

The Role of WhatsApp in Developing L2 Spanish Learners' Intercultural Sensitivity: An
Exploratory Task-Based Language Study in a Language Immersion Setting

by

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ABSTRACT

Technology (i.e. the WhatsApp mobile application) can play a positive role in a student's language and culture learning when it is used in collaboration with a language curriculum that uses a modular framework. When technology tools are used in an intensive language learning environment, those mobile devices will allow students certain affordances (like modifying, authoring, and reviewing content) as well as opportunities to work independently (e.g., create their own content to demonstrate cultural understanding) and/or to reflect upon cross-cultural issues that impact their intercultural sensitivity (Lee, 2011). Barker (2016) adds that cultural discussions performed during a student's language learning process can lead to intercultural sensitivity development and learning if done communicatively and in engaging environments. In this study, participants intensely interacted in a three week immersion experience where they used WhatsApp to communicate with each other, with their instructors, and with their host families by completing tasks in three modules that were a part of an Advanced Spanish Conversation and Culture Course.

The argument in this study is that if WhatsApp is well integrated into the course activities and curriculum of an upper level Spanish university course while abroad, the students will use more innovative ways to communicate, thus, allowing for more intercultural sensitivity growth. In this study, the author analyzed the intercultural sensitivity development and Spanish language use of twelve university level students as they learned Spanish in a 13 week study abroad program abroad in Segovia, Spain. The

goal of the study was to gauge how effectively the students communicated with one another while simultaneously measuring their intercultural sensitivity growth to see if the integration of the mobile app, WhatsApp, had any effect on their intercultural learning capabilities. The author analyzed data from twelve learners' interactions while they studied abroad in a country that they were mostly unfamiliar with. As a result of WhatsApp's various modalities and capabilities, the findings showed that all of the 12 students showed modest intercultural sensitivity growth along the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Bennett, 1993) to assist them in more effectively communicating in the target language about the host culture.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all of the language and culture teachers and scholars out there. Keep following your passions and I hope you all continue to contribute to the beautiful world that comprises language and culture teaching and learning as well as multicultural education.

I also dedicate this dissertation to all my fellow study abroad leaders, experts, and colleagues who I learned from (especially Lucía, Cecilia, Antonio, and Alfonso) – Thank you for the passion that you have for language, culture, and travel. Throughout our many tapas, cenas, etc., we have learned from our students, colleagues, and friends on how to navigate this exciting life together.

And lastly, I dedicate this to my former high school Spanish teacher (who motivated me for the wrong reasons) – This is a strange one. Most of the time teachers inspire you to keep studying because of the positivity they exude and because they believe in your abilities. I had a Spanish teacher who always doubted me in high school. She said that I should give up Spanish and looked at me like I was clueless or out of touch as a student during our class sessions. This one is really for her.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction to the Study

As the world continues to be more and more globalized, intercultural interactions amongst people from different nations continue to occur and be encouraged. Intercultural communication is of particular importance in fields such as government, education, business, and travel. This intercultural understanding and communication across cultures is called Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Bennett, 1993). ICC is therefore required to develop today's global citizen's intercultural competence, and sensitivity, which are necessary skills needed by today's workers from education to economy and to diplomacy (Deardorff, 2015). Effective intercultural competence and sensitivity entails developing the awareness, knowledge, and skills related to understanding a new culture. Study abroad programs at the university level have emerged as a fitting environment where students can both develop their language proficiency in the second language and their ICC.

This study will use the study abroad context as an arena to gauge a foreign language learner's intercultural sensitivity and development as they experience cultural exchanges while immersed in a new country abroad. At the same time, the present study will analyze how a mobile application like WhatsApp allows for specific affordances in the immersion experience. Moreover, the cultural learning that the study abroad learners will encounter as well as the direct and incidental second language (L2 learning) that is

likely to occur will provide language teachers and researchers the chance to confirm how and why study abroad serves as a dynamic stage for learners to try to foster both their language growth and intercultural sensitivity.

In order for cultural sensitivity to develop, it is crucial for learners to participate in cultural discussions during their language acquisition process (Barker, 2016). Fantini (2000) agrees with the premise of developing personal interactions related to cultural exchanges since he says they eventually lead to more intercultural understanding, which allows for the linking of intercultural development and sensitivity. In this study, the language tasks were performed communicatively and in environments where learners interacted intensely with one another and with native speakers of the foreign language. As noted by Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard (2006), by participating in short and long-term study abroad programs, foreign language learners will better understand the cultural nuances of the host country. Similarly, in this study, the language learners who came from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds were encouraged to participate in intercultural course activities by interacting with each other in very deliberate ways in order to acquaint themselves with new types of learners as they investigated various aspects of the target culture in the foreign language.

Students often enjoy participating in study abroad programs because they are exposed to a plethora of cultural artifacts in a more intimate way when compared to learning about those objects or places in a traditional, less language immersive type of classroom in their home country. Kinginger (2009) reminds us that the nature of cultural interactions (i.e. in a place like a study abroad program) can give us an insight into

understanding how students socialize when they further develop their intercultural sensitivity. This socialization assists in leading students to participate more in intercultural activities for the purposes of enjoying the content because this type of learning stresses that an increased focus on interactions provides opportunities for them to engage with the new culture, reflect on its value systems, and write/speak about new student experiences with the native speakers of the foreign language (Kinging, 2009). Students in study abroad programs often participate in intercultural learning activities that involve going to a workshop on art, tasting new foods, shopping in an open air market, attending a show or museum event, etc. Specifically, university students at all levels have been tasked to learn the target culture by absorbing and interacting with the content (and cultural artifacts) by conversing with native speakers in multiple ways. Furthermore, language course activities and excursions usually plunge the learners into an environment where they can both make and nurture more intercultural contacts and exchanges.

One area where universities seem to struggle is with encouraging students to participate in cultural events outside of the classroom when the students cannot see the relevance or applicability of attending the event. Thus, an important aspect of this specific intercultural sensitivity study was to strive to offer suggestions for how instructors can help students further develop their intercultural sensitivity with the addition of technology guiding the students' learning in those study abroad programs. The suggestions will primarily focus on the ways in which instructors can utilize technology to teach ICS. The overarching idea is to provide recommendations for both the students and instructors to participate in relevant cultural activities that are inherently

connected to the content that students learn in a cultural course so that they enjoy those activities and see their relevance as a part of the study abroad program (Jackson, 2008).

This study will also analyze how a mobile application and social media tool like WhatsApp (WA) allows for certain creation and conceptual affordances in a study abroad experience. Thus, if a learner has a framework or system available to them that fosters intercultural sensitivity through a variety of different intercultural activities, the learner will learn more about themselves as a participant in that target culture (Lomicka & Lord, 2016). This computer-mediated discourse assistance ultimately guides the students an additional way to learn about relevant intercultural practices by adding to their overall knowledge and ability to comprehend the content (Thorne, 2006). Technology plays an extremely vital role in a university learner's educational progression since their social contacts are likely to expand as they study abroad. The learner's fostering of those social contacts will also contribute to more language communication for many years to come if they see the value of participating in more intercultural learning activities while abroad (Mertova & Green, 2010). From an intercultural learning perspective, learners will work collaboratively in their language courses abroad so that they can use technology to gain practical experiences that will positively impact their lives.

Theoretical Background of the Study

The frameworks of intercultural competence and sensitivity. There is a wide array of existing frameworks concerning intercultural competence and sensitivity; in keeping with many previous studies, the present study uses the intercultural sensitivity theory (Chen & Starosta, 1997) to measure and interpret students' ICS learning. There

are two frameworks that will be used to guide the theoretical structure of this study. Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) as well as the aforementioned Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS) theory, definition, and explanation attributed to Chen & Starosta (1997) which will be used to allow for the evaluation of each learner's ICS learning, development, and growth.

The DMIS model (Bennett, 1993) was constructed as a basic outline to explain the reactions that people have to cultural differences. The stages of DMIS align along a continuum that ranges from ethnocentric to highly ethnorelative (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2012, p. 155). The DMIS is supported by the idea that cultural awareness should be thought of as bettering the cognitive development of the learner (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2012, p.155). Similarly, intercultural sensitivity is described as the affective mindset that describes how a student tries to differentiate between the various behaviors, perceptions, and feelings of someone from a separate culture yet allows the student to appreciate and respect that other person, too (Chen & Starosta, 1997).

Chen & Starosta (1997) also maintain that intercultural sensitivity learning allows for the understanding of that student's cultural growth and how they recognize cultural differences to become more mindful of another person's cultural behaviors. Effective nurturing of ICS development analyzes how a student reflects on culture in order to understand, appreciate, and accept cultural differences (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Even though this study uses the ICS definition from Chen & Starosta (1997) as its ICS learning metric, it primarily utilizes Bennett's (1986, 1993, 2004, 2013) Developmental Model of

Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to document and categorize the participants' ICS growth. The DMIS framework fits this study as the since it assists in explaining how students interpreted and engaged in language and cultural exchanges related to differences in viewing the world relative to their new immersion experiences. This study will employ a content and thematic analysis approach as well as the previously mentioned DMIS framework categories since the framework allows for the organization of intercultural sensitivity growth by separating it into categories that are based along a continuum of increasing sensitivity on one end to cultural (in)difference on the other.

