as *"Korean culture is just like any other culture (excerpt below)"* or *"Everybody is the same, they are a bit more hard-working (excerpt below)."*

"I think it's normal. When I think about Korea now, I am realistic in the way I think about it. I am gonna go there. I am really looking forward to going to Korea. But at the same time, I know what to expect in terms of maybe difficulties that I will face in terms of race or foreigner in general so just things like this, have realistic expectations about what living there is. Not much, just as fantasy you see in the show. I think many people do not know Korean culture. Just a little from the drama, they think it is like drama. I just trying to let them you are wrong. Just like any other culture, it's got its problems" (Rebecca, 2nd interview)

"Definitely. I had a very positive, everything was very happy happy like a fool. In general, Korean people are really nice people like..I thought it's a whole new world in Korea. I used to think like that
Korean people are the people of the future because they are developed. They are more advanced in terms of education. I thought they would just keep on going. There will be non-stop for them. That's how I felt before, then after studying, learning much, I just like..Everyone is the same; the only difference is they are a bit more hard-working. That is about it. Because of Korea's competitive nature, they became hard-working. You can't help it."
(Jessica, 2nd Interview)

5.4.2. The construction of L2 identity

This section looks at how KL students' construction of a new identity as learners of Korean and their envisioning of the future in the imagined community shaped the nature of their learning engagement and intercultural experience. The first interview questionnaire included items regarding participants' cultural backgrounds and which culture they identify with the most. Most participants were in contact with some form of multiculturalism. Those ranged from having one person from a different cultural background as a family member to have emerged in fully bi-(multi-) cultural background. However, the degree to which participants identified with their multiple cultural groups differed depending on their circumstances. For example, to the interview question asking their major cultural group, most participants answered that they identify with British culture, although it was unclear and sketchy about what "British" means.

"I was born here, and I look at myself as British, but my parents are from the Caribbean, so I also look at myself as the Caribbean. If someone asks me who I am, then I would say 'England.' Culturally, I am English.
I have a Caribbean culture like food and things like that, but I have been living in this country my whole life. I feel like an English person" (Sylvia, 2nd interview)

Some students from multicultural background commented that they have two or more cultural identities and can switch behaviour to a more culturally adequate context. These include switching greeting expressions or methods depending on the cultural background of the family member, changing communication style to accommodate the interlocuter's cultural standard and preference. For example, Heidi (excerpt below) commented that she shows more of her Brazilian side when she is with her Brazilian mother's family compared to when she is with British friends.

"I think, mostly, British culture with some elements of Brazilian culture, but those cultural aspects are only present when I am home or when I am with family. Otherwise, my regular life is British culture.
Some cultural aspects, like kind of speaking with respect to elders like using titles, those aspects would be only present when I am with my Brazilian family. I would not do it with my British friends or British family. I guess my religion is tied to Brazilian culture. So, I am overly religious when I am with my Brazilian family. It doesn't matter in British culture, so I don't feel the need to present that" (Heidi, 2nd interview)

Similarly, Nadia (excerpt below) took a selective approach in displaying her cultural elements. She embraces three different cultural aspects (of father's, mother's, and of place she resides) that she obtained from her family and carefully chose her behavioural pattern in a way that seems to be the most culturally appropriate in the cultural context. It was possible because Nadia believed that she respects the cultural diversity in the family by abiding by the standards and expectations of the culture group.

"I feel very, I related much to my mom's culture, which is a Pilipino culture, also I related to my father's culture which is a Pakistani culture, but I am also British in my way.
So, it is very difficult, but I would say rather than say I belong to one singular culture, I'd say I have a grand idea of what each culture has impacted on me. And how each society I am from. With regard to my mother's society and my father's society, and the society I've grown up in. I take certain aspect of that, and I place it onto myself, and I sort of show it, displays it. In terms of how I greet my family, I do it very Pilipino way. With my father's culture, I respect my family in the way they want me to, in the way I was supposed to do" (Nadia, 2nd interview)

Some students were conflicted about their cultural identity and felt like "in-betweenners" that does not belong to their cultural group. For example, Justin (excerpt below) commented that although he is from a mainly British community, he never thought he belonged. Those who felt conflicted between their cultural identity and their community described the sentiments as *"Feeling like I don't have a home," "I never related to British people,"* or *"I never belonged to my community."* The feeling of cultural isolation became the main drive force to find a place where they believed more culturally fit.

"I've never felt like, never really like related to British people. I think more trying to find a culture that would fit more into my personal value, I guess? I have never wanted to live in my place for the rest of my life. The first opportunity, I left my hometown. I want to experience the world. To be fair, culturally, I fit in more here in London than I do. Where I live is kind of rural as well, so it is like 99 percent, not so much these days, but when I was a kid, it was all about white British. Kind of boring. Since I came here, I met people from all over the world. It's a lot more interesting" (Justin, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Alice (excerpt below), who is originally from the United States but travelled and lived in several different countries across continents, felt like she does not belong to a single cultural group. Because of her experience with multiple cultures, Alice tend to get confused by straightforward questions such as "Are you going back home for Christmas?"

"I really don't feel like I belong to American culture. I do not feel I am a typical American. I went to Germany, then Hong Kong, then Manchester, and then London. I do not have, physically do not have a house; when people ask, 'Are you going back home?' then I feel like, 'Where is my home?' Probably I go to the States, but I go to a place where my dad has a house" (Alice, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Although K-pop attracted some KL students to the initial interest of the country, their academic learning and intercultural experience allowed them to visualise themselves being a part of the country. In the second interview, it became apparent that the participants' perception of Korea shifted from entities of the K-pop to a more realistic place where their friends live, and they will be living soon. Accordingly, KL students' plans for the future became more in detail and finely defined. They began to visualise themselves living in Korea, pursuing a higher degree in Korean universities, or working as a teacher at

Korean schools or Korean-related companies. In particular, KL students displayed strong hope to work in the industry sector of their specific interests (e.g., entertainment industry, history, art, or media) in Korea.

"I've always thought about going to Korea to do a MA if that's a possibility. One of my friends is doing MA in Korean university in Korean. So maybe I might do that. I'd like to move to Korea for a certain period of time. (Sarah, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"*I see myself living in Seoul and working for a museum or art gallery, probably behind the scene, not walking around the museum being a guide, but working with international promotion or curation, interacting with many modern contemporary artists. That is how I see myself. (Alice, 2ⁿᵈ interview)."*

Some participants wished to utilise their language skills they obtained in future studies or work. They imagined their future selves to be a speaker of multiple languages. This tendency was more salient among those who felt comfortable and easy in learning new languages. In particular, one participant described her linguistic pursuit as '*Adding on more language to the language portfolio.* East Asian languages such as Chinese or Japanese were mentioned as additional languages that KL students would like to learn additionally.

"Hopefully, in 3 years, I will be able to speak very well. Verbal capability is my priority. Because I've grown up speaking so many languages, and I want to know that I can speak another one. Able to speak it properly, high level. Element of personal satisfaction" (Heidi, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"I also want to move on the study other languages. I want to learn   Mandarin or maybe Japanese since I came here. I have met few Koreans who speak Chinese; I also have Chinese friends as well. Obviously, it is useful. I am interested in language in general, so I want to learn as many as possible." (Justin, 2ⁿᵈ Interview)

Some expressed their hope to work and travel not only in Korea but in other surrounding Asian countries. Those included neighbouring countries of Korea, such as China, Japan, or Hongkong.

"I am thinking of doing EPIK programme, the teaching abroad Korea. I might do that if I do the Master's. After that, I want to come back to London and work for a British company here. And if they have outlets like foreign countries, Hong Kong or Korea, those are two main countries. (….) If I can transfer and work for a different country, work in a different country, that would be amazing. Living abroad is definitely something I want to do. Travel" (Nadia, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Although KL students' envisioning of future selves was mainly shaped by their hope to study further in Korean university or work abroad, that did not necessarily mean they wanted to stay in one country permanently. KL students expressed their willingness to travel around the world, live in several countries. They envisioned themselves to be a 'global nomad' or to be the owner of 'dual citizenships.' Their envisioning of global citizenship was expressed in their wish to be 'a bridge' connecting two cultures- Korean and their own. For example, working as a translator/interpreter for an embassy or international organisation seemed to mean much for them, as the profession was perceived as a way to introduce Korean culture to their country or build a bridge to connect two countries culturally and economically.

"I have to do something within the field of the Korean language. I have to be maybe closer to my goal to become a translator. In the smaller field, like broadcasting workplaces like KBS where I can have many opportunities to translate and connect people around the world. Worldwide English version of the radio station. Just like helping to interpret and translating, helping people around the world to understand Korean culture" (Ashley, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

"Most importantly, finishing my masters in Korea. I would like to work together with the Korean and Lithuanian governments to kind of bring the two counties together. I would be happy to do international relations, embassies, and so on. Since Korea is developing so much huge technology industry, so I would imagine there should some point improve the relationship with Korea and kind of cooperate in terms of diplomacy many some military thing or just general technology, that is where I think translators use to be useful" (Stephanie, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

The biggest concern that participants had was the issue of integrating to the Korean society. As chapter 5.2.2. discussed with regard to learning motivation, KL students' concern that they might not be recognised as community members in Korea re-emerged in the context of a hypothetical long-term future. However, participants believed that one would be able to get as close as honorary citizen status by

accomplishing the highest level of language skills. In this process, KL students began establishing a solid identity as language learners. For example, Sarah (excerpt below) believed that she would be seen as a 'foreigner' regardless of how fluent her Korean is. In order to overcome the perceived limitation, Sarah negotiated her position to reach the nearest possible by becoming a 'foreigner with a near-native level of Korean.' Sarah imagined herself to be a fluent Korean speaker enough to surprise even Korean native speakers.

"I always loved the Korean language since I was quite young, now I have more appreciation now because now I am studying it because it's hard work. I want to go to Korea and see, and obviously, I will always be a foreigner, but I want to be able to go somewhere and speak Korean, and there will be no other issue, wow you speak Korean. How did you manage that? Living in England?" (Sarah, 2nd interview)

Some participants believed that one would be able to integrate into the target community by fully understanding its culture. With cultural knowledge, one will be able to interact with the local people perfectly, hence will be accepted as a member of the society. As Rebecca (excerpt below) believes, by knowing the culture, one will abide by the community's rules, which is another way to integrate into the community wholly. Here again, the essential prerequisite was the language skill.