Rationale for this Study

Foreign language learners in study abroad programs have used mobile devices and other technologies to complete their language tasks and projects in the past, but it has now become apparent that by using mobile devices, specifically by focusing on multimodal social media applications, students can further see new opportunities for learning culture (Arevalo-Guerrero, 2009). Moreover, as Arevalo-Guerrero (2009) points out that there is a need to further investigate how mobile device use promotes language learning when students can more independently become motivated to investigate the host culture nuances at different times of the day. Other studies have also shown that mobile device ownership can provide insight on how culture is learned in terms of usage patterns (time on task), motivation, and opportunities for task integration when learners understand how to independently focus on using online services or tools in their intercultural learning (Kukulka-Hulme, 2009). When students learn how to document and categorize their intercultural exchanges through the use of a social media platform,

they realize the importance of being able to choose between text, voice, picture, and video communications for their social media posts (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Since learners already feel comfortable using their mobile devices to post their answers and reactions to tasks, it is vital for study abroad language instructors to also have instant access to their students' information to monitor how the learners intend to show a specific understanding of the task content (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009). Similarly, as a learner is immersed abroad, being able to critically think about the tasks in the foreign language can combine with their active participation in intercultural exchanges to allow them to more accurately document their experiences through the social media tool (Lee, 2011). In the case of this study, the virtual space that was created within WhatsApp, allowed the learners to post, chat, and engage with each other in a more hyperpersonal way (Thorne, 2003). Their interactions in that virtual space allowed them to have more chances to participate in valuable cultural discussions that enhanced their intercultural development and sensitivity.

WhatsApp as this Study's Tool of Choice

WhatsApp (henceforth WA) started in 2009 and has rapidly become one of the most popular text and voice messaging social media tools. WA is not only known for its quick ability to send various types of messages between users and groups, but it also has various security and privacy features, like end-to-end encryption. WA integrates with your cell phone in more ways than by simply having the user download and sync their contacts and photos to their devices. The application can be organized to be set as always activated, serving as a student's built-in messaging service while continuously running in

the background, allowing the learner to receive instant updates and notifications regarding incoming calls and messages. The WA application also captures time and date information from the user's phone, instead of a messaging app that uses the phone carrier's technology to categorize those communications i.e. it works to organize group chats, send one on one messages, remove questions about missed or made calls, store photos, save videos, etc. Schenker (2012, 2018) argues that data collection and exchanges via technology mediating devices allow for more student-centered learning and could potentially allow for the storage of more conversations via different applications (like WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger) for archiving/researching purposes. WA was specifically chosen for this study because it easily allowed both the researcher and his participants to archive their messages and document submissions where they could find them in an easy to access way. Both the students and instructors were able to look back on their group chats and messages to see how they interacted with the content and to remind themselves of the assignments or ideas that resulted after they participated in cultural excursions and conversations.

The WhatsApp Application is an effective messaging system because:

1. It is available on all major mobile computing platforms like Apple O.S, Android, Symbian, and Windows.
2. It allows users to send free international texts and call friends, family, and colleagues while abroad.
3. It lets cell phone users automatically check the availability of the registered users within the platform by accessing the phone's contact list. Consequently, this

signifies that no friend requests, user responses, etc. are required to link up with someone else who is using the app in order to communicate with them.

4. It provides a logical and simple way in which students can attach a picture, video, and share their geolocation. A learner can post a meme, audio clip, etc. for a classmate since almost all file types are allowed and easy to attach.

5. The hassle-free way in which instructors and students can create groups allows for them to engage with others with little training required, making the app an efficient tool for creating engagement amongst its users.

6. The large collection of emoticons and emojis that a learner can reference are easy to find and use.

7. No ads or spam messages appear within the app or on your phone while you use it.

In prior studies, increased mobile device use in the classroom has shown that it can lower the anxiety levels for students who use them in structured ways (Shamsi, Altaha, & Gilanlioglu, 2019). The effects of WA on reducing foreign language students' speaking anxiety and how their participation has increased is detailed by Han & Keskin (2016) and Shamsi, Altaha, & Gilanlioglu (2019). Both of these studies concluded that when students used WA to do activities, they successfully employed it to significantly reduce their language learning anxiety, therefore, their increased platform use led to more improvement in their target language skills. Since WA is a dynamic social media platform and multi-modal system, this study will also analyze how the multiple types of conversations amongst students (where its multimodal characters could be used) could be beneficial for intercultural sensitivity growth. Therefore, the use of WA has shown to

naturally encourage students to utilize more engaging ways to collaborate and comment on each other's work (Calero-Vaquera, 2014). When instructors have implemented WA to engage with their students by permitting them to work collaboratively on homework or projects in their classrooms, the advantages have been endless. The platform can be used to message other people who are not physically co-present and at times not necessarily ready to review and respond to the post(s). While WA studies do not appear in a large amount of focused research on applied linguistics that attempt to explain intercultural sensitivity growth, there have been studies with other popular web pages or apps like Facebook and YouTube that center on how those multimodal applications allow for more cultural discussions (Han & Keskin, 2016).

In this study, students were able to track their progress on the tasks within the app and collaborate with their classmates in a neatly organized view on the platform. In this way, WA provides a more useful and streamlined way (due to the app's rapid connectivity and storing power) than a traditional web 2.0 tool to monitor and explain the students' interactions and how those encounters may lead to intercultural sensitivity growth.

Due to the communicative nature and power of WA, this study yielded the following:

1. The learning benefits of using mobile assisted language learning while abroad.
2. The opportunities for the enhancement of intercultural learning and sensitivity for foreign language Spanish learners that participated in a study abroad program in Spain.

3. The ways in which intercultural sensitivity can be taught in foreign language classes and the potential training suggestions instructors (and study abroad leaders) on how to successfully integrate intercultural sensitivity activities into their courses.

Definitions of Key Terms

Culture: Geertz (1973) describes culture as “the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their actions” (p. 83). This definition of culture allows instructors to understand that they are likely to have a diverse set of students in their classroom who will bring with them different types of abilities and cultural vantage points. Culture consists of something that is shared and/or learned by a group of people, but the content of the culture varies in its demonstrated forms. That content of culture could be a set of traits linked to behavior, knowledge, facts, ideas, beliefs, norms, etc.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC): Computer-mediated communication (CMC) can be defined as human communication that is performed with computers and includes many different types of synchronous, asynchronous or real-time interaction that humans have with each other, whereby a computer-like device is used as a tool to help facilitate the exchange of texts, images, audio recordings, and/or video messages.

Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL): Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is language learning that is assisted or enhanced through the use of a mobile device. MALL is a branch of both mobile learning and computer-assisted language learning. MALL has evolved to support students’ language learning with the

increased use of mobile technologies such as mobile phones, tablets, and other similar devices. MALL allows students to engage with the technology device to interact more effectively with the language learning materials and with other classmates.

Foreign Language Competence (FLC): Foreign language competence is the way in which a learner understands a language by improving and adding to their proficiency level related to the use of the four linguistic abilities (i.e. speaking, writing, reading, and listening) to communicate by processing information and interpreting it in a logical and authentic way.

Intercultural Communication: Intercultural communication is connected to the framework that monitors the effect of culture in communication utterances between people from diverse cultural groups. Samovar & Porter (2000) confirm that this type of cultural communication allows for further investigations of relevant cultural aspects (sometimes in a foreign language) that could explain the interactions that occur when people from a mix of two or more different cultures engage and interact with one another.

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): Based on Byram's (1997) definition, ICC describes how a person interacts or learns about people from other cultures by using a common (foreign or otherwise) language. ICC requires awareness of the cultural context, so that dynamic and interactive communication occurs whereby the speakers of the common language are able to relate to one another. Fantini (2000) describes these interactions as involving behavior and emotions that foster interest, openness, motivation, and a willingness to not judge others to learn about the cultural aspects of someone else's life.

Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS): ICS is how a human learns how to adjust to cultural nuances when speaking, listening, or writing to people from different cultures to speculate about their own world views. Bennett (1993) suggests that an interculturally sensitive person is able to build a world view that allows for understanding and adjusting to cultural differences with the objective of obtaining a new sense of how the world works. Chen & Starosta (1997) further expand on Bennett's (1993) definition of intercultural sensitivity by stating that intercultural sensitivity is actually the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication. Thus, ICS learning and developing should spend time focusing on the ways in which people think and behave, and the process that the student performs by participating in these new exchanges can lead to greater intercultural sensitivity.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA): Second-language acquisition or second-language learning, or L2 (language 2) acquisition, describes the ways and the science behind how people try to learn and understand a second language. Second-language acquisition specifically refers to the scientific discipline related to researching and learning about that language acquisition process.

An L2 Language Learner: The term *L2* is used to talk about the ways in which someone studies a second language or a foreign language. *L2* users should not be confused with someone who is an *L2* learner. Oftentimes, language users try to tap into linguistic resources in order to use them for everyday interactions and tasks. Language learners, however, are trying to build or develop their language skills into a more organized model

for a specific purpose or for overall acquisition and are normally motivated by other aspects related to their learning goals.

A Native Speaker of a Language: A native speaker of a language is a person who speaks that language as their first language rather than having learned it as a foreign language.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL): Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is the interactive use of technology to foster second language acquisition (SLA) by giving students opportunities to learn a language in environments beyond that which are typical of a brick and mortar indoor classroom. CALL is largely based on the communicative approach to second language acquisition (SLA) with the implementation of authentic communication exchanges that focus on meaningful and relevant activities that are engaging and dynamic.

Researcher Positionality

My identity as a researcher in this exploratory study is important to highlight since it played an essential role in evaluating the participation of the students that I studied. The ways in which I gleaned aspects of the data throughout the study shaped the manner in which various observations and aspects of the study were interpreted and processed. My researcher bias influenced the mindset I used when I analyzed and summarized the data.

It is key to note that I have been working for over 10 years as an instructor in the world language space in a variety of educational settings and have always had a focus in second language acquisition and intercultural competence and sensitivity. In addition to having over 5 years of experience leading students on immersion experiences and teaching them in Spain about language and culture, I also studied abroad myself in Spain, which first piqued my interest in language acquisition and intercultural understanding. I studied Spanish as my major as an undergraduate student and second language learner (English is my first language) at a large American university in the Midwest. My academic journey as a researcher and instructor later included many trips overseas as a graduate student and/or as a Spanish/English instructor where I interacted with not only

U.S. students but with learners from all over the world, including teaching English to native Spanish speakers in Spain.