"In my mind, when I learn Korean, I will be more like a Korean. I know about music, food, fashion and will be able to speak. Even if it is daily life, I would like to live in a society where I am not able to speak freely and fully happy. Also, be abide by the rules since I will understand it more deeply." (Rebecca, 2nd interview)

5.4.3. Summary of findings: Imagined community and identity

The KL students in this study evidenced varied impressions of the target country before they began their language studies. Specifically, the participants' general perceptions of Korea alternated between glamorously choreographed images of K-pop videos, displays of attractive people in K-drama, and depictions of a controversial yet fascinating society consisting of extreme forms of competition, social pressure, long school/working hours, and harsh beauty standards portrayed by media. Although Korea

may be generally viewed as a highly varied cultural entity comprising many contradictory elements, individual participants tended to interpret these elements differently based on their circumstances and interests. For some, Korea was seen as a country offering exotic, unique, strange features that could fulfil one's cultural, intellectual, and personal desire to gain access to an alternative form of culture. On the other hand, some participants saw this same country as an extremely competitive place where studious and hard-working people lived. Moreover, their imagined constructs provided the KL students a strong impetus for learning the language, regardless of any actual resemblance to the real Korea.

As these KL students accumulated linguistic knowledge and built personal relationships with Korean friends, their attitude towards the target country continued to transform. The most significant change was that KL students developed an understanding of a more practical, realistic side of Korea as they learned about the language and met real people. The romanticised version of the target country that had characterised many of the KL students' earlier beliefs became demystified and more realistic. Some students described the phenomena in terms of their ideas on Korea becoming "humanised". However, in some cases, they expressed disappointment at having their previous set of ideas challenged by reality. They came to realise that Koreans were not as wonderful as they thought they would be, and Korea, like other countries, had its problems.

Their changes in perception allowed participants to broaden their understanding of the country and establish a clearer identity as language learners. Furthermore, these alterations enabled them to translate their imagined identity into a more realistic form, from a vague desire to access glamourous K-pop land to envisioning themselves becoming students who were pursuing a higher degree at university or working in the industry. However, some concerns accompanied this more practical approach to an imagined community, especially in the context of envisioning their long-term future in Korea. Many KL students were apprehensive that they might not be seen as members of the Korean community no matter how long they lived and how fluent their Korean might be. In compensation, they renegotiated their position to become a "foreigner with a near-native level of Korean speaker" or "honorary citizen of Korea" by attaining the highest level of language skills. They figured that a knowledge of language and culture comprises the capital necessary to study/work and integrate into the community. Some participants believed that fully understanding the target community's culture would allow them to integrate into that society. In other words, cultural knowledge would enable an individual to interact with the local people perfectly and, hence, be recognised as a member of society.

Experiencing a new linguistic and cultural environment prompted these KL students to reflect further on their position in the world. The experience of finding similarities and differences between Korean culture and their own cultural background encouraged the KL students to re-discover and better understand their cultural heritage. At the same time, the same experience provided a chance to establish a new identity as a global citizen. With increased global mobility, KL students imagined their future selves as citizens of the world, living and working in multiple international locations while speaking various languages fluently. The study results demonstrate the rise of a new hybrid identity amongst KL students. In this context, part of their identity was rooted in their local culture, while another part was associated with a global identity that linked them to the international mainstream.

6. Two case studies

This chapter takes a closer look at two case studies that demonstrated different intercultural developmental trajectory. These cases were intentionally selected to exemplify two opposite developmental stages to offer insight into what individual/environmental factors have accounted for different IC development paths.

If one views the IC development as having an increased IDI score, one case might be considered a successful case and the other unsuccessful. However, it is not easy to say one student had achieved more successful learning/ intercultural experience and the other did not when multiple variables are considered (e.g., environmental variables, individualistic characters). Therefore, it would be more appropriate to regard them as separate individual cases with different IC developmental trajectory.

6.1. Julia's case: Knowing Korean culture and your own

6.1.1. First phase: A member of the K-pop community

Julia's first DO was 98.89 (at the cusp of Minimization), but her second DO increased to 115.09 (at the cusp of Acceptance), scoring the highest in the cohort. Julia identified herself as culturally Italian from southern Italy. She attained most of her pre-university education in Italy and then came to the United Kingdom to study Korean. Although she did not have any experience of living abroad before coming to the United Kingdom, she managed to teach herself multiple languages, including English, Spanish, French, Japanese, and a few other languages. Julia mentioned that she became interested in Korean because of her personal memory with a Korean person and popular culture she was introduced through a Chinese friend.

"I had a Chinese friend who introduced me K-pop and K-drama, and I found it very interesting because they sounded very different from American pop and European pop. Around the same time, I met a Korean lady who used to travel around the world. She was very nice. She brought back little souvenirs from Korea, one of the little paper

things. Hanbok made of paper, it was so cute, yeah, I mean, I started getting very interested in there as I grew up. And I never lost interest, which is rare for me because I am a person who loses interested very quickly. I decided to continue studying it, also because of the culture." (Julia, 1st interview)

As a big fan of K-pop musical bands, Julia regularly monitored the latest music releases in K-pop industry, new K-drama, blogs specialised in K-pop-related articles, and YouTube to keep herself updated. Occasionally, Julia attended regular culture-related educational courses organised by Korean Cultural Centre in central London. Through the course she attended, Julia had a chance to socialise with like-minded people, soon, who became good friends.

"Other Korean people outside of the university, most of the Koreans I met through the Korean cultural centre. I go there often because right now they are doing a programme that is called K-pop academy. Even though it's just like few hours, they manage to teach few aspects of Korean culture and every week they have different themes" (Julia, 1st interview)

In addition, Julia actively engaged in the K-pop community. According to her description, the K-pop community was online-based and open for anyone interested in Korean culture to join as a member. The community was an unofficial, voluntary group and free from any obligatory duty to stay as a member.

"K-pop community is not like proclaimed that 'We are K-pop community' It's like a family, we'd like to define as family, we are all together, and we have interests, and it's a massive community of people that likes Korean culture. It has a lot of Korean people as well" (Julia, 1st interview)

Julia described that community members living in London tend to occasionally bump into each other at any K-pop related events or Korean language classrooms offered by any institutes. As members frequently bump each other in the same venue, they recognised each other and began to socialise 'distantly' by signalling the acknowledgement of each other's attendance at online/off-line events or offering /sharing information about their common interest. This K-pop community served not only as a platform where scattered information gathered and reorganised but also as a space where its members connect to like-minded others, which would have not been easy in the physical world due to geographical barriers. Yet,

this space was not exclusively virtual as members could meet each other locally, and the fact that members share a common interest allowed them to feel mutually favourable. Julia described being a member of the community as "a warm feeling as a member of the community where we share our passion."

"It's not like we have a specific meeting, there is an event, you will see people, then you like okay then, you will see, one point, in the events you realise that all the people here are under this community that like K-pop. We are all brought by interests. We have something in common. It's kind of community, but it's also kind of a family. People you don't know will start talking to you. We will take care of you even though they don't know you. It's very warm." (Julia, 1st interview)

As an Italian, Julia strongly identified herself with what she perceived to be Italian culture and saw Korean culture to be different from her own culture. In her first interview, Julia chose 'respect culture' as a unique element that Korean society has and evaluated it as a positive feature that modern Italian culture lacks currently. From Julia's point of view, respect culture was something that Italian culture is losing over time, hence should be restored.

"Respect culture is the one I am most interested in. Obviously, Korean have that very specific respect for their elders, I wouldn't say hierarchy, but you know your place very much. You have terms like 'nuna oppa'. In Italy, I found that we don't have this respect culture, and if we have it, it's not marked as much. Because I've seen a lot of people dare to talk back to their parents, which I found very stupid, because your parents worked hard for you and their children, don't show enough respect to them" (Julia, 1st interview)

Apart from socialising with the community members, she also began communicating with Korean speakers whom she met through various channels. As Julia was starting to meet Korean speakers at the time of the interview, she was in the stage of gathering information about the country based on her own experience. She heard several stories about life in Korea from her Korean friends, and began building her own version of Korean culture based on her indirect experience. However, Julia was unsure whether her understanding of Korean culture was intrinsic or just an individual difference that cannot be accounted as a cultural element. Because of the uncertainty of her interpretation, Julia sometimes directed the question to the researcher, asking for confirmation during the interview. *"I am not sure whether this is true. People*

tell me that…Do they like to show their emotions a lot or not?"

"I have a Korean friend in school here. I kind of noticed; he told me about how life is in Korea. I've noticed that sometimes, we have a lot of things in common. As in the way we interact with people sometimes, Koreans tend to be very straightforward. If they don't like, they would tell you. We Italians are the same. We wouldn't talk behind someone's back. We would just go and say, 'I don't like you, very straightforward. I am not sure whether this is true. People tell me that…Do they like to show their emotions a lot or not?" (Julia, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Julia continued to gather information from her friends' stories and personal experience, find commonalities and differences between Korean and Italian culture. So far, Julia thought the way family is being valued in Korea is similar to Italian culture, whereas that the way physical contact is perceived in the society is different. From two episodes she had with Korean speakers related to casual physical contact, she deducted that physical contact between people in Korea seemed to be perceived unusual or even discouraged, which she found different from her own culture.

"I feel like, especially if we are friends, your friends will care about you a lot. This friend I have, as soon as we became friends, she started taking care of me as if I am like a younger sister, and we do the same in Italy. Friendship is valued. You need to take care of your friend if you want the friendship to last. So, we are very like affectionate with friends and family. We have a concept of family; the family needs to be together. Whatever happens, they need to be together" (Julia, 1ˢᵗ interview)

"To be honest, I had a Korean friend, and she was very interested in Italian culture. We were speaking about my culture, and she was like, 'Oh My God.' I am very surprised. How you guys kiss on the cheek? She was 'very surprise; I wouldn't be the type that would hug someone that I don't know, kiss them on the cheeks, it's very weird' She said it's very weird compared to her culture" (Julia, 1ˢᵗ interview)

"When I met the guy, the first day met him; I am very spontaneous. When I was going home, he dropped me at the station; I went for a hug. He was very stiff. I remember that he told me that he doesn't like physical contact. And I completed forgot about it. And I was like……eh" (Julia, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Julia moved to London and encountered people from different cultural backgrounds, but she claimed that she always managed to find cultural commonalities to which she relates. However, what interested her the most about experiencing cultural diversity was learning about a unique element that makes cultures different from each other.

"*Since I moved into London, I've had the chance to experience different cultures ranging from Spanish culture, Korean culture, Nigerian and so on. What really surprised me was that no matter how different two cultures can be, we can always find something similar that allows us to relate to certain situations. However, what interested me the most were the different aspects that made that culture stand out from the others.*"*(Julia, 1st interview)*

Julia believed that cultural differences could influence the way people think and interact. Also, she thought that there are unwritten rules embedded in the way people behave.