My first experience of studying abroad was life changing because as I immersed myself in a new language and culture, I honed my language skills and intercultural competence/sensitivity skills abroad as a result of the process. I saw the cultural connections that I made with other people as incredibly fulfilling and after studying abroad, I came to the conclusion that I would never have had those opportunities to learn about intercultural learning and development had I not become totally immersed in that new culture myself (in Spain). While technology was not as advanced in 2006 when I first studied abroad as it is today, I still tried to use simpler forms of technology when I was in Spain interacting with others (such as telephone calls, cell phone text messages, and Facebook/Myspace posts and blogs). Similarly, I still saw the benefits (at that time) of learning a new language and culture through study abroad immersion with the help of those forms of technology.

As someone who has been using advanced technology in the language learning classroom for over 10 years as a language educator and having also experimented with a bit of everything related to innovative digital technology platforms, I recognized the importance of promoting language learning with technology since I saw it as a vital part of learning a foreign language and culture. Moreover, after realizing the importance of technology in the language classroom and language learning space, I decided to complete a graduate level certificate in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) theory and practice, in collaboration with my home university of Arizona State (where I worked on

my PhD studies) and have also presented on various topics at both national and international conferences within the CALL/MALL fields. I have attended myriad professional development workshops, events, seminars, and meetings on language learning technology and mobile assisted language learning (MALL) continues to be at the forefront of my research agenda and of this dissertation.

My time and travel spent abroad as both a student and instructor and my many years of teaching both English and Spanish around the world has shaped my identity and views as a researcher. The validity of my research most bear these things in mind since I realize that I bring a unique vantage point to this study as I am an adamant proponent of study abroad, technology use in the classroom, and multilingual community education and its interactions when learning a foreign language and culture. Most importantly, I am passionate and dedicated to studying the areas encompassing how a foreign language learner uses their newly acquired second language skills and intercultural sensitivity recognition abilities before, during, and after they go abroad to gain more knowledge about the target culture.

The Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation explains the theoretical foundation for this study, the design of the data collection and analysis process, and the study's results and conclusions, following a traditional sequence of chapters. To begin, after having read the introductory chapter, a review of the relevant literature will explain issues that current learning frameworks have explored in explaining human-mobile device interaction and proposes the use of Bennett's (1993) intercultural sensitivity framework to study mobile-assisted

language learning in study abroad programs. The literature review continues by presenting Chen & Starosta's (1997) theory to define and interpret intercultural development and sensitivity learning to frame its importance in acquiring language and culture together. Finally, an overview of the relevant research is provided to describe the significance and keys to intercultural sensitivity teaching and learning and the reasons for which they should be at the forefront of study abroad learning so that learners can successfully engage in cultural activities that will strengthen their language use.

The third chapter of this study will describe the methodology of the research and the instrumentation used. It will also explain how a thematic and content analysis can be used to collect data for a study of this nature, as well as highlighting the research design, and the data collection procedures used. Chapter 4 will present the results of the research as well as the analysis and interpretation techniques used. Moreover, it will provide an explanation regarding how the data were gathered and analyzed in order to describe the results. These results are listed to show how a mixed-methods design chronicled how twelve participants received the full pedagogical intervention, including two post study assessments after they had engaged in multiple interactions throughout a three week experiment in Segovia, Spain. In this study, each participant co-constructed their own intercultural learning experience along with describing how they used the WhatsApp digital tool with their human counterparts both inside and outside of the classroom. The last chapter will discuss the research results and offer future ideas on how to plan and instruct language and culture courses that focus on ICS. It will also provide the conclusions and offer suggestions for additional pedagogical implications for those

foreign language instructors mentioned above. Lastly, it will offer insight into whether intercultural learning outcomes were in fact mediated by intercultural sensitivity frameworks and how digital tools (specifically a social media mobile app like WA) can help facilitate ISC growth. Implications of the results include suggestions to researchers, teachers, and digital practitioners, on how to better understand intercultural learning and development. This study concludes by providing a reflection on how WA was used to foster more intercultural learning, development, and growth and how the modules the researcher created thus allowed for more opportunities and development for ICS learning outside of the classroom i.e. by the programming of events, excursions, and workshops, that effectively assisted students in their ICS development and growth.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the most relevant research studies and theoretical frameworks that informed the design of this study. This study combines foreign language learning with intercultural sensitivity in a study abroad environment with technology as the mediating tool to view and interpret intercultural sensitivity growth. Therefore, this chapter tries to facilitate an understanding of the complexity of these issues by describing them as separate themes and providing details on their relevance. The relevant literature will be examined in depth, especially as they relate to the research questions that are listed at the end of this chapter.

Research on Second Language Acquisition and Intercultural Learning

First, in order to understand how culture and language work together to simultaneously enhance learning, culture needs to be defined. Geertz (1973) defines culture as the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their actions. Kramsch (1993) suggests that culture is a social construct and potentially a product of self or of other perceptions that one continues to acquire over time. Individuals can reflect on their own culture while demonstrating that they understand how to become cognizant of the innerworkings of another person's culture to form a better intercultural understanding of a language (Kramsch, 1993). According to Dema & Moeller (2012), the ability to recognize cultural knowledge can affect one's linguistic growth and informs their ability to react in cultural interactions. Dema & Moeller (2012) also state that the knowledge from language emerges from societal interactions, thus, learners will have difficulties learning the foreign language without acquiring knowledge about its culture, native speakers, and community participants. The way a learner comprehends appropriate intercultural behaviors in various new language encounters can enable them to change their viewpoints by how they interpret social cues, which will influence their perceptions of the target culture and alter their intercultural understanding (Luna & Schaefer, 2018). Kramsch (1993) finds that is important for learners to have language instructors that show them the material in a way that embraces ICS learning by explaining cultural encounters, while at the same time providing the students with chances to reflect on their own cultures as they evaluate the target one. Thus, a learner's ability to recategorize existent knowledge and create or glean meaning from cultural interactions may take time as they grow with the language (Hoff,

2014). Hoff (2014) also adds that the student's learning process includes their ability to evaluate encounters that correlate to an unfamiliar cultural event, like a phone call, a party, a get together, or a technology interaction (a web chat, SMS message, etc.)

Therefore, the learner must relate those cultural events to specific phenomena in their own culture to more deeply understand those specific cultural nuances. That comparative process for foreign language learners can be an arduous task since all of that memory formation and language production should be ideally performed in the target language, too. Moreover, Hoff (2014) stresses that the importance of conflict resolution as the learner communicates with native speakers of the foreign language or their peers in well-designed tasks can allow learners the chance to understand and articulate differences that contain conversational ambiguity. As one can imagine, an interculturally competent language instructor that can better facilitate the student's learning process as they work through those complex intercultural encounters may be helpful for them to achieve both linguistic and intercultural gains. In a parallel way, Moloney & Harbon (2010) agrees regarding the implementation of intercultural learning in the classroom and the role of the instructor when he says that learners are best served by obtaining skills of discovery and that effective interaction to explicitly acquire the ability to manage the new knowledge of another culture is of the utmost importance. Moloney & Harbon (2010) argue that this ability to interact in the foreign language allows the learner to recognize and understand the distinct interlocutors that may satiate one's perception of those cultural connections to link their own culture and the one being studied. Thus, the teachers, students, native speakers, community members, etc. should assist the learner to oversee the instantly

changing communication in the foreign language (Moloney & Harbon, 2010). The learner will achieve intercultural growth if they can match the mutual perceptions in the foreign language with the experiences in the new culture. Additionally, the more a learner interacts, participates, immerses oneself, and engages with native speakers in the target community, the more likely they are to acquire those skills, knowledge, and motivation that are essential for intercultural development (Jackson, 2008). As Kramsch (1993) explains in her study, effective intercultural communication that keeps both language and culture in mind when adapting to a new learning situation will continue to be an integral part of learning a language. If the learners more fully immerse themselves in the host culture while abroad, they will be more successful in communicating in the foreign language (Kramsch, 1993). Lastly, Kramsch (1993) importantly clarifies the idea of intercultural learning in a student's language progression as paramount to achieve language proficiency when she states that cultural integration will ultimately yield more linguistic features that the student can eventually acquire as a result of interacting intensely with that target language community.

Intercultural Sensitivity and Technology Use

In our globalized world where learners can connect with others all over the world via technology in a matter of seconds, language instructors have the responsibility to prepare students to be citizens of the world by showing them how to interact with others from different cultures using a variety of digital platforms. The intersection of language and culture through learning about intercultural sensitivity using computers, tablets, mobile devices, etc. allows learners the chance to feel more comfortable in their

academic quests while also making them more sensitive to someone who is different from them (Cushner, 2004). According to Weber (2003), in foreign language classes, instructors have been tasked with trying to connect the activities that they employ with the cultural ideas that are the focal points of the lessons. Instructors often use various pedagogical frameworks to assist the learners in their quest for knowledge of the target culture. For that reason, Sercu (2005) suggests that instructors focus on activities that allow for the intersection of both the teaching and learning of intercultural sensitivity with the enhancement of technology resources. When ICS learning and technology are practiced together, learners are shown that they can have a more open-minded attitude to learning culture and will do more independent research to discover information about the content in their tasks. More specifically, the use of technology tools assists the students in their language and culture development by allowing them to see the interconnected relationships between intercultural sensitivity and intercultural learning (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). Moreover, González-Lloret & Ortega (2014) add that learners can practice improving their intercultural awareness and foreign language interactions by not only reflecting on the culture but by tying its importance to the target language. Learners can connect their cultural interactions to the foreign language by comparing and contrasting cultural differences and similarities that tie into their own culture to have a more enhanced learning experience.

By using intercultural sensitivity principles as a framework, instructors are able to spend valuable time with the learners in those cultural exchanges by stressing the importance of having their students think about those cultural encounters by using

technology as a mediating tool to not only supplement more traditional and direct ways of teaching, but also to enhance the rigor, creativity, and elements of the language and culture that are being assessed and practiced (Lee, 2011). For example, internet communication tools have been used as artifacts to draw correlations between communicative activities and interpersonal dynamics (Thorne, 2003). More specifically, technology tools have been used in study abroad contexts (like mobile applications with multimodal capabilities) to allow learners to maintain or strengthen communicative affordances as well as to give them the opportunity to work more closely with native speakers (e.g., to work on more creative content exploration) and/or to reflect upon cross-cultural issues that impact their intercultural sensitivity (Lee, 2011). Most importantly, the interaction with the host environment along with the student's comprehension of the language tasks influences their intercultural sensitivity. Thus, according to McGroarty (2001), a learner's access to technology and their comfortability level in learning a foreign language is affected by their interactions abroad. According to Godwin-Jones (2013), the need for intercultural sensitivity training with technology in the language learning process has been highlighted in the past by its inclusion in the national language learning standards for the United States; as seen in the most recent ACTFL Guidelines on intercultural learning (in Van Houten & Shelton, 2018) as well as in the cultural standards espoused in the European Common Framework for Languages Whitepaper (2001). Therefore, intercultural sensitivity is likely to be developed in study abroad courses when learners use technology to participate in discussions and activities (usually with native speakers) to learn about the new culture. In this sense, learners are forced to

step outside of their comfort zone to better understand their global perceptions and to attempt to remove their previously held stereotypes or preconceived notions about the target culture community. Lastly, language and culture learning environments and tasks that incorporate technology allow the learners to build on those global perceptions to grow their ICS since they can reflect on their intercultural relations as they progress in their language proficiency.

Intercultural Competence and Sensitivity

Defining intercultural sensitivity and its relationship to intercultural competence. There are many ways in which one can describe a new culture or compare multiple cultures to recognize and reflect on aspects of their own culture. Some cultural experts call this recognition of culture—intercultural competence (ICC). For the purposes of this study, it is first necessary to discuss how intercultural competence has been defined in the past and then clearly articulate the sub section of intercultural competence that is at the heart of this investigation, referred to as intercultural sensitivity.

Finkelstein, Pickert, Mahoney, & Barry (1998) define intercultural competence as the “multiple abilities that allow one to interact effectively and appropriately across cultures.” (pg.12). Byram (1997) saw ICC through a lens of world language development, thus, he reminds us that becoming competent or astute in recognizing culture as one observes the cultural nuances is a vital component to become more sensitive to the host speaker’s cues and gestures. More specifically, this type of intercultural learning has allowed for students to acquire the language development and cultural skills to become interculturally competent as they see the differences between the target culture and their

own culture in their home country (Byram, 1997) since the student goes through a cultural recognition process. That learning process allows the learners the opportunity to recognize how a speaker's cues and gestures in the foreign language can impact their overall understanding of the cultural exchanges. The reason that intercultural competence is important for language growth is that the student should try to learn both the target language and culture at the same time, as they adjust to situational differences while abroad. Understanding these cultural differences allows the learner more time to establish themselves as a distinguished intercultural communicator in the target language.

In order for a learner to be inspired to learn more about or enhance their intercultural competence or sensitivity, it is recommended that they start to more thoroughly and positively embrace encounters with native speakers as they reflect on the host country's culture while immersed abroad (MacIntyre, 2004). Therefore, an ICC/ICS communicator has to acquire linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge in the target language; however, they are more likely to reflect on these ICC/ICS skills when trying to determine which ones are imperative to successfully manage their relationship(s) with the native speakers. Byram (1997) indicates that the student's ICC/ICS will at first connect to their own cultural norms in their home country, however, this can vary depending on the student, and the contrasting system they try to acquire (the one being studied as the target culture), may at times progress, regress, or become altered. The learner will be forced to engage in a plethora of different activities to try to demonstrate their understanding of intercultural communication objectives while trying to become more proficient in both language and intercultural learning growth (Byram, 1997). Additionally, Deardorff

(2009) performed a study where she analyzed how a student's cultural sensitivity almost always affected two specific intercultural features of their development as the students formed their new intercultural learning.

Deardorff (2009) defined those intercultural learning features as:

- 1) The degree to which a student's pattern of behavior aligns with someone else's patterns in those new cultural exchanges.
- 2) The expandability, flexibility, and adaptability of one's filter or the ways in which they adjust to the circumstances as a part of the language learning growth process in those new cultural exchanges.

Deardorff (2009) states that those elements make it easier for intercultural sensitivity to be developed, measured, and dictated. Most importantly, Deardorff's (2009) study reiterated the idea (see also Byram, 1997) that stresses that learners have the ability to adjust and integrate their own cultural norms into their thinking as they reflect on the cultural norms of the target culture.

The Differences between Intercultural Sensitivity, Cross-cultural Competence, and Intercultural Competence

It is important to note that intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity differ drastically from cross-cultural communication. Cross-cultural communication groups together a particular set of ideas or conflicts that form parts of several different cultures, in which a comparison is made from one culture to another, depending on the interest of the student (Belz & Thorne, 2006). On the other hand, intercultural competence and sensitivity focus more on interactions between different cultures

(Scollon & Scollon, 2001a). Regarding a student's development of cultural competence as they learn a second language, the learner is confronted with new cultural encounters and other intimidating circumstances that are sure to be unfamiliar to them while abroad, especially when put in an immersion setting for the first time. Moreover, in order for learners to become more interculturally sensitive learners, they need to absorb more from their interactions with other social beings, which allows them to better define culture through their own unique lenses (Byram & Fang, 2004). Moreover, Byram (1997) explains that learning about culture is specific to each learner's needs when they try to learn a foreign language. Byram (1997) views language and social interactions as being the key component to understanding how to communicate with someone from a different culture. Byram (1997) opines that if culture can be learned, it can also be taught to others, therefore, if culture impacts the interactions between different groups of people, those communication acts can be analyzed. Since culture and language learning are inherently linked, learning both concepts together enables the learners to make crucial connections to improve their intercultural learning (Byram, 1997). It also behooves learners to participate in that intercultural learning whereby instructors assist them in developing their intercultural development by facilitating said cultural learning using an intercultural based framework so that language and culture can be construed as inseparable in the students' learning process (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014).

The Interconnections Between Language, Intercultural Competence, and Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity is difficult to define and there is a lack of agreement over a specific definition that includes all that intercultural sensitivity encompasses. Chen & Starosta (1997) believe that the disagreement stemmed from the notion that sensitivity in language and cultural learning contexts can be extremely ambiguous and, at times, inaccurate. Some researchers have attempted to combine intercultural sensitivity with the more commonly used terms of cross-cultural competence and intercultural competence (as described above, see Byram, 1997 and Deardorff, 2002) and in intercultural awareness studies (or cross cultural awareness experiments) (see Bennett, 1998). Additionally, Chen (1990) asserts that some studies have tried to define intercultural sensitivity but could not put into concise words how relevant its significance is to a student's ability to display or understand the specific foreign language use and/or host culture nuances. As such, both ICC and ICS researchers label it as something different, which is both debatable and difficult to accurately define. However, in Chen & Starosta (1997), intercultural sensitivity is defined as the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication. This definition of intercultural sensitivity assists culture researchers in getting closer to the idea of its concept, which highlights the specific cultural conventions that may somehow affect how people think and behave (Chen & Starosta, 1997). Therefore, intercultural sensitivity and its relation to overall cultural competence when learning the foreign language should be closely connected to mostly the behavioral aspect of communication (e.x. in the case that speaking, writing, and listening patterns are specifically linked with the locational cultural norms of where the target language is practiced). Moreover, intercultural sensitivity can be described as how the student's

foreign language patterns connect to their intercultural understanding as the learner identifies elements of the culture (see Deardorff, 2002) in order to guide their ICS development.

Bhawuk & Brislin (1992) also attempt to define intercultural sensitivity as a type of reaction that learners demonstrate when they meet people from different cultures. This sensitivity reaction coupled with the student's adaptation to the target culture influences their intercultural sensitivity spectrum and their ability to fully understand and explain the cultural phenomena. Therefore, learners can be seen as growing from their cultural reactions as they try to successfully perform different tasks (whether inside or outside of the classroom) in the foreign language to grow their intercultural sensitivity. According to Bhawuk & Brislin (1992), the idea is that hopefully, over time, the learners grow more accustomed to a new way of intercultural communication in the foreign language, thus becoming more aware of how their intercultural sensitivity evolves. Bearing in mind their intercultural sensitivity and its growth, learners can more deeply apply their new intercultural skills to their cultural understanding by successfully executing various types of intercultural tasks while abroad. Additionally, the implementation of more culturally focused tasks in study abroad programs promotes interacting with others in new types of exchanges, which contributes to an overall better communication pattern for learners who have different cultural norms and values (Chen, 2010).