"Sometimes is the fact that I need to be aware that other cultures might have certain morals or "unwritten laws" that influence the way people interact or think; laws that might, I might not find in my culture therefore difficult to understand at times" (Julia, 1st IDI context-based question)

Although it was only the beginning stage of study, Julia was curious about different cultural patterns, and she recognised, and appreciated differences and commonalities in one's own and other cultures. Furthermore, Julia understood that people do not necessarily have to agree on anything; they just need to recognise that there are other ways of dealing with certain situations, which shows another trait of the Acceptance stage. Even though Julia is at the higher cusp of the Minimization stage in her first IDI, her overall narratives resonate with the description of the Acceptance level of DMIS. A learner in the Acceptance stage is able to recognize and appreciate cultural differences through both behaviours and values. This stage promotes the belief that one's own culture is just one of the many cultures that exist in the world (Bennett, 2011).

6.1.2. Second Phase: Observing cultural practices

Julia scored 115.09 in the second IDI, placing her as the highest and the only participant to reach the Acceptance stage. What are the elements that made her more successful in gaining higher IC compared to other students? What kind of experience did Julia encounter? In her second interview, Julia mentioned that she had been actively engaging in intercultural experience with a broader range of Korean speakers from various age groups, professions over the past academic year. One of the main methods to connect with Korean speakers was via online. At times, those online meetings developed into actual physical meetups.

"There is an app, which is called Hellotalk. Through this app, I have found that a lot of people are living in my area. We have just decided to meet up, it was just random sometimes 'Do you want to meet up?' we ended up being very good friends. We still meet, and I am still finding new people to meet." (Julia, 2nd interview)

As time went on, a group of friends got bigger, developing into a broader network of friends as her classmates joined the group. The network of Koreans and KL students was not an exclusively closed circle. Instead, it was a loose and open network of friends. Anyone who was available and wished to join the meeting could come.

"It's like a big range of people, and then I introduced them to my friends, so we hang out together. Now we are all friends together, I also met others through my other friends, so it's just like a big group of English people and Korean people." (Julia, 2nd interview)

As for her academic advancement over the academic year, Julia initially felt it hard to follow the pace of Korean classes at university but felt more comfortable about it later. She actively attempted to apply grammatical knowledge and vocabulary that she obtained in the classroom to actual speaking practice. Her Korean friends took the role of a tutor, correcting her mistakes and providing feedback. When her little experiment with Korean sentences is successfully delivered and confirmed legit by native speakers to be correct, the event boosted her confidence. This practice of gaining -knowledge-in-the-

classroom-and-applying-them-in-real-life-situation allowed her to actively expand the pool of Korean phrases she could use without a doubt when needed again in the future.

"At the beginning, it was hard to follow the pace of it. But as we started to learn, developed our learning skills our language ability now, I find it easier to speak sometimes.
I manage to make some Korean friends, which helped me with my speaking and writing ability, so I feel like my confidence mostly comes from them, thanks to them speaking to them. (….)
I tried the pattern that I learned with my friends. Sometimes they would look at me. 'what are you saying? It's kind of weird' Other times. If I say this is it okay, Other times 'maybe it's better to say this way', because it sounds more comfortable to say it. Receiving feedback from them if I get something wrong, they would say, 'It's better to say this way,' that helped me a lot and became more confident and be able to speak more fluently." (Julia, 2nd interview)

For Julia, casual group chats with Korean friends served as an opportunity to observe authentic Korean conversation outside of the classroom, and to evaluate her Korean skills in comparison to her classmates. When she engaged in conversation with Koreans in a group chat, she carefully switched her position between a conversation leader and an observer, depending on the dynamic of the conversation. At times, she actively participated in the discussion. At times, she sat back to observe the conversational dynamics between Korean friends and her classmates to see how her fellow KL students interacted with Korean speakers.

"Sometimes I would rather sit back see, imagine my friends interact with other people, how they use Korean, other times instead, I would be speaking actively in the group. It really depends on the situation.
I think when we learn a certain language. You mostly focus on your progress. You tend to ignore what others are doing, how other people are doing. Up until a few months ago, I did not know how my friends' Korean level. When I saw them interact in Korean, I realised that some are better at doing this, and I cannot. Also, I find it kind of fascinating to see Korean interact with their native language. I want to see the dynamic." (Julia, 2nd interview)

One of the skills she gained while interacting with Koreans was taking a critical stance and observing cultural similarities and differences without being judgmental. When she faced an event which can be deemed to cultural, she would hypothesise based on what she had observed while taking a neutral stance rather than drawing conclusions based on her cultural standard. Below is Julia's written answer to the second IDI context-based question. In response to the given task to describe examples of situations

one was personally involved with or observed where cultural differences needed to be addressed within one's organisation (university), Julia answered:

"Since the start of the university year, I made friends with people from various backgrounds and cultural identities. During a normal conversation with this group of friends, I noticed two of them having a heated debate on whether a certain behaviour, in this case, instant prejudice based on looks or a certain behaviour, was considered acceptable or not. Boy S (Spanish background) claimed that because prejudice is intrinsic to his own culture, it was acceptable for him to do so. Boy E (English background) instead was trying to make Boy S understand that even if it was an intrinsic value of Spanish culture was not acceptable to do so; judge someone based on their appearance or behaviour. After a long debate, the two did not resolve the discussion and stood by their ideas" (Julia, 2nd context-based question answer)

Julia has never been to Korea, yet she chose to learn Korean with a future plan to live and teach a foreign language in Korea. Although she drafted a specific plan for her future life in Korea, yet she was uncertain about setting a long-term life plan. Julia's desire to live in Korea was purely based on the image she created based on her indirect and insulated experience and information provided by the media. Julia thought that she would figure out whether Korea is an excellent place to live for a longer term by visiting the country for a short time. Julia also prepared for the possibility of a plan change in case she does not find Korea suitable for her. She negotiated her future self to be a 'language teacher with an extra skill.' She believed her knowledge of the Asian languages would make her stand out in the field of teaching or translation (excerpt below).

"I started learning Korean because I mainly wanted to either teach English, Spanish or Italian in the country because my main goal is to live there. This summer I will go to Korea to see the situation looks, whether the country is better for me if I like the way it is. But nevertheless, knowing Asian languages, you stand out in the eyes of people because they will look at you like, 'Oh, she knows Korean, maybe she is good, in the interpretation section or teaching section. So, my main goal was mostly teaching with the help of the language. (Julia, 2nd interview)

Initially, what motivated Julia to learn Korean was the contemporary Korean culture. While maintaining her primary interest in K-pop culture, Julia explored different fields of study. Modules offered at the university enabled her to see other aspects of Korean culture, stimulated her curiosity other than K-pop, and expanded the scope of the academic interest.

"Recently, I got interested in learning more about ancient times- like Chosun era and Koryo. In the beginning, I was still interested in it, but I would not have gone deeper than knowing the name of the eras. Now it is like, I learned, we started, but we didn't finish it. I want to go more into the detail into that period." (Julia, 2nd interview)

Overall, the interview analysis suggested that Julia demonstrated signs of the developmental stage of Acceptance, which includes traits such as 'typically curious and interested in cultural differences and committed to the cultural diversity and provided evidence of a more ethnorelative mindset' (M. Bennett & Bennett, 1993, 2004). Julia effortlessly made friends with people from different social and cultural backgrounds, and she was open-minded about experiencing other cultures. The interview indicated that Julia recognised and appreciated patterns of cultural difference and commonality in one's own and different cultures. Julia's social skills were sophisticated, displayed more behavioural flexibility in dealing with cultural differences. However, while she recognised the relevance of culture and cultural context yet, she was unclear about adapting herself to cultural differences appropriately. According to DMIS, shifting one's perspectives to the other's cultural world view to become more adept at intercultural communication is one of the indicators of the Adaption stage. Considering traits of the Acceptance stage of DMIS, Julia's narratives taken in two different time frames revealed two interesting findings: a) inflated sense of intercultural sensitivity b) one's endeavour to fit into the self-image one created.

Julia's first DO fell into the Minimization stage, yet her narratives of the first interview resonated with the description of the Acceptance stage. This finding indicated that Julia evaluated herself to be more interculturally aware than she was, which was a common tendency found in all participants in this study. However, in the second interview, Julia's narratives became more aligned with her second DO score (Acceptance level). Also, Julia's narrative change resonated with (Byram, 2006, p. 4)'s definition of 'ability to mediate'- "being able to take an external perspective on oneself as one interacts with others and analyse and, where desirable, adapt one's behaviour and underlying values and beliefs," which is also one of the aims of intercultural language teaching by the CFER (Council of Europe, 2001).

Julia's IC trajectory also resonated with this study's findings, verified in the quantitative analysis in chapter 4.3. All the variables (past language learning experience, positive intercultural experiences, and personal learning motivation) identified to be contributory to the IC development were found in Julia's case. Julia was interested in learning foreign languages. Also, she was positively motivated by the personal connection and cultural product of the target country. Her intercultural journey was fuelled by positive

learning experiences in an academic setting and intercultural relationships she built with her Korean/international friends. Julia has become more linguistically knowledgeable and culturally open-minded, soft-pedalling her gaining of academic achievement and interpersonal experience in favour of intercultural awareness and personal flourishing.

6.2. Jessica's case: in search of an alternative world

6.2.1. First phase: Jessica's K-pop land

Jessica was one of the three students who have experienced dramatic regress in the second IDI over time. Jessica's first DO score was 82.92, which fell within the cusp of Minimization, but her second DO score dropped to 59.25, which indicated the Denial stage, resulting 23.67 points decrease. Jessica described herself as Asian born, raised in Britain from a Bengali family. However, Jessica mentioned that she neither identified with Bengali culture nor can speak the language; "*I don't know how to say days in Bengali. I can't even say Monday to Sunday in Bengali.*"

Jessica was a huge fan of Korean popular cultural products. Her subject of interest ranged from K-pop, K-drama, comedy, variety shows and reality television shows. When Jessica referred to her interest in K-pop culture, she used a broader label; *'entertainment'* or *'entertainment industry'* As an avid, one of the most informed K-pop fans, Jessica proudly outlined her K-pop related knowledge, including K-pop band names, entertainment shows, and dramas the most popular at the time of the interview. Although her first contact with contemporary Korean culture was somewhat coincidental, she emphasised that she became a huge fan immediately (excerpt below):

"It was by accident; I was looking for Tarzan, movie trailer on YouTube, then a Korean music video came up, there was a song called Tarzan, I wasn't really aware much of Korean culture then. So, I saw automatically, because they were Orientals, the first thought on my head was there were Chinese people. Oh, let me see what it is, and I just fell in love. I started to research more into it. And Then I found out there was a whole group of people like me in my school" (Jessica, 1st interview)

As described above, she coincidentally came across Korean music video with the identical name as a Western film. The video immediately caught her attention because people in the video were "Asians" (in a broader sense). Soon after, Jessica gained interest in K-pop and found friends to share her new passion. Jessica mentioned that having items related to K-pop helped her find a group of like-minded people at

school. In her interview, Jessica said that paraphernalia such as posters, pictures of K-pop groups, t-shirts or jumpers engraved with the K-pop band's name served as a signifier in identifying fellow K-pop fans.

"I had my best friends recently, literally my best friend. I met her through K-pop. I saw she had a picture of the boy group, and I was like, 'You like K-pop.' Since then, we are so close; I have to thank K-pop for that. That was three and half years ago." (Jessica, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Those markers were explicit and implicit simultaneously. The act of showing the markers was intentionally explicit as K-pop fans displays items visibly, such as wearing jackets with favourite band's name on them. Yet implicit because the signs were only recognised by those with similar interests. Paraphrenia that K-pop fans used was automatically recognised and acquired immediate favour from the party with a similar interest. Also, the sentiment of 'appreciating and sharing similar (minor) cultures together" acted K-pop fans as a strong facilitator for friendship.

Jessica recently met a small number of Koreans via language exchange program when she became a university student. Jessica and her Korean friends talked via the Korean messenger program (Kakaotalk) and frequently met for food, occasional *Noraebang* (singing rooms). Jessica said that she discovered Koreans have similar characteristics to her culture, and she felt comfortable socialising with them.

"Very similar, Koreans talk similar to how we talk. They talk about the same things, the music they listen to. They act in the same way. I did not feel like I talk to someone who is from a different country. I thought it was someone who attends my school, who is a nice person. It felt very comfortable" (Jessica, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Although Jessica did not specify what it meant to be culturally similar, she seemed to have certain ideas about different cultural groups. In the interview, Jessica commented that she recently began doubting her cultural identity as a Britain born Asian, raised by traditional Bengali parents. Her multicultural background led her to inevitable complications and conflict between different sets of cultures. Jessica labelled being 'liberal' as British value and her parents' Bengali cultural heritage as 'traditional,' which sits at the other end spectrum of being British. Jessica mentioned that she did not feel she belonged to British culture as her skin is dark, not white as ordinary British people, despite her British values. However, she did not feel closer to Bengali culture, as she was unfamiliar with it (excerpt below).

"I had a bit of identity crisis, 2-3 years ago. Because I was raised with the cultural aspect of my parents, but my ideology and the culture I see are very different. The way I see it, the way I understand it is more liberal. We constantly have a fight because we do not see each other's viewpoints. I do not get along with them. It just made me think, 'What am I?' I am not fully white; I am not white skin, I cannot say I am British, then my ethnicity is Bengali. But I do not know anything about Bangladesh. How can I call myself Bengali? It's really confusing." (Jessica, 1ˢᵗ interview)

The British value that she obtained outside of her home often collided with her parents' conservative values, making it difficult for Jessica adapt to both cultures. When describing similarities and differences between her own culture and Korean culture, Jessica used both British and Bengali culture as cues to compare. Bengali culture was used to navigate similarities between a traditional side of Korean culture and British culture to describe a modern side of Korean culture:

"The traditional Korean aspect is very similar to Bengali culture, but the modern Korean aspect is very similar to England. So, when we talk about traditional Korean, I automatically compare it to Bengali culture. But if we talk about modern music, Korea's music is very similar to America's and Britain's. So, there's a connection there. So, If I want to compare with the UK, there are many similarities. Yes, they eat, they drink, they dress up, the music is the same, of course, this country is set on Christian values as well. Modern Korea is the UK. Traditional Korea is Bangladesh. Even when I was trying the food, the taste was very similar to what my mother cooks. I was like, 'Did my mother come? Did she cook?" (Jessica, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Jessica found learning Korean language relatively easy because she was exposed to Korean cultural products for a long time. Jessica liked listening to the sound of spoken Korean, and she believed that watching Korean speaking entertainment shows helped her enhance her listening skills. Furthermore, vocabulary/expressions Jessica learned at the university enabled her to understand authentic television conversations better, which boosted her confidence as a result. She believed in the positive influence that language learning had on her.

"Because I like the culture and the language and it sounds pretty to me in my ears, I like it when I speak Korean. That is why I am more enthusiastic about learning, so I am making more effort, and I am learning quicker. On top

of that, I am watching shows I can pick up. 'I know the word, that's familiar.' So, watching the shows make it a lot easier to study Korean. (Jessica, 1ˢᵗ interview)."

Jessica's goal was to achieve the level where people mistake her as a native Korean speaker. In the interview, Jessica mentioned that she would like to speak like a person who was born in Korea (excerpt below). Jessica believed that using long and complicated words would make her sound like a native speaker. Also, she thought that the higher-level Korean vocabulary would make her sound smart. For Jessica, professional level of Korean was perceived as an instrument for the exhibition of cultural and intellectual capital.

"I want to be a native, everything. I want to sound as if I was born in Korea. I want them to say, 'Are you born in Korea?' I want them to say that to me. It would be good if I can learn a lot of complicated words like not very elementary very simple keywords. I also want to learn long, complicated words so that it can make me sound smart in Korean." (Jessica, 1ˢᵗ interview)

Jessica intentionally chose the Korean module, as it offered study abroad opportunity to its qualified students as a part of the module. As a Korean culture enthusiast, being able to visit the birthplace of K-pop was perceived to be an opportunity Jessica always longed for. She did not have any specific plan concerning her study yet. Jessica mentioned that she will decide once she is in Korea.

"At the moment, I am kind of doing this education because it is something I am interested in. Nothing else offers this sort of education, and my goal is literally to pass this year so that I can go to Korea next year to study abroad. And over there, while living there, I can decide whether I want to do more Korean in Korea or to do more Korean in the UK. So, literally, I won't know until I go there" (Jessica, 1ˢᵗ interview)

6.2.2. Second phase: Focusing on similarities rather than differences

Jessica's second DO was 59.25 points which was in the Denial stage, showing a significant regress of 23.67 points compare to the first DO (82.92). It was a significant drop compared to most students who showed gain or a small-scale regress in their second IDI. Possible answers to the reason for the DO regress provided by IDI, LLC is that there reported some cases that the responses to the IDI may reflect his/her struggle with this transitional situation rather than their more stable orientation toward cultural differences when the participant is experiencing a significant professional or personal transitional experience (e.g., moving to another country, traumatic event). If this is the case, IDI, LLC suggests retaking the IDI at a later date.

When Jessica was asked whether she experienced any significant events during the academic year, she replied that she did not. When Jessica was asked to evaluate her year at university in the second interview, she replied that the first year of learning Korean was wonderful. Jessica said that studying what she was passionate about made her learning easier. She also mentioned that the Korean cultural products she intentionally exposed herself during the study helped the learning of the language.

"Awesome. I am really interested in Korean. So automatically, if you study what you like, it makes everything easier. Because I was studying something else before, Business. I did not like it. So, I changed to be Korean only. It was a good decision because it opened to make another subject, music, Korean and music. I watch a lot of shows. It kind of helps to pick up. Stuff I learn from the Korean shows, I could just implement in class" (Jessica, 2nd interview)

Jessica also described her intercultural friendship with Korean speakers positively. Jessica was acquainted with many Korean speakers through various channels. In addition to the friends Jessica made through language exchange, she also met Korean friends through her classmates. Jessica mentioned that talking with friends helped her improve her Korean pronunciation.

"My friend met a couple of Korean people through language exchange. Then we decided to get together. Because they were nice people, it was outside of language exchange. We just met as friends to just relax and hang out, and

they speak a bit of Korean with them. I went to foreign language exchange events. It did help. It helped me improve my pronunciation" (Jessica, 2nd interview)

Listening to music occupied a considerable part of Jessica's learning activity. She also mentioned that the linguistic knowledge she gained through university lectures enables her to understand the meaning of K-pop songs, making it easier for her to connect and relate to the music.

"Ever since I started doing Korean, I just listen to the music. Now that I have studied more, now half of the music makes sense to me. 'Oh, that's what they were saying.´ It's so strange, song you didn't understand, the song that you listened to for a year and finally, understand it now." (Jessica, 2nd interview)

Unlike Jessica's positive language learning and intercultural experience, her dealing with cultural identity seemed less satisfying. In her first interview, Jessica briefly mentioned the conflict of values with her parents and confusion over cultural identity. Jessica said that she felt conflicted between traditional Bengali values that her parents forced upon and her own cultural identity she established for herself, which was influenced by British values. Jessica perceived British values in relation to freedom, individualism, and being liberal. On the opposite end of the spectrum laid her parents' cultural values, which were related to being traditional, conservative. Jessica experienced conflicts on a daily basis, ranging from a choice of food, clothes, going-outs to important life decisions. To the context-based question of the second IDI, which asked examples of situations one was personally involved with or observed where cultural differences needed to be addressed or not successfully resolved, Jessica replied:

"With my parents, it's the clothing. I personally do not see anything wrong with what I wear. But my parents would rather me wear something more traditional. I don't like it, so I don't see why I have to wear it, and we have fights over that." (2nd IDI context-based questions)

Her conflict with the parents influenced the choice of undergraduate study. Although Jessica enjoyed learning Korean, she said that her decision to learn Korean was a compromise. Initially, Jessica wanted to study music at university, but her parents strongly disagreed with her decision. So, she compromised to study Korean. Jessica said: "*I love learning Korean and cultural studies, everything is*

amazing, but it wasn't the original thing that I wanted to do." Jessica thought the reason for being unable to pursue music mainly laid in the cultural difference between her and her parents (excerpt below).

"I had a lot of conflicts with my parents because they don't want me to study Korean at all. They wanted me to do science, but I am not interested in science. But my parents were like, 'You should be doing what you are good at. I am not the best when it comes to learning Korean or studying or essays in general. Stuff science is a lot easier for me. Even music, I was gifted in music, but again my culture does not allow me to pursue music. They say it is like a forbidden sin to venture into that. I basically wasted my chance going into that because of the cultural differences. Because I was young, I had to conform to what they want to, so I was disappointed because I was not allowed to do one thing I really wanted to do" (Jessica, 2nd interview)

The conflict she has seemed to be only intensifying as she sought her autonomy as a grown-up. Jessica felt a big discrepancy between her gained cultural identity as a liberal person and conservative familial culture enforced against her will. And she believed that the gap was preventing her from living a whole life as a fully autonomous individual.