The idea of improving foreign language communication by making strides in intercultural sensitivity growth can be more apparent in study abroad settings because the learner must recognize how individuals who live in different societies use the language

outside of a typical classroom setting. Therefore, according to Bennett (1998), the notion behind intercultural competence and subsequently, intercultural sensitivity is that intercultural awareness and development in a foreign language classroom makes learners more interculturally sensitive to the target culture community if and when the learner can adapt to someone else's culture. The learner will use the foreign language to effectively communicate with the native speaker by making and recognizing those cultural growth patterns to think more critically about the concepts being learned. It is important to note that behavioral expressions or ways in which people communicate while abroad in a new cultural learning space also affect this intercultural learning process. According to Chen & Starosta (1997), the interpretation of intercultural sensitivity learning should continue to focus on the behavioral aspects of the intercultural development process which allows for more meaningful intercultural communication amongst different groups of people since students' growth in understanding the foreign language and its cultural concepts can also be evaluated. A learner can therefore show ICS progress when they show signs of more sensitivity in their behaviors (albeit, even minimal ones). A learner's ability to quickly grasp a cultural concept may not necessarily lead them to a greater overall cultural understanding of the target language but could still show they have made small progress on an intercultural growth scale (Bennett, 1998). Those growth strides are the focus of intercultural sensitivity progress and can be somewhat subjective (Chen & Starosta, 1997).

Intercultural sensitivity may also be defined as how the student acts and subsequently observes their responses to unmonitored tasks. Most of the time, a student

who is more interculturally sensitive can interpret the difficulty level of a task or interaction with a native speaker of the target language. Then, in a hypothetical situation, the learner can hopefully decipher how the host culture participant is trying to interact with them. Chen & Starosta (2000) further state that interculturally sensitive learners can obtain intercultural sensitivity progress in that host culture by displaying consistent recognition of cultural differences with various expressions and examples in the foreign language. By being able to repeatedly demonstrate those newly acquired behaviors or skills and by also recognizing those cultural subtleties related to that new culture, the learner demonstrates a new type of intercultural sensitivity. This intercultural sensitivity overcomes any previously held beliefs where they were formerly denying or hiding the existence pertaining to how the cultural differences affected their states of mind (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

Another relevant definition of intercultural sensitivity was set forth by Byram & Fang (2004) since they propose that in order for a cultural learner to make intercultural strides while immersed, the learner has to focus on aligning their behaviors with the interaction type to fully process the connection with the foreign language and/or culture. In this sense, learners have attempted to actively learn from all of their interactions (regardless of the type or time spent in that interaction). Moreover, according to Byram & Fang (2004), learners who engage socially outside of the classroom ought to attempt to increase their exposure to other native speaker community members in their new learning environment since more varied interactions give the learners broader power in identifying how they can form their newly developed intercultural sensitivity. Byram & Fang (2004)

point out that the importance of exposing students to different types of language and cultural events is an important requirement for interacting with a variety of native speakers since those interactions act as learning resources for the learners to supplement the information learned in their in-class activities in their language courses. More specifically, if the learners focus on the crucial engagement necessary to interact to better understand the nuances of their new cultural interactions in the foreign language while abroad, more ICS progress can occur.

Intercultural Learning and Engagement with Native Speakers

The field of sociology has also played a role in understanding how culture and language are connected. Sociologists have reminded language and culture experts that by analyzing the social atmospheres where the teaching and learning about the host country take place, the students will be better able to understand the context of the learning situation (St. Clair, 2002). By seeing the culture and language learning taught together in more authentic contexts and by studying various types of texts with a more natural backdrop (i.e. in study abroad programs), learners will have a more reliable context to reflect on the social interactions they participated in (St. Clair, 2002). Thus, when learners practice the language situations with more relevant context clues to ultimately recognize and understand the backdrop of those settings, the importance of the new host culture environment allows them to learn more about the cultural nuances (St. Clair, 2002). By understanding the relevant contexts of the learning situations, learners show that they tend to be more engaged with the content, especially when interacting with native speakers in the target culture abroad (Rosenthal & Capper, 2006). The overarching

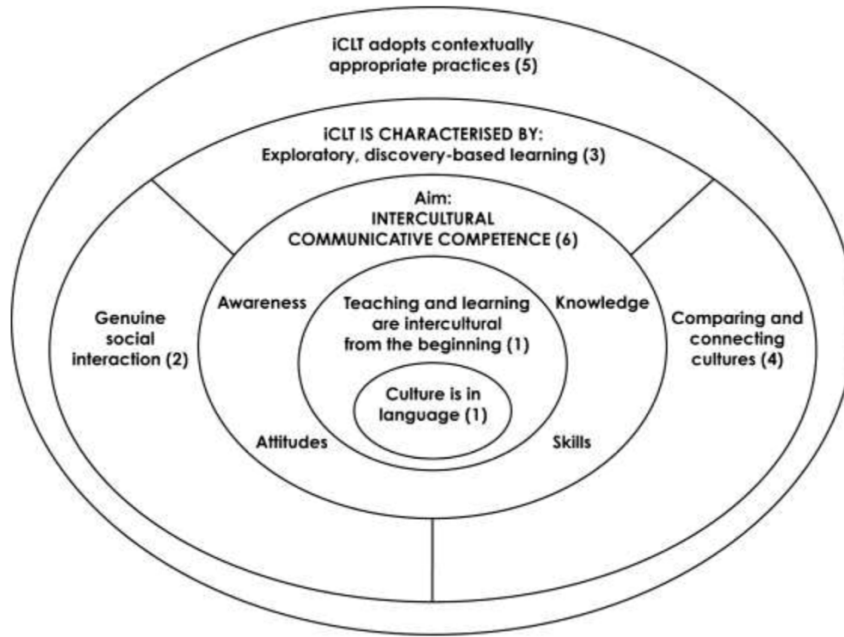
idea is that when students are immersed and actively participating in intercultural interactions to improve their knowledge constructions to efficiently produce the target language, more cultural appreciation takes place. As the learners reflect on their own cultural background, they are able to compare those new cultural experiences abroad to what they already know about the new culture. Therefore, due to the importance of comparing one's culture to the host culture, it can be said that without the study of comparing cultures, second language acquisition is not complete (Kramsch, 1993).

Another way of understanding the link between intercultural learning and language, according to Rosenthal & Capper (2006), is to focus on the cultural phenomena being taught so that the learner can understand the relevant clues to form positive cultural representations of the host country. The ability to form an understanding of these foreign cultural representations gives the learners multiple opportunities to see the world through a different lens, which lets the learners acquire more confidence, motivation, and social knowhow as they navigate this unknown territory.

Figure 1 below from Newton, Yakes, Shearn, & Nowitzki (2010) shows learning targets for intercultural development. The goal for intercultural development for foreign language instructors is to lead the learners from the outside part of the circle to the smallest ring of it. The ultimate objective is for the learners to arrive at the *Culture is in Language* ring of the circle to achieve full intercultural learning development and eventually ICS understanding in their cultural progress and/or growth.

Figure 1 (Newton, Yakes, Shearn, & Nowitzki, 2010)

A Visualization of Intercultural Learning Strategies for the Foreign Language Instructor



The Key to Acquiring Intercultural Sensitivity While Immersed Abroad

In this study, it was imperative to assess the learner’s comfort level with the cultural content while also using the technology component (i.e. the mobile application) to review how each student’s new experience(s) and ICS growth affected their intercultural sensitivity experiences. Both their ICS development and growth were measured and categorized along different stages of the DMIS continuum (see Bennett, 1993). Thus, the use of the DMIS framework and continuum provides an ICS tool where a closer cultural analysis of how students learned culture and language together could be performed as the students navigated new situations while abroad. Similarly, the DMIS continuum guided this experiment in simultaneously assessing both the students’ ICS growth for the purposes of providing future recommendations to instructors and also gave insight into intercultural sensitivity teaching and learning and connect its importance to

both applied linguistics and teacher pedagogy trends. According to Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman (2003), the DMIS model assumes “that as one’s experience of cultural difference becomes more complex and sophisticated, one’s potential competence in intercultural relations increases” (p. 423). Therefore, an increased level of ICS allows a student to more fully understand and differentiate between the cultural differences within two distinct cultures. Bennett’s (1986, 1993, 2004, 2013) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) focuses on the construction of a learner’s viewpoints and allows for learners to interpret their behaviors and attitudes to see how their cultural viewpoints are affected. The methods espoused in Bennett’s model do not highlight cultural literacy development or language acquisition strategies per se but instead try to measure intercultural sensitivity and a student’s potential ICS growth along it (Bennett, 1993).

Figure 2 below illustrates the various stages of the DMIS Continuum.

Figure 2

Bennett’s DMIS Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993)