"In terms of United Kingdom, you give a lot of freedom, what you want to do. Aside from individuals, my parents are very conservative. I am not, because I was raised here, it is very difficult. I am a liberal person, but living like a conservative, because of the cultural reason, because not I want to" (Jessica, 2nd interview)

These daily conflicts prompted her to view cultural differences as a negative, the problematic obstacle that caused a constant conflict that demands endless negotiation for her. The fact that Jessica's DO score regressed to the Denial stage (which is a stage that one may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences) corroborated her narrative, which refused to see the existing cultural differences. This developmental stage is also reflected in her answer to the second IDI context-based question. In the question "The situation ended positively—that is, was successfully resolved. Please describe where and when the situation took place, who was involved, what happened, and the final result", she replied, *"I can't really think of a positive situation caused by cultural differences."* This resonated with her second interview (excerpt below).

"Because people are so different and don't tolerate or try to understand the other person's view, it caused people to fall out and just ended up not talking to each other. When the situation could have been solved by understanding, sometimes it is not someone's business what the other person does or wears." (Jessica, 2nd interview)

Jessica believed that focusing more on finding similarities and commonalities across the cultures rather than differences would eradicate many problems created by different cultural practices.

"Focusing on the similarities rather than the differences would be good. Even though it is impossible but having people follow the same or similar laws would make it a lot easier to have similar cultures" (Jessica, 2nd interview)

Jessica thought that traditional Korean culture is similar to Bengali culture, and modern Korean culture is similar to the British one. Also, Jessica said that the generation gap between the young and the old that modern Korean society experiences currently is very relatable to her. She hoped to find a clue to resolve her existing issues from modern Korean society. In other words, Jessica saw her conflict with her parents as a clash between traditional and modern ideas and sought to find a clue she can apply to her situation from the social transition that modern Korean society experiences.

"In Korea, the culture very, not very but the majority of, but it is quite similar to Bengali culture, the way Korean people interact, I think that's why I don't find socialising with Koreans uncomfortable because I have come across many people like in my own culture. (…)I feel like Korean culture is very similar to the UK, the more recent ones. Korea's culture and history have changed over the years. People are rapidly evolving. The new generation is stark different from their parents. They are so different. Like here, probably parents and children are similar to some extent in terms of ideas and values. But in Korea, you can see a massive gap between parents and children because they had to urbanise very quickly. So, the younger generation is so different from, the older generation. I feel like the younger generation in Korea and the young generation in the UK it is like a small bridge for me. And I feel like K-pop is helping because people find some common interests in Korea. The bridge is becoming more defined. I feel like the transition between Korean to English is clearer now" (Jessica, 2nd interview)

At the same time, Jessica mentioned that studying the language and culture of Korea in an academic setting also resulted in a change of view towards Korean culture. Before entering university,

Jessica had a romanticised images of Korea that she has gained from the media. She believed that South Korea was a special country where studios, well-educated, intelligent, talented people who are good at singing, dancing, and acting live. However, now she said that she feels Korea is no different from other countries.

"I had a very positive, everything was very happy. In general, Korean people are really nice people like. I thought it's a whole new world in Korea. I used to think like those Korean people are the people of the future because they are developed. They are more advanced in terms of education. I thought they would just keep on going. There will be non-stop for them. That is how I felt before, and then after studying, learning much, I am just like…Everyone is the same. The only difference is they are a bit more hard-working. Because of Korea's competitive nature, they became hard-working. You cannot help it. Just like the human race does not change, same everywhere. It does not matter what cultural background you are from, where you're originating from. If you look in a broad range, it is just similarities; you have rebels in Asia, you have rebels in Africa, you have rebelled in America, you have rebels in Europe when I look at like that, it's just everyone is the same." (Jessica, 2nd interview)

Jessica's view on the study abroad programme changed in accordance with her changed view on the target country. In the first interview, Jessica saw Korea as a place where all her favourite K-pop stars are based, hence a place she must visit. In her second interview, she mentioned that she sees the study abroad programme as a chance to challenge herself to live independently from her parents. She saw it as an opportunity to discover herself and find her autocracy as a grown-up.

"The reason I carry on with Korean was, because I have been very sheltered. I stayed in the house the whole time. I feel like once I go to Korea, it would give me a whole year to just do what I have not been able to do. Just to learn few things about myself. Even if just everyday life situation" (Jessica, 2nd interview)

Jessica believed that although it was an accidental event that led her to the interest in East Asian culture, K-pop guided her to the understanding of whole Asian culture. By seeing Korean society through the lens of K-pop, she was able to find similarities between Korean culture and her own. She believed that the linguistic and cultural knowledge she gained through K-pop would act as a bridge, which transits to the more extensive Asian culture such as China and Japan. Here, Jessica exhibited an expanded global identity that covers pan-Asia.

"Korea, I felt like a small bridge between Japanese Chinese and English. I must go to Korea to get to Japan because I want to slowly introduce myself to the oriental culture. I feel like Korea is the first one that is a good transition. (..) Once I finish learning about Korean, then I want to branch out to China and Japan, maybe even Thailand. It is like travel. I see Korea as my first step of big adventure because Korea interested the most of all of them so far. I am interested in Japan as well. I just see the links. If I go to Korea, I see their links to Japan. It is very interesting to see how they are all connected. (Jessica, 2ⁿᵈ interview)

Overall, the two interviews showed that Jessica has been struggling with cultural identity issues, buffeted between the cultural values she created and the values that her parents enforced. The conflict exacerbated psychological distress and made Jessica suffer from cultural dislocation. While Jessica navigated the world as a teenager, she found Korean culture that seemed to resolve her cultural alienation issues. She consumed K-pop images mediated through media and romanticised the birthplace of K-pop as an idealistic society where developed, intelligent, hardworking people live. Furthermore, social transition that modern Korean society faces, which can be defined as a clash between traditional and contemporary values, seemed to provide an answer to her ongoing cultural conflict. Jessica's aspiration to be involved in the imagined community made her choose to learn its language and dream of living in Korea.

According to DMIS, Minimization is a state in which elements of one's cultural worldview are experienced as universal (Hammer et al., 2003). Individuals in Minimization highlights commonalities due to limited cultural self-understanding, which can mask a deeper understanding of cultural differences. Also, Individuals in Minimization expect similarities, and they tend to see the world through the lens of "universal absolutes.'' In Jessica's case, a regress in DO coincide with an intensified cultural conflict she experienced. It seemed that the constant cultural conflict over the academic year prompted her to eject cultural differences and only focus on similarities in cultures. These changes in attitude towards culture seemed to be reflected on her DO scores, indicating a stage of Denial which is a stage that avoids or withdraws from cultural differences. It is possible that Jessica also underwent a transition, which was reflected in the change of DO due to their internal dynamics. This change coincided with Jessica's report on her perception of Korean culture. Jessica reported a changed view of Korea. In her second interview, Jessica said that Korea was no longer seen as a special place but the same as everywhere.: "*You cannot help it. Just like the human race does not change, same everywhere. It does not matter what cultural background you are from, where you're originating from. It's just everyone is the same.*"

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Nevertheless, the two interviews also clearly displayed Jessica's ongoing personal strife to resolve cultural conflict she experienced and develop self-awareness. Her imagined community was Korea, where talented people live, and Jessica imagined herself to be a part of the imagined community, speaking near-native level of Korean. And her imagined identity positively influenced her engagement with learning practices. Even when Jessica's imagined community was challenged with the changed view, it did not affect her decision to continue the affiliation. Instead, she diverted it as an opportunity to challenge herself as an independent person capable of making a decision for herself. Also, Jessica showed a sign of creating a sense of global identity, hoping to expand her horizons from Korea to more extensive Asian countries. Learning Korean enabled her to open to see the bigger world, and provided a steppingstone to the personal development, created a new identity that will connect to the imagined community, which is a product of her life trajectory, current circumstances, and future aspirations.

7. Conclusion, Limitations, and Implications

This chapter presents the conclusion to the study, study limitations, and pedagogical implications. The conclusion section is devoted to outlining the participants' overall intercultural trajectories, drawn from the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings. A discussion of the study limitations follows. In light of the results, this chapter will also consider pedagogical implications in terms of how intercultural learning of language students may be enhanced. In particular, the implications section focuses on the applicability of intercultural awareness in designing a degree-level language curriculum and study abroad programme. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research to enhance intercultural development in the field of KFL.

7.1. Conclusion

7.1.1. Considering the data: IC development and correlation with variables

Quantitative data analysis revealed that group-level IC development in the first-year undergraduate students majoring in Korean at a UK university did not happen over one academic year. The overall presentation of IC development showed a minor change that was not statistically significant. Most participants, except one who progressed to the Acceptance stage, remained within/below the boundary of Minimization and did not move to the higher stage. Some participants regressed in the second DO, falling within the lower boundary between Minimization or Denial.

However, linear regression analysis with four possible variables (past language experience, past living abroad experience, intercultural experience, and learning motivation) confirmed a significant correlation with the group DO. Among possible variables, the past language learning experience variable was a better predictor of the higher IC. Participants with past foreign language experience before university presented a significantly higher initial DO and demonstrated a significant increase at the later stage. Interview analysis found that students with foreign language learning experiences employed more

proactive strategies to maximise their linguistic input, including utilising multiple educational aids to supplement the study and paying more attention to communicative elements, such as conversational dynamics, when conversing with Korean speakers. They also actively applied the knowledge they learned in the classroom in their daily interaction with Korean speakers, making intentional cognitive connections between knowledge and practice. Participants who had foreign language learning experience also developed cultural awareness by closely looking at historical and societal aspects of the target country, the latter being deeply embedded in everyday language practice. In contrast, participants without prior language learning experience tended to display a simplistic view of the connection of language and culture and separate them, maintaining that linguistic knowledge did not necessarily lead to cultural awareness. These different strategies that students employed in dealing with language learning were reflected in their DO and narratives in describing their academic and intercultural experience.

While quantitative analysis showed that the intercultural experience variable did not impact the initial DO of participants, linear regression and multiple regression results showed that the same variable became an influential factor in the increase of the second DO. This result suggests that having intercultural experience with Korean speakers positively contributed to IC development. Qualitative data supported the findings of the quantitative analysis: interview analysis confirmed that participants who had a positive intercultural experience displayed more openness and respect to other cultures, and a stronger ability to discern different cultural practices accurately. Although the nature of interactions between participants and Korean speakers began out of practical necessity on both parties, the academic benefits they obtained, shared interest (learning Korean for KL students and English for Korean speakers) and common experience allowed both groups to enjoy each other's company, helping the acquaintance develop into genuine friendship. Loose networks of a group of friends expanded into a bigger group as participants and Korean friends introduced their friends to each other. Eventually, their interaction moved along the continuum of intercultural to increasingly interpersonal, though intercultural elements may have played a large role. International friendships with Korean friends positively encouraged participants' academic pursuits. In contrast, participants who faced either a negative intercultural experience or experienced complications that originated from cultural differences displayed a significant regression in their second DO. Accumulation of negative intercultural experiences led some participants to solidify stereotypes about certain cultural groups or even reject the concept of "cultural difference", pointing to the elements of Defence/ Minimization of DMIS. The study finding that participants who had negative experiences showed a regression in the second DO regardless of their initial DO is in line with the argument that an

increased level of DO does not necessarily mean one has completely resolved issues from one stage and is therefore ready to move up to the next level (Anderson & Lawton, 2015).

The learning motivation variable showed a pattern similar to that for the intercultural experience variable. Although the motivation variable did not influence the initial DO, multiple regression analysis revealed that the personal motivation variable (i.e. familial or personal relationship) became an influential factor in the increase of the second DO. However, the interview data established that the major motivational factor that introduced most participants to the study of Korean was contemporary popular culture. Almost all participants demonstrated at least some, though not necessarily great, degree of interest in Korean popular culture. The study results support the findings of previous studies that identified Korean popular culture as the main facilitator in drawing attention to the learning of the language (e.g. Jung et al., 2007; Chan & Chi, 2008, 2010) while adding empirical data in the UK context to the literature. An interesting finding is that many KL students reported having switched their interest to Korean popular culture after earlier contact with Japanese popular culture. This study finding partially supports Choi (2014) argument regarding "cultural glide" in the sense that study participants in the United Kingdom showed a similar pattern. However, while it is possible that Korean popular culture may have played a role in first drawing KL students' attention to the study of language, an interest in popular culture (interest in the culture of the study) did not necessarily lead to IC development. Rather, it was KL students' personal motivation (i.e. integrative motivation) that was the most influential factor in the increase of DO. KL students who established an affectionate relationship with a Korean family or friends maintained a more positive view towards the target country, were more willing to socialise with Korean speakers, and exhibited deepened linguistic and academic interests, motivating themselves to study Korean language and culture. In summary, the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data related to the motivation variable underlined that interpersonal bonding influenced the development of IC by encouraging KL students to engage actively in learning activities and intercultural communication.

The representation of the quantitative data renders a potentially mixed message, depending on various factors. The study's quantitative results clearly indicated statistical non-significance; hence, these first-year undergraduate students learning Korean at a UK university did not appear to develop IC. However, a result that is not statistically significant does not support the assumption that there was no impact at all. IC development in individuals can be dynamic in that multiple key elements are interlinked with each other, yet these elements may also change over time. As the regression results for each variable

demonstrated, it is possible that one variable interacted with another negatively, and thus, they cancelled each other out in the larger model. Along the same lines, multiple interculturalists have argued that IC development is an ongoing, lengthy process, and there may not be a "pinnacle at which someone becomes interculturally competent" (Deardorff, 2009). Therefore, the observed changes might simply have been part of the dynamic and continual process that characterises IC development, a process that may include moments of stagnation or even regression (Fantini, 2005).

A review of two DO scores on which participants were assessed by IDI and interview data supported the underlying assumption of the DMIS – as individuals' experience of difference becomes more sophisticated and cognitively complex, the degree of IC increases (Bennett 2009; Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Students who scored higher DO in the IDI displayed curiosity and openness to different cultural practices without being judgemental. They also showed signs of greater awareness of differences and similarities across and within cultures. Those signs included not only of others but also their own social, cultural, and linguistic awareness. Also, they displayed the skills of discovery and interaction, which Byram et al. (2002) defined as "the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and to operate this knowledge in real-time communication". Interculturally competent students were more socially mindful and more successful at maintaining a positive attitude. Those who were more successful in eventuating in an expanded understanding of their own and other cultures and increased competence in intercultural relations (Hammer et al., 2003) attained higher levels of DO. On the other hand, those who fell within a lower range of DO scores described culture in terms of observable cultural icons (e.g. food) and often displayed a superficial understanding of cultural differences. They also tended to focus on commonalities rather than differences and denied the existence of cultural differences, evaluating such differences negatively or failing to notice any deeper cultural difference. Any negative experiences they faced tended to influence them greatly, creating indications of generalisation and generating stereotypes. Overall, the DMIS proved very helpful to understanding the connection between intercultural sensitivity and an individual's awareness of and respect for cultural differences. At the individual level, assessing the level of intercultural sensitivity allowed for self-reflection and awareness of the reality of cultural development, attitudes, and values. At a group level, the aggregate results provided insight into discovering central issues that required attention. Moreover, the IDI provided an individualised way to assess and monitor the development of language students' IC.

7.1.2. Developmental patterns: The Minimization stage

In this study, most participants remained in the low to mid Minimization stage throughout the study. According to Hammer et al. (2003), the Minimization stage is a state in which elements of one's cultural worldview are experienced as universal. In this stage, an early experience of finding superficial similarity between cultures (i.e. food, fashion) generalises to other assumedly natural phenomena (i.e. needs and motivations), progressing further to the assumed cross-cultural applicability (i.e. religious, economic, or philosophical concepts). Individuals in the Minimization stage highlight similarities across cultures and tend to see the world through the lens of "universal absolutes" (Cushner, 2012, p. 158). An individual in the Minimization stage perceives that people share the same traits, regardless of any differences in tradition and culture. The elements of this stage were also detected in the study interviews in such statements as *"everyone is the same", "people are people"* or *"having people follow the same or similar laws would make it a lot easier to have similar cultures"*, which were often found in the narratives of participants who were in the Minimization stage. Even when recognising some cultural differences, these participants downplayed or discounted them. Another common theme that emerged in the participants' narratives was a highly romanticised image of the target country. Individuals in the Minimization stage speak of "universal absolutes" and obscure profound cultural differences; they may even trivialise or romanticise other cultures (Cushner, 2012, p. 159). For KL students, South Korea was perceived as a construct of powerful imagination, interwoven with glamorous video images mostly conveyed by media, consisting of a complex mixture of familiarity and difference. In their romanticised version of the target country, Korea served as an idealised place where one can fulfil one's cultural and intellectual desires as well as a place where one can resolve one's cultural issues.

Being in the same Minimization stage did not mean all the participants shared the same knowledge on culture. KL students experienced different developmental stages at various times of the study, reflecting their individual differences in personality, intelligence, and degree of experience. However, overall quantitative analysis of the second interview revealed the participants' growing awareness of other cultures, increased mindfulness, and development of alternative perspectives. A comparison of first and second interviews indicated obvious differences in the choice of words and phrases that participants used when describing their intercultural and learning experiences. In the first interview, the KL students showed a limited, superficial understanding of culture, exemplified by illustrating cultures in terms of simplistic

cultural icons (e.g. food, fashion, or stereotypes) or defining culture in terms of accumulable knowledge. In the second interview, the KL students demonstrated greater awareness of the similarities and differences across and within cultures. They also displayed a clearly deeper understanding of society, an awareness of the different cultural and linguistic practices of the target country, and a heightened sensitivity to the dynamic, fluid nature of culture.

The KL students also had a first-hand experience to learn about different linguistic systems and cultural perspectives. In dealing with intercultural events with Korean friends – whether positive or negative – the KL students constantly interpreted their dealings from a cultural viewpoint and converted their personal experiences into a cultural one. Unique elements that participants noticed while socialising with Korean friends, such as ways of communicating, different behavioural patterns, or personal value system, were singled out and connoted as being "Korean" (Schulze, 2013) and were analysed from a cultural perspective. The KL students continued to identify and classify their intercultural experiences, making them culturally meaningful by synthesising gained knowledge and their own personal account. In this process, the KL students' personal impressions played a critical role in forming a positive or negative image of the target cultural group/country, which affected their interactions going forward. A positive impression of the target country on the part of some participants motivated them to be more open, friendly and develop an eager-to-learn attitude towards people and culture from other countries. In contrast, negative experiences led them to create stereotypes or judgemental views regarding the whole cultural group/nation, resulting in less motivation to learn the language. Sometimes, the process led to simplifying or creating stereotypes. Although many participants already acknowledged that nations are not culturally homogeneous and perceptions can vary depending on many other factors, such as social class, age, education, gender, and life experience, these aspects were often conveniently and deliberately ignored. That phenomenon resulted in statements such as, *"I know I should not generalise, but Koreans are such-and-such"* when the KL students described their intercultural experiences. However, not all overgeneralisation influenced KL students negatively, either. Some seemingly simplistic statements such as *"Koreans eat rice" and "Koreans are emotionally expressive"* provided an emotional common ground that the KL students related to, positively influencing their learning motivation.

Notably, participants' accounts of positive learning, intercultural experience, and a deeper understanding of culture did not correspond with improvements in DO scores. The IDI result in the study indicated that participants at all stages had an inflated perception of their degree of intercultural sensitivity.

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This tendency was evident in their narratives; a comparison of the interview narratives and individual DO scores revealed that the KL students tended to view their IC as one developmental stage higher than reality, on average. For example, students in Polarization might consider themselves to be in Minimization, while those in the Minimization stage placed themselves within the Acceptance stage. This study finding is in keeping with other studies that used the IDI as a research tool (Westrick & Yuen, 2007; Lantz, 2014; Jackson, 2009; Hornbuckle, 2013). There are several possible explanations for this discrepancy between the perceived developmental stage and the actual stage. For example, it is possible that social desirability bias (Bryman, 2016) might have led participants to report their experience in overly positive terms during their interviews. Specifically, study participants might have responded to the interview in a manner that would be viewed favourably by others by emphasising positive opinions and underreporting negative events or opinions that would be considered stereotypes. Clearly, the interview data should be treated with caution since self-perception about attitudes and skills can easily be misleading. Another possible explanation is that participants' narratives aligned with elements of the Minimization stage. Individuals who see a cultural difference from a Minimization perspective do not view differences as threatening, believing that there are universal values that apply to all people, although these values may be projected from one's own culture (Bennett & Bennett, 1993), and cultural differences can easily be overcome if people find common ground. Students in this stage tend to think that they are "doing okay" (Cushner, 2012), thus self-evaluating that they are interculturally competent enough. In particular, the tendency was more salient to students who had not experienced critical events that originated from cultural differences (e.g. *"My Korean friends and I, we have a good time, and we understand each other; therefore, I am interculturally competent").* It is possible that they did not develop enough cultural self-awareness to see the cultural differences (Bennett & Bennett, 1993). Therefore, these participants' inflated perception of IC might have been due in part to being in the Minimization stage, meaning they were not fully capable of assessing the cultural position of others (Bennett, 2009). Additionally, it is possible that the KL students truly believed that they were interculturally competent despite their actual developmental stage. Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) suggested that an individual who is interested in other cultures for various reasons (i.e. interest in international pop culture, having foreign friends, or being advanced in a foreign language) may evaluate himself/herself as interculturally competent without having any real-life intercultural experience or training. Given that many participants disclosed themselves to be fans of Korean popular culture, they might have felt more familiar with the Korean culture, hence evaluating themselves to be interculturally competent than they were.