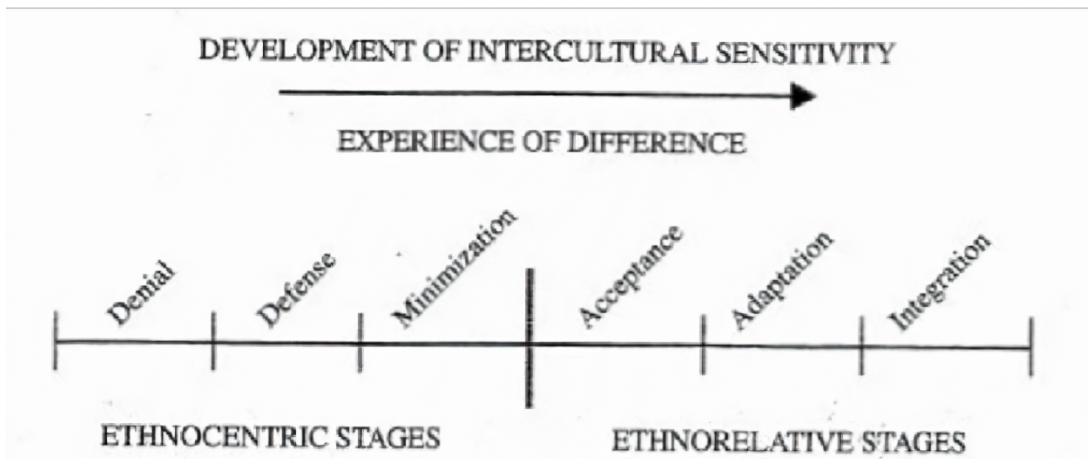
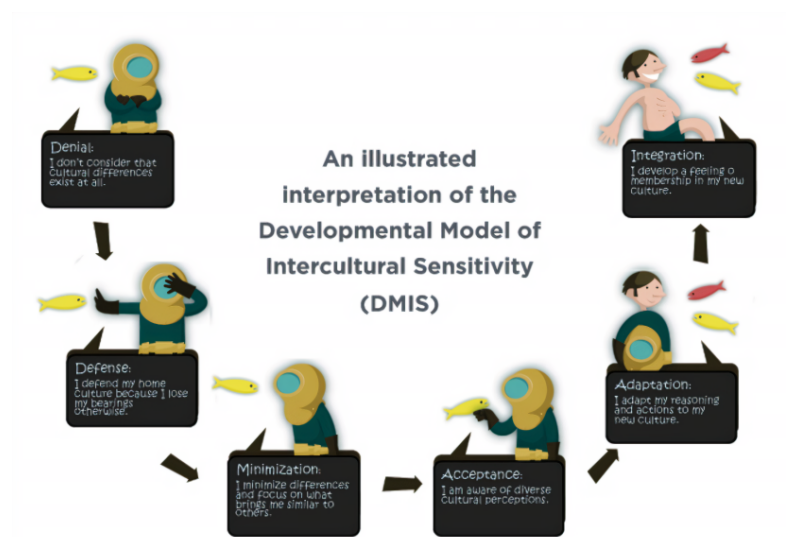


Figure 3 below shows the various DMIS Model stages with examples to highlight the different learner perspectives.

Figure 3

An Illustrated DMIS Model (Bennett & Schmidt, 2011) with Sample Explanations



Lastly, figure 4 below defines the DMIS stages and represents how specific learners' characteristics are to be categorized within the DMIS ICS continuum.

Figure 4 (Bennett, 1993)

DMIS Categories with Sample Definitions to Define ICS Meanings

Stage	Definition
1) Denial	This stage is one of lack of interest in cultural differences so much so that cultural differences are not even recognized.
2) Defense	People at this stage recognize cultural differences but react negatively to them. They expect conformity to their own cultural norms or worldview and tend to avoid “the other”.
3) Minimalization	One can appreciate cultural differences but still tend to see their culture as superior and thus confine contact with “the other” to a minimum.
4) Acceptance	Recognition of all cultures and that all cultures are valid, yet not yet equal.
5) Adaptation	Ability to adapt to intercultural contexts while still maintaining one’s own cultural roots.
6) Integration	Ultimate level of “ethnorelativism” where one can recognize that his or her own culture is one of many equally-valued cultures. People at this stage can function on multiple planes of cultures in that they can interact effectively and collaborate with other cultures.

The DMIS model (Bennett, 1993) has six stages, which are all important steps for the analysis aspect of this exploratory study. The first three stages are referred to as the Ethnocentric phases. By referring to these first few phases of the continuum through an ethnocentric lens, the learner is seen to construct their own distinct world view of the various culture(s) that they experience by comparing and contrasting them to their own culture. By using this DMIS framework, researchers are able to see how and why students act in various ways with native speakers of a different language and culture. The DMIS is used to evaluate how those students learn and behave in those new communities of practice and how they relate their understanding of new cultural phenomena back to their own cultural reference points. In this sense, language learners who participate in

study abroad programs may sometimes be able to understand a new reality with more experience.

In the DMIS model, Bennett (1993) categorizes the first stage as Denial. In the Denial stage, the student does not acknowledge the existence of other cultures and may isolate themselves, due to not feeling comfortable mentally or emotionally with the new aspects of the host culture. The student in this stage believes that cultural differences only occur in foreign places, outside of their traditional home setting.

Isolation is the first substage in Denial and is connected to physical isolation from the culture of others (Bennett, 1993). This stage can be difficult to explain because of how learners are now connected on a more global level with technology but can be partially defined as the ways in which learners behave when they do not have enough knowledge and understanding to differentiate between the various cultural differences between their home and host country in a logical way.

Under Bennett (1993)'s DMIS model, the second substage of the Denial phase is called Separation. This separation phase means that a student purposefully puts up barriers (either physically or socially) to create distance from those cultural differences or nuances that they encounter. Separation can manifest itself as isolation and it may act as an obstacle for the student trying to culturally assimilate due to wanting to separate from the new host culture group or from the activities that they have to participate in.

The second ethnocentric stage in Bennett (1993)'s DMIS Model is called Defense. This stage represents how a student's impression of one's own culture is seen as the only legitimate culture. The student may recognize the other culture and its

differences, but they interpret that culture as mostly containing negative or strange aspects of their worldview. In the Denial stage, culture can be ignored but in this ethnocentric stage called Defense, students will mostly recognize the cultural differences and/or perceive some of them as a threat. The student may acknowledge those cultural differences but may not understand the interculturality of them.

The Defense phase is important in a study like this one since it could represent a developmental increase in intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993). Moreover, there are three substages in the Defense stage: Denigration, Superiority, and Reversal. Denigration may involve the use of negative stereotyping and/or trying to associate those stereotypes, interpretations, or judgments to every native speaker in the new target culture community, like “All Spaniards take naps during the day” or “Europeans have a poor work ethic because they take more vacation time when compared to American workers from the U.S.A.”

Denigration may also highlight aspects of the culture related to sexuality, race, religion, gender or economic influence; however, the students could use other reference points as triggers, which could signify cultural nuances or ways of living that are generally aligned with those cultural topics above (Bennett, 1993). Thus, the learner could construe those cultural nuances and behaviors of the target culture as bizarre and/or similarly develop some type of inferiority complex as they navigate through the newly identified target community when trying to understand those cultural encounters. For example, extremist groups like the Basque organization, ETA, focused on negative stereotypes of their compatriots within Spain that were more nationalistic in nature and

also more culturally extreme in their region as a way for them to show their supporters that their agenda to commit violence against a Spaniard (not from the Basque country) who was not considered a Basque citizen served as a legitimate cultural norm for them. In this way, the terrorist group ETA denied that they were a part of the general Spanish population (and target culture) and had no connection with the culture that the typical Spanish foreign language learner tries to study and understand.

The Superiority substage in the Defense phase of the DMIS framework focuses on the positive evaluation of one's own cultural affiliation or association within their country and does not necessarily vilify others in the host community (Bennett, 1993). Examples of this substage include a student's recognition and possible comparison of forms of nationalism, the power of their ethnicity, and other gender or sexuality initiatives like feminism movements or LGBTQ advocacy. In this sense, the learner can see how each country's community may put an emphasis on promoting specific advocacy groups or associations. If the student feels threatened by another cultural organization or movement within that host country, the response is to refer to that set of individuals as an organization or cultural activity that is beneath them (in status). Moreover, in this stage, it is not seen as worth the time to investigate how those specific movements or organizations may be different from that same group in their home community.

The final substage in Defense is Reversal (Bennett, 1993). Reversal can be typical for students who go abroad to live for more than a month or have traveled extensively overseas. Therefore, the student is likely to start to scandalize their own culture after

getting used to living in the host country and may enjoy living more in the adopted culture.

In the third ethnocentric stage, Minimization, a person will reduce the possible existence of difference by rationalizing surface differences between cultures as minimal and view the culture of others as similar to their own (Bennett, 1993). Reaching this stage represents movement along the developmental continuum since the student will be able to directly recognize cultural differences on a deeper level and will not denigrate or negatively evaluate others. Rather, this student will trivialize cultural differences at times, but will try to evaluate its many new characteristics or goals for their own learning. This stage is importantly classified as ethnocentric, since the student could still naively believe that all cultures share basic characteristics, and that they are assumed to be universal. These characteristics typically come from the culture of the person making the claim, who is often a member of the dominant culture in a society.

According to Bennett (1993), Physical Universalism is the first substage of Minimization. This position assumes that all humans share the same biological needs i.e. to eat, sleep, procreate, have families, and die. Moreover, culture and specifically intercultural differences are merely a result of fundamental biology and students in this stage minimize the importance of cultural similarities and differences. The second substage is Transcendent Universalism. In this stage, the student is able to somewhat analyze the idea that culture, religion, and history bring together all people as a result of the existence of a higher power.

The second half of the continuum on the DMIS scale is termed Ethnorelative, which means that one's own culture is viewed through a context of its relationship with other cultures. Cultural differences are not perceived as either positive or negative. One's culture can be seen as simply different from that of the culture they study. This stage does not suggest that ethnorelativism corresponds to all cultural differences but indicates that someone's cultural vantage point may be interpreted by looking at their choices, decisions, and behaviors and that those are impacted by multiple factors outside of their control. Their interpretations will not influence how their ethnocentric position is evaluated. The ethnocentric perspective is threatened by cultural conflict and actions since it works against feeling inferior in the target culture. In the Ethnorelative experience, cultural difference is not something to reject or deny but is investigated by the learner as a part of behaving in various centric stages (Bennett, 1993). The first Ethnorelative stage, Acceptance, is the first stage after making the switch to the ethnorelativism part of the continuum from ethnocentrism (Bennett, 1993). This stage views other cultures as complex yet different formations of reality and acknowledges cultural differences as normal and part of the foreign language learner experience.