Despite these factors, ample evidence in the study suggests that the study participants fostered IC by enhancing the intercultural experience and applying gained knowledge to improve future communication. Through their constant contact with the language and intercultural encounters, the KL students consistently created, exchanged, contradicted, and re-interpreted the meaning of language and culture. Their learning process included understanding foreign culture as well as incorporating an understanding of themselves, which developed into improved skills and a deepened cultural awareness.

7.1.3. Constructing intercultural identity

Learning a new language and culture is a physically, cognitively, and emotionally overarching experience that requires learners to alter their perspectives, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Learning a new language is sometimes compared to learning a new identity (Lightbown & Spada, 2021; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Kinginger (2004) argued that foreign language learning is often an attempt to claim a more complex and more satisfying identity – an attempt conflicting with implicit monolingual ideologies and societal power relations of race, class, and gender. Thus, the question arises as to what kind of influence Korean language and culture learning had on the building of the KL students' learner identity.

Developing intercultural identity through language learning is a transformative process that invokes complex shifting factors between linguistic knowledge, motivation, intercultural experience, and identity changes leading to a journey of personal growth and development (Adler, 1975; Anderson, 1994). Indeed, while Korean popular culture mainly drew the KL students' initial attention to the study of the language, their learning experience over an academic year transcended more than linguistic and cultural information. By actively seeking out and investing in the new language and culture, the KL students discovered joy and a deeper appreciation for language learning. Moreover, these KL students showed a broadened academic interest in further related fields, such as history and politics. The KL students' intercultural experience over the academic year enabled them to become less anxious about different cultural practices and more open to other cultures and their associated attitudes and values. The artificial environment that the participants created with their Korean friends in which they were encouraged to speak practical and authentic Korean provided a second-hand experience of living in Korea. In the process,

KL students' views towards the target country shifted from a vague, romanticised entity to a practical, realistic understanding. Also, the participants' learning motivation became more of a personal pursuit, shifting from simple interest in K-pop culture to wanting to communicate fully in Korean with friends, engage in academic pursuit, and integrate into the target country.

Furthermore, their learning experience prompted these KL students to recognise themselves as cultural beings. Holmes and O'Neill (2012) suggested that intercultural encounters enable people to use the other culture as a mirror through which they can better consider themselves with the following observation: "Individuals – come to recognise their own identity and its boundaries, and thus to appraise their IC" (p. 716). The KL students exhibited a stronger desire to understand and express their identity to others in communicating with friends from different cultures. They also began to reflect on their cultural boundaries and recalibrated their identity as language learners and cultural beings. This recognition included not only cultural understanding of Korean culture but the learners' cultural, social, and political self-positioning. Moreover, the participants' understanding of their cultural heritage and identity enabled them to think further about their cultural position in Korean society. As the KL students actively engaged in developing and creating a new identity in relation to Korea, their imagined identity translated into a more practical form, especially in dealing with concerns in the context of their long-term future in Korea. Thus, the KL students came to see knowledge of language and culture as capital to integrate into the community and negotiated their position in the target country to be a "foreigner with a near-native level of Korean speaker" or "honorary citizen of Korea" by attaining the highest level of language skills.

Furthermore, the learning experience contributed to the development of intercultural identity. The study found that being from bi-/multicultural backgrounds did not necessarily mean being more interculturally competent than someone from a monocultural background, which is in keeping with Bennett and Bennett (2004) suggestion that developing an expanded identity such as bi-/multicultural does not necessarily mean a significant improvement of IC. However, the KL students' intercultural experience contributed to their IC development. Participants who reported having positive intercultural experiences yielded strong evidence of openness and flexibility, along with critical thinking, as significant personality characteristics contributing to their intercultural development. Moreover, most KL students showed a heightened sense of self through contact with different cultures and expressed the desire to become more independent and proactive, suggesting possibilities for future self-enhancement and identity expansion and indicating the potential development of IC in near future. Contrariwise, KL students who encountered

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negative intercultural experiences or experienced complications that originated from cultural differences displayed an overgeneralised or stereotypical view of the other cultures. An accumulation of negative intercultural experiences led some participants to solidify stereotypes about certain cultural groups or even reject the concept of cultural difference.

Lastly, the KL students showed a keen awareness of themselves in the wider global context, which is one of the benchmarks of positive intercultural development (Kim, 2000; Deardorff, 2006). The learning experience prompted many participants to reflect further on their position in the world. As participants formed a solid idea of what they wanted to do in the future in terms of study and career, their imagined identity expanded from living in Korea and pursuing a higher degree at university or working in the industry to multiple global locations, speaking multiple languages (especially East Asian languages, including Chinese and Japanese) fluently. The KL students imagined having an intercultural identity partly rooted in their local culture and partially associated with a global identity that would link to the international mainstream, with a particular interest in Korea and surrounding countries (e.g. Lamb, 2004).

7.2. Limitations of the study

While the findings of this study are not meant to be representative of all Korean learners, this study provides a valid snapshot of the IC development of a cohort of first-year Korean learners studying at a particular UK university. However, the study has several limitations that future research should address. First, the sample size of the study was limited to a single cohort group recruited in one UK educational institute. Although the study findings may adequately represent the whole population of BA in Korean majors studying at one university, they cannot be generalised to students studying at other UK universities or to those majoring in other languages. Therefore, future studies involving a more comprehensive range of students from different universities are needed to confirm the generalisability of the findings. Also, the location of the study may not represent the cultural diversity of the whole United Kingdom. The research was conducted in metropolitan London, a city known to be relatively international and culturally open-minded due to the presence of international students from all over the United Kingdom and abroad. Therefore, a comparative study at other universities in the United Kingdom or set in different countries would contrast findings and reach meaningful conclusions.

A second factor limiting this study is that it was conducted over one academic year. Because it was necessary to restrict the sample to first-year students due to the study purpose to observe the students' IC changes before the study abroad programme, the study's findings provided a snapshot of developmental changes. Considering IC development is an ongoing and lengthy process (Deardorff, 2009), the observed changes represent only a part of the dynamic and continual process characterising IC development. Therefore, a longitudinal research design that tracks students' IC development over an entire university degree period would better indicate their intercultural development.

A third limiting factor is the IDI. Although the assessment tool used for this study was well-documented in the literature as statistically reliable and cross-culturally valid, some researchers have pointed out that the IDI originated in a Western country; hence, it may not seamlessly transfer across cultures (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Based on a study involving 134 Korean undergraduate students, Park and Chung (2008) argued that the five developmental phases of the IDI are not clearly applicable to the Korean context. The researchers suggested that the IDI be used with caution and called for the need to

develop a new test to measure the intercultural sensitivity of Koreans in their cultural context. Thus, although the IDI is known to be normed on individuals across cultures (i.e. culturally neutral), using an additional tool would be helpful to ensure the validity of results and more accurately assess IC development.

7.3. Implication for future research and practice

This section describes a range of practices that can enhance the IC of KL learners. The discussion begins by suggesting several pedagogical implications regarding designing language curriculum that integrate interculturality in the language classroom. Recommendations for further research follow this discussion. While some elements are specifically designed to stimulate the intercultural awareness and competence of Korean learners at university, many suggestions may be equally applicable to those who study foreign language or work in an intercultural environment.

7.3.1. The need for facilitation of IC for HE study abroad programmes

The study results align with the mounting evidence in the literature that the development of IC is not a natural occurrence (Paige et al., 2003; Berg, 2007a; Berg et al., 2006; Paige, 1993; Engle & Engle, 2003; Berg & Paige, 2009), and exposing students to international experiences without preparation or proper support can result in negative learning outcomes (Bridges et al., 2009; Coulby, 2006; Sercu, 2006). Thus, without intervention, students may become not more but less positive about other languages and cultures after initial exposure to language study (Mantle-Bromley, 1995). Learning can be negatively impacted by a lack of preparation to confront cultural differences, and students who are not prepared may react negatively to cultural difference or may never actually confront it (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Coulby, 2006; Sercu, 2006; Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, & Hoff, 2005)

This implication of the study highlights the need for facilitated intercultural learning in language programmes offered at university. Byram (2006) asserted that language education should play a critical role in developing tolerance and understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds who live together in increasingly multicultural and multilingual societies. In the same vein, foreign language teaching within an institution of general education is responsible for developing critical awareness of the values and significance of cultural practices in others and one's own culture (Byram, 1997). Thus, acknowledging that some of the learning objectives of language programmes in HE go beyond the

academic content is essential. The central point is that a language programme should contribute to educational processes, the development of individuals, and societal evolution.

Hence, this study calls for an institutional level of support for the implementation of intensive, appropriately sequenced intercultural sensitivity-focused programmes into language learning programmes. Much more effort should be made on the part of departments and universities than simply sending students abroad. Lacking intercultural training beforehand, being abroad unprepared will not necessarily enhance intercultural learning. However, students develop effectively and appropriately through interventions designed to improve their intercultural effectiveness (Cohen et al., 2005, Hammer & Bennett, 2012; Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). Educational responses must reflect this reality and provide opportunities for facilitating students' intercultural development. Adding IC as a learning outcome for students in study abroad programmes is critical in terms of developing a curriculum (regardless of academic content) that incorporates such learning outcomes and development opportunities. Thus, guiding students in developing their intercultural learning throughout the language learning programmes (pre-departure, while abroad, and once returned) is essential for language programme students to create an intercultural identity.

Some language teachers pointed out they neither view themselves as playing an important role in developing students' IC (Hornbuckle, 2013) nor they are prepared to play this role (Bayles, 2009; DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009; Lundgren, 2007; Cushner, K., & Mahon, J., 2009; Westrick &Yuen, 2007; Yuen, 2010; Yuen & Grossman, 2009). Indeed, with the increased demands that communicative competence places on language teachers and classrooms, as well as added skills with additional knowledge, attitude, competence and skills such as basic insights into cultural anthropology, culture learning theory and intercultural communication required from the language teachers (Atay et al., 2009), it is not surprising that adding further to the range of knowledge and skills expected of language teachers has met with resistance (Sercu et al., 2005; Young & Sachdev 2011). In response to these concerns, Byram et al., (2002) argued that teachers do not need to be experts in other cultures and intercultural communication. What they really need is the skill to promote a classroom atmosphere where students have the chance to take risks in their thinking and feelings about intercultural interactions. For Byram et al., (2002) the purpose of foreign language teaching with a focus on intercultural communication is not to try to change learners' values, but to make them explicit and conscious in any evaluative response to others. This paradigm shift indicates switching from traditional teaching-centred to learning-centred pedagogy (Choe, 2013; Berg, 2009) and giving learners autonomy to play the central role in the classroom. In this new classroom where

the 'perspectives' dimension involves the understanding of meaning, values and the idea of the target culture teachers should stop being 'one of the all-knowing sources of the correct' as an information provider and instead try to guide and support student's cultural exploration (Damen, 2003, pp. 81-84).

As for suggestions for future research, the current paradigm of educational approach in KFL needs to adopt more longitudinal perspective, concentrating on fostering linguistically and culturally aware communicators of Korean over a long period of time. Hence, the future research needs to explore the longitudinal development of intercultural learning of KL students, paying attention to the early intercultural experiences, once abroad, and the alignment of these experiences and intercultural learning with the interest goals. Additionally, there is a relative scarcity of systematically garnered qualitative and quantitative data that assesses the impact of study abroad in the context of KFL. The research findings of this study reveal that a large number of participants expressed many concerns about cultural adaptation, communication with Koreans who are less interculturally experienced and social integration into Koran society during their upcoming study abroad to Korea. Therefore, it is important to gain an understanding of the specific needs, interest desires, and concerns of students. Also, further research should address how the intercultural learning of study abroad students have developed through a pre-departure programme.

7.3.2. On implementing intercultural learning in HE language learning programmes

This study's findings suggest that intercultural learning can be effectively supported by communicatively, interculturally focused pre- and post-study abroad preparation. The programme will enable students to prepare for real-life experiences during their studies abroad while having a meaningful learning experience. The majority of the study participants remained within the area of Minimization, which represents an ethnocentric stage. Hammer (2009b) identified Minimization as a transition stage for moving from a monocultural to an intercultural mindset. He suggested that the core Minimization issue would be resolved by exploring cultural differences more deeply and recognising that these cultural patterns need to be understood from the other culture's perspective. As this recognition develops, an appreciation of the complexity of cultural differences arises. In this process, one key aspect of fostering intercultural identity is the ability to self-reflect (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). Therefore, the

educational approach for a pre-study abroad programme should focus on introducing students to the concept of intercultural learning and providing opportunities to reflect on their experiences. The programme comprises three parts: a) reflect, b) articulate and c) developing skills. In other words, these processes involve fostering students' ability to reflect, make meanings, and articulate their findings.

Learning can be achieved by making sense of experiences through reflection and understanding. In the reflection stage, the programme should be steered in the direction of developing the ability to think interculturally. In this stage, learners are introduced to cultural awareness. Classroom activities specialised in enhancing intercultural sensitivity will give students the chance to reflect on their experiences and make comparisons with their classmates. This preliminary stage will be followed by the articulation stage, in which students are encouraged to talk about their discoveries arising from their reflection. The verbal articulation stage is essential in the sense that it allows the opportunity to articulate their experience and thoughts that they might never have spoken out otherwise. Students will be given a chance to talk about their intercultural experiences and their interpretation with classmates who have had similar experiences and objectives without fear of judgement or social desirability. In this stage, cultural self-awareness can also be generated through discussion, exercises, and other discovery methods with teachers or ethno-relative people from non-dominant cultures in small group discussions (M. Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Such discussions may focus on culture shock and cross-cultural adjustment, the acculturation process, or the relationship between language and culture. In this stage, the vital element is the careful exploration of differences rather than learning about cultural differences.

Following the reflection and articulation stages, an introduction of an explanatory framework designed to acknowledge cultural differences can take place. In this stage, an explicit exposure to the theoretical scaffolding of intercultural learning or demonstration of the potential effectiveness of those frameworks will stimulate students' intercultural learning. According to Einbeck (2002), a thoughtful selection of appropriate readings can effectively teach students necessary mediation skills between cultures. However, it is essential to understand that appreciating cultural differences is not about emphasising cultural differences or forcing learners to be assimilated into the target culture. The common mistake that many language teachers make is explicitly comparing different cultural aspects of the target country. However, simplistic images and statements about other cultures that focus solely on national cultural representations can be problematic. Those simplistic images of other cultures and cross-cultural comparisons can easily result in essentialist representations of others that hinder rather than aid

intercultural learning. Furthermore, particular attention must be paid to the fact that intercultural interaction between Korean and international students has sometimes led to negative consequences. This finding highlights the need for more intervention from institutions to promote positive experiences between domestic and international students.

The last step involves the developing intercultural skills stage, which focuses on preparing students to encounter cultural differences and addresses the challenges they are likely to experience in an intercultural situation. Here, learners should be put in a position to observe different cultural practices and interact with members of the target language community. The aim of this stage is to develop skills to adapt one's behaviour to shape successful intercultural interaction with others who come from different cultures. In this process, addressing how to deal with negative cultural experiences is particularly important as such experiences have substantial impact on future learning. In this stage, "Cultural mentors" (Berg, 2009) can take the role of guides and co-researchers and become providers of an appropriate analytical framework in dealing with critical events.

Appendix

Appendix A: Sample of IDI online questions

(As provided in Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman, 2003, p. 434)

Indicators of Denial / Defence

    It is appropriate that people do not care what happens outside their country.

    People should avoid individuals from other cultures who behave differently.

    Our culture's way of life should be a model for the rest of the world.

Indicators of Reversal

    People from our culture are less tolerant compared to people from other cultures.

    People from our culture are lazier than people from other cultures.

    Family values are stronger in other cultures than in our culture.

Indicators of Minimisation

    Our common humanity deserves more attention than cultural differences.

    Cultural differences are less important than the fact that people have the same needs, interests, and goals in life.

    Human behaviour worldwide should be governed by natural and universal ideas of right and wrong.

Indicators of Acceptance / Adaptation

    I have observed many instances of misunderstanding due to cultural differences in gesturing or eye contact.

    I evaluate situations in my own culture based on my experiences and knowledge of other cultures.

    When I come in contact with people from a different culture, I find I change my behaviour to adapt to theirs.

Appendix B: In-depth Interview questions

a. First interview questions

Cat	Theme	Detail of question
Language	Language learning experience	What is your first language? • Other than your first language, how many languages have you studied? • How do you find learning Korean? • What are the most challenging things in learning Korean?
Motivation	Attribution Self-efficacy Expectation	What is your main motivation for choosing to study Korean? • What are the goals that you hope to achieve? • How do you see yourself in 3 years after completing the course?
Cultural positioning	Intercultural interaction Cultural identity	• Are you interested in Korean culture? • If yes, what kind of cultural form are you most interested in at the moment (music, literature, movies, social media etc.)? • Could you describe your impression of Korea/Korean culture? • Do you find Korean culture different from your own culture? • If you do, could you describe Korean culture compared to your culture in terms of commonalities and differences? • Do you socialise with Korean speakers on and off-campus? (e.g. studying together, language exchange, casual friendship, internet socialising) • If you do, what kind of activities do you usually engage in with Korean speakers? • What were the most significant while interacting with Koreans? • In your opinion, what were the reasons for the experience?
Learner Identity	Identity building Ideal self	How do you find learning Korean? • What are the most challenging things in learning Korean? • How do you see yourself in 3 years after completing the course?

b. Second interview questions

Cat	Theme	Detail of question
Language	Language learning experience	• How did you find learning Korean so far? Why? • What was the most challenging thing in learning Korean? • Could you tell me how did you study? What was your main method of learning the Korean language? • Did you try anything other than taking courses to learn Korean? If yes, what sort?
Motivation	Attribution Self-efficacy Expectation	•Last time you told me that your motivation for learning Korean was _____. Do you find your motivation for learning Korean has changed? • If yes, what are other motivations that you acquired in studying the Korean language? • Could you tell me your most recent interest that is related to the Korean language /culture? (Music, literature, movies, social media, etc.)? • Could you elaborate in detail?
Cultural positioning and distance	Intercultural interaction Cultural identity	• Do you find linguistic knowledge you gained in the classroom helped you understanding Korean culture better? If yes, could you give an example? • Is there something that you found very similar/different? • For this semester, were you engaged in any activities that required you interacting with Koreans? • If do, what kind of activities did you usually engage in with Koreans? • Was there any interesting/difficult experience while socialising with Koreans? • Do you feel comfortable socialising with Koreans? Do you feel close to them? Or do you feel you are in a position to observe rather than being integrated with them? • How was your interaction with lecturers in the classroom? What was your impression of them?

Learner identity	Identity building Ideal self	• Do you find your view toward the Korean language/ culture had changed compared to when you first started? • How do you see yourself in 3 years after completing the course?

Appendix C: Sample interview request email

Do you want to find out how International/ Intercultural you are?

Dear all first-year students who study Korean!

Hello!

My name is Hyejin Jang. I am 2nd year PhD student in Department of Japan and Korea.

Currently I am researching on Intercultural development of first-year Korean language and culture students at the university.

My study aims to find out the extent to which intercultural development occurs in students, how it may be linked to linguistic development, and other possible variables such as previous/ongoing cultural contact with the target culture, motivation, interests, etc. Particularly I am very interested in how your concept of culture- especially towards Korean, changes as you go through your first year of study.

Regarding my project, I would like to invite you to take part in a research tool called Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). IDI is a reliable measurement tool that is validated by multiple international journal papers and Ph.D. dissertations.

The focus of IDI is on understanding patterns of difference between different social communities (i.e., Korean or British) and how the normative systems of these communities are reflected and individuals in those communities interpret and act in the world. In simple words, it is a tool that measures how you think about cultures. My plan is to take IDI twice, first at the start of the first academic year and second at the end of your first year, to see the changes.

It's a simple online survey that will take about 20 minutes to complete. At the end of each IDI, you can request the result if you wish to know the outcome.

Also, I'd like to invite you for interviews. The format of the interview is casual. You can simply tell me about your current interests that are anything Korean/Korean language-related (language/ culture, literature, K-pop, movies, or friends, etc.). The interview will be held twice (around Oct 2016 and June 2017) and take about an hour. Also, there will be a small compensation at the end of each interview.

In regard to IDI, I'd like to ask all of you to take part in the survey. For the interview, it's voluntary. However, it will be a good opportunity to talk about your interests and, I expect a positive influence on your preparation for Study abroad in Korea next year).

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