The first substage in Acceptance is Respect for Behavioral Differences and develops in both verbal and nonverbal ways (Bennett, 1993). Moreover, this substage is evaluated by reviewing a learner's language recognition and how their language use is seen as the most vital cultural measurement tool that ties together intercultural communication and sensitivity. In this stage, intercultural communication and sensitivity work together so that the student incorporates both verbal and nonverbal expressions,

gestures, and cues into their linguistic repertoires for evaluation. Foreign languages are analyzed in this stage as demonstrating that cultural differences exist because of how speakers engage with one another (Chen & Starosta, 1997). Students in this stage begin to recognize differences in nonverbal behaviors such as how people communicate and how their styles/strategies vary in the target language and in their cultural behaviors. Such intercultural communication behaviors as greeting people, explaining aspects of life, and linking cues for conversation spark curiosity and intrigue but also seek approval rather than portraying those encounters in a negative light. For that reason, Bennett (1993) opines that the Development stage as a part of ethnorelativism puts an emphasis on language recognition and appreciates values in language variation as a part of one's behavior and communication style while they learn about the culture.

The second substage in Acceptance is Respect for Value Difference. In this stage, students accept that different worldviews are critical to evaluating behaviors related to acknowledging the differences between the two cultures (Bennett, 1993). A student in this substage will hopefully gain cultural self-awareness as they begin to look at their own worldview as a cultural construct. According to Bennett (1993), the second Ethnorelative stage is called Adaptation. A student may state that cultures can only be understood relative to one another in this stage and that behavior is to be evaluated within a cultural context. Similarly, new skills for effective intercultural communication in a foreign language are to be slowly acquired and expanded upon for that learner rather than by replacing their communication style in their first language. In this stage, the learner observes the way to interact in another culture with someone without compromising their

own cultural identity. Additionally, the learner will align with this aspect of the DMIS continuum if they are capable of modifying their perspective to allow them to find meaning within the various types of cultural understanding that native speakers use when behaving together.

The first substage in Adaptation is Empathy. Empathy requires a change in a learner's frame of mind so that they imagine the experience of reality from that host culture participant's mind (Bennett, 1993). Changing one's mentality to acknowledge and/or appreciate another's perspective may provide them with an opportunity to better understand differences and form a greater appreciation for that new cultural perspective to see it as a legitimate interpretation of reality. A learner's ability to engage in reasonably effective communication across cultures will be seen if they show knowledge related to this new mindset while also possessing characteristics of appreciating another person's cultural perspective.

The second substage of Adaptation is termed Pluralism and is used to represent two aspects of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993). The first aspect is philosophical and states that not only are cultures different, but that difference must be viewed wholly within the context of the relevant culture. The second aspect is that pluralism implies that an individual must internalize two or more cultural frames of reference, which usually involves an extended living experience in another culture (i.e. perhaps a study abroad trip with their university for more than one month). Thus, Pluralism can be viewed as a more intense state of intercultural sensitivity when compared to Empathy since cultural

differences and sensitivity allow the learner to show more respect where they directly feel the cultural differences and demonstrate more serious intercultural reflection.

In the final Ethnorelative stage named Integration, a learner portrays themselves as demonstrating how their sense of self has changed (Bennett, 1993). This stage includes the ability to rotate between multiple worldviews. The learner is constantly in the process of moving between and differentiating amongst various cultural contexts where they evaluate and analyze their own relationship to those contexts. This learner understands their identity and their new or updated viewpoint emerges from the act of recognizing and forming this new identity to better understand both the target language and new culture.

According to Bennett (1993), the first substage of Integration is Contextual Evaluation where the individual evaluates and analyzes situations from one or more cultural perspectives. This ability to analyze intercultural exchanges allows the learner to examine a given situation from a variety of different perspectives and ultimately assists them in making an appropriate decision related to their perceptions of the interactions when given the relevant context clues.

The second substage in Integration is the final stage in Ethnorelativism and is called Constructive Marginality (Bennett, 1993). In this stage, the learner would function outside of all normal cultural limits. For the learner who eventually becomes a Constructive Marginalist, there are no unquestioned assumptions, no intrinsically absolute behaviors, and all interactions become aligned with their behaviors so that cultural nuances are not noticed or questioned. This learner is constantly creating their own reality. Without previous development in the other stages of ethnorelativism, there

are still obstacles with this stage of intercultural sensitivity. It is possible that the learner may experience being uncomfortable or worrying about aspects of their behavior if they are seen to be linked to new cultural boundaries. This stage can also be the most crucial and fruitful stage of intercultural sensitivity progress for the foreign language learner because of how deeply integrated they are in the target culture.

Study Abroad and Intercultural Learning and Sensitivity

Brembeck (1977) argues that there are three visions of intercultural learning that directly relate to intercultural sensitivity. Language learners need to learn about intercultural learning by:

1. Becoming more multiculturally aware.
2. Reaching beyond one's borders.
3. Co-existing with their language and culture instructors and other native speakers throughout the language learning process (i.e. by engaging more with peers, community members, etc.) to learn about the new environment for the sake of improving their intercultural development and openness.

Brembeck (1977) further explains that learning another person's language and not their culture is a legitimate way to make a fool of yourself. Landis & Bhagat (1996) also add that intercultural sensitivity is a key component to enable people to work, socialize, and interact with others from different cultural backgrounds to adjust to living in a new environment. Thus, study abroad programs expose students to new situations where their intercultural sensitivity can be quickly developed as they learn about cultural differences

which allows them to test their own adaptation abilities while also altering their behaviors as they adjust to those cultural differences. Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard (2006) also write that it is crucial that our universities prepare students to manage and learn about cultural orientations that are different from the ones that they previously learned about in their home countries. Therefore, study abroad programs again tend to provide a fruitful environment for learning about new cultural orientations since they usually include excursions as well as courses that allow learners to interact with other students from different countries (or from other regions of their own country) and/or with host families that put students in more visible and live contact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, interacting with a diverse group of people is paramount for those learners to achieve intercultural sensitivity growth as those interactions allow for more authentic intercultural learning where students can foster more positive outcomes for their own ICS development.

Intercultural sensitivity growth requires active participation by the foreign language learner. Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere (2003) state that learners in semester study abroad programs can show an increase in intercultural sensitivity learning if they are exposed to a variety of activities where they can enhance their appreciation of the new culture by actively participating in it. Thus, in the Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere (2003) study, the students' strides in intercultural sensitivity resulted in more active participation in cultural exchanges and focused on the incorporation of cultural workshops that showed instructors how they could quickly document the students' opinions and interactions while also monitoring

their ICS development. Consequently, instructors in the past have often sought to gain access to more student examples of ICS growth and have usually wanted to plan more activities in and outside of the classroom to observe their students' intercultural learning. Thus, an instructor's ICS training and ability to observe a student's appreciation for understanding cultural differences allows them to judge if the student has experienced any intercultural sensitivity growth. Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard (2006) observes that students who just travel overseas and participate in a short-term or long-term study abroad program will not automatically learn more about a host culture. The students may often show ICS growth without the instructor knowing it and their ICS development may indicate that they have a deeper ICS understanding if their instructors are actively involved in those learning processes, too. Therefore, if the instructor is teaching ICS in a study abroad program, Landon, Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner (2017) suggest that the instructors plan their pedagogy to incorporate various theories and practices related to ICS that include interactive and engaging tasks designed to chart the student's ICS growth to evaluate if they are transforming from more culturally cognizant learners into more globally cultured citizens. Hence, at the end of their study abroad programs, the learners' cultural progress related to ICS growth should be measured by how effective they are at seeing the various differences and similarities between the host culture and their own (Landon, Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner (2017). Study abroad programs provide students with ample opportunities to engage and interact with native speakers in a variety of environments. For example, Peng (2005) performed a study in which cultural interactions were analyzed to see how students' learning outcomes were influenced by

their participation in understanding cultural differences in China. This study concluded that when a higher respect for differences in culture were acknowledged, the students tended to have greater pleasure participating in intercultural interactions, which improved their attention to the language and their intercultural sensitivity recognition. Thus, those native speaker interactions made the learners more intercultural sensitive (and more in tune) to the nuances of the host country language, which led them to a greater understanding of their cultural interactions (Peng, 2005). Due to the fact that immersed learners are constantly presented with a large number of intercultural situations where they interact more frequently with native speakers than those who do not study abroad (e.x. students who always take classes in a traditional classroom in their home country), immersed learners are often forced to interpret various new meanings of cultural experiences. For example, immersed learners become more engaged in developing their intercultural understanding since they have to learn how native speakers behave in order to effectively communicate with them (Peng, 2005). The process of engaging with different interlocutors who expose the learners to a new culture allows them to reflect on those cultural interactions with a different mentality. Therefore, the learner can reflect on those interactions and ponder their own intercultural sensitivity (whether directly or indirectly) which often times allows them to recognize how their own culture compares to the target one (Peng, 2005).

The value of intercultural learning can also be seen by using technology in study abroad programs since the program activities may use technology to allow students to access resources or use a number of digital tools to solve everyday issues that they

confront. For example, Peng (2005) describes intercultural sensitivity learning as a way in which students get more out of intercultural situations by recognizing details within those cultural interactions, which guide them to find meaning in their language use as they navigate the culture instead of portraying those interactions as obstacles, challenges or problems. Moreover, immersed learners have a greater probability of developing intercultural sensitivity with the assistance of technology since the digital tools give them a better chance of improving or increasing their overall self-assertion, decisiveness, drive, flexibility, and ability to work with others (Gantt, 2014). If a learner views intercultural learning and sensitivity as a relevant process for their own language growth, they are more likely to come to a better understanding of the host culture norms. More specifically, the learners are also more likely to more carefully view the host culture characteristics for the purposes of applying that ICS knowledge to their language acquisition proficiency if they can use other tools to help facilitate that learning process. At the same time, the learner becomes a more active participant since they will have participated in a large amount of activities that they have confronted abroad by using interactive tools, which can result in more reflection and cultural comparisons (Gantt, 2014).

It is important to remember that the characteristics and dynamics of each study abroad program are different but if the learner is invested in the program and is willing to step outside of their comfort zone to fully participate in the study abroad cultural events, they are more likely to have success in their quest for more intercultural sensitivity learning (Dwyer, 2004).

The focus on native speaker engagement for immersed learners can also influence other aspects of the students' lives upon returning to their home country. Overall, the learner is more likely to see intercultural learning as having been a vital part of their study abroad experience if they are presented with the relevant cultural information that motivates them to actively participate in cultural workshops that enhance their language learning experience (Stephenson, 2002). The exposure to a new culture can lead the learner to have new cultural interactions that assist in their personal and character development, too. The students are, therefore, more prone to express enjoyment in other academic areas and perhaps could see eventual professional success after graduation due to their exposure to a new culture and their evolving intercultural development (Stephenson, 2002 and Dwyer, 2004).

The Importance of Digital Journaling and Social Media Use in Study Abroad Programs

Electronic journaling activities are another way that technology can assist in fostering intercultural sensitivity growth when learning a new culture abroad. Deardorff (2006) describes the importance of digital learning activities to develop intercultural sensitivity when she says that those activities provide the students with overall better access to appropriate cultural information where the student can reflect on the intercultural aspects of those tasks. Lee (2011) elaborates on the importance of digital journaling in study abroad settings by asserting that digital journaling encourages the students to demonstrate self-expression and self-reflection which promotes collective interactivity and collaborative learning. Lee (2010) asserts that intercultural development

for the students requires a considerable amount of time and effort but is worth it so that the students can see the effectiveness of the digital journals to document their experiences while also increasing their intercultural sensitivity. Lee (2010) confirms that since the students are more likely to show better reading and writing skills due to their enhanced language exposure as a result of the digital journaling process, the critical thinking that is required in ICS development will also aid in that learning process. Thus, the learner may simultaneously and explicitly explore intercultural learning to become more sensitive to the nuances of the target culture as they more closely adhere to the host culture's ways of socialization and engagement (Lee, 2010). Lee (2010) explains how those digital journals also increase intercultural communication and the development of their ICS skills as she stresses that project collaboration via digital journaling is not only a beneficial way to reflect on those intercultural experiences but is a valuable tool for their instructors to assess if the students can increase their target language and cultural understanding.

Digital journaling through social media platforms is an efficient tool in guiding students to deeper critical thinking so that they understand the intercultural aspects of the new culture. Solmaz (2017) recommends using a social media network like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. in conjunction with a digital journal or blog or on its own to document intercultural experiences. She explains that the learners can also self-develop or add to their own experiences by using those social media tools to remember or reflect on previous cultural experiences or articles that they read which can also increase their ICS development. Additionally, the learner is able to add other visual materials to these social media tools while abroad like screenshots or audio/video recordings to document

the ICS learning experiences to further expand their ICS growth (Solmaz, 2017). Moreover, Al-Ali (2014) proposes using social media platforms to replace the traditional journaling method (with pen and paper) because the digital platforms allow the instructor to measure a learner's satisfaction level as well as how instructors can make a more valid assessment plan to evaluate the students' ICS development and sensitivity using the digital tools, which aids in the students' overall language learning process. Finally, Godwin-Jones (2013) suggests that the learner's satisfaction level and ability to connect the dots as an intercultural indicator by using social media platforms gives the learner more chances to show that they can add meaning to those newly shared intercultural encounters while abroad.

In sum, digital reflection journals offer a way to better document experiences and student feelings toward the host country so that the learners can see their new intercultural experiences in a different light to further dialogue or remember how those encounters abroad shaped their ICS development (Lee, 2010). Moreover, if the instructor shows the students how to model this writing process related to those new potential experiences (like using electronic journaling to write reflections) and links its benefits to expose and motivate the students as they participate more in ICS tasks, the students will feel more encouraged and more comfort when using the new technologies to write and reflect upon their native speaker exchanges. Similarly, the learner's ICS interactions are more likely to reach past more trivial descriptions or artificial reactions to encounters with others (Lee, 2010) if digital journals are used to reflect on those new cultural encounters. Therefore, the importance of technology use through digital journaling not

only allows for increased foreign language development but may promote intercultural sensitivity and growth by leading students to have more deeper cognitive moments while simultaneously guiding them to increased meaning making opportunities while abroad (Moloney & Harbon, 2010).

Summary of Literature Review Findings

In this literature review, there was special attention paid to the prior research on various definitions of intercultural sensitivity. There was a review of the relevant literature regarding both ICS development and growth and also detailed the importance of using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993) in a study like this one. The various elements of intercultural learning were shown to demonstrate how they could be used to measure ICS along a valid and categorized continuum. Those intercultural sensitivity learning elements were confirmed by describing how ICS development has previously allowed researchers to analyze cultural exchanges and provided suggestions for how to evaluate them. Investigating ICS in study abroad needs to focus on improving the target language and ICS of all of the students involved and a study abroad course allows for that to happen (Wiseman, 2001). Thus, according to Wiseman (2001), learners can complete tasks more thoroughly in ICS contexts if they improve their language knowledge, skills, and motivation as they move through the intercultural learning process (i.e. complete a language course with an ICS framework in place).

The cultural and social contexts and their relation to ICS learning were also reviewed so that it was made apparent that learners who study abroad are given a rich

atmosphere for demonstrating their ICS strides and that when also given digital tools to document their experiences, are more likely to reap the benefits of being more hyperpersonally engaged in those cultural encounters, especially with native speakers of the target language. Moreover, LeBaron & Pillay (2006) and Fantini & Tirmizi (2006) also emphasize that the types of intercultural studies that allow researchers to analyze how learners develop more ethnocentric viewpoints to investigate differences amongst cultures allows for more engagement with others. Thus, intercultural learning promotes foreign language communication when the learner's behaviors and attitudes are more interculturally-oriented, enabling them to analyze their own knowledge, skills, motivation, and attitudes to deepen their language competence. In evaluating both ICS development and growth, there are still many gray areas and instructors may be tempted to subjectively formulate their analyses or change their mindset while assessing their students' ICS progress. For that reason, Bennett (1997) reiterates that acquiring language skills while also recognizing intercultural sensitivity development and growth is not only a tricky balance for the learner but also for the instructor as they have to review many linguistic and behavior characteristics in each cultural interaction. At times, learners may show linguistic or behavioral abilities that pertain to the host culture, but do not accurately notice or reflect on those skills or cues (Bennett, 1997). Thus, according to Bennett (1997), ICS development and growth requires the student to effectively understand how their experiences are affecting their intercultural learning even if their foreign language proficiency is not making significant gains. Lastly, there was a specific emphasis in this literature review on the importance of digital journaling as a reflective

component necessary to see ICS growth since cultural learning requires authentic contexts where students have access to multiple types of resources as they engage in trying to understand their interactions with native speakers (Çakir & Atmaca, 2015).

In conclusion, intercultural learning and sensitivity growth are enhanced when students can actively participate in specifically structured native speaker target language discussions with others from different cultures where they are forced to step outside of their comfort zone to better formulate their global perceptions. These ICS interactions may allow the learners the chance to remove their stereotypes or preconceived judgements or notions about the target culture while also improving their foreign language proficiency. Moreover, Bennett (1998) clarifies that intercultural learning is sophisticated enough to recognize that there will also be differing realities where learners will have to adapt and comprehend concepts in a completely different way even while interacting in a new communication community. By reviewing the relevant literature regarding the cultural learners' openness and flexibility throughout their learning processes, a new ICS mentality could be shown to benefit their post study abroad relationships with friends, family, colleagues, community members, and strangers (or new friends) from all across the world.

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. How do Spanish foreign language learners employ the affordances of WhatsApp (WA) while completing mobile task-based culture activities abroad?
2. Can WhatsApp (WA) be harnessed to facilitate the development of Intercultural Sensitivity?
3. How do Spanish foreign language learners articulate newly acquired intercultural sensitivity?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodology, participant information, instrumentation, and procedures that were followed to collect and analyze the data in this study. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part presents the participants. Part two describes the methods, instruments, and procedures used to collect the data. The third part explains the setup for the analysis of the data, followed by other important considerations related to this study's specific design. Finally, the last part of the methodology section presents a summary of the study design to show how the WhatsApp (WA) posts were submitted and how the data were transferred into the software analysis program, Dedoose for the analysis.

The Context for the Study

The purpose of this intercultural sensitivity study was to investigate (a) the development of ICS during study abroad, and (b) the effect of WhatsApp as a pedagogical tool on ICS. This study's primary goal was also to explore the ways in which the learners interacted with WA and how those actions should be viewed as an important component of teaching and learning about culture.

In this study, the students were assigned a number of culturally focused activities that were designed as three separate modules (with instructions for each module also posted online to their learning management system (LMS) – on Google Classroom) within WA. The modules occurred during weeks 7-9 of their thirteen week course and were integrated into the curriculum of the Spanish upper division class (Spanish 470 - Advanced Oral Spanish) that they took. Each module included one excursion/workshop that related to each of the module themes (for example, module 1's workshop was to attend a tapas presentation for two hours with the owner of a tapas restaurant).

The students' use of WA was done in conjunction with an Advanced Spanish Culture and Conversation Course that the researcher taught, and the coursework included in class-presentations, homework assignments, classroom discussions, and other activities as well as the completion of digital reflection journals. The students' discussions and participation activities were submitted through their WA accounts into the appropriate WA module groups, in accordance with the directions and due dates that were stored online in both Google Classroom and in the WA module groups.

The average class meeting lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes and met twice per week (in-person). 30-45 minute blocks of time were used during the two weekly class sessions

to have the students focus on specifically reviewing and adding posts into the WA module groups. Students were aware that those technologically focused parts of the lectures/conversations were linked to the three modules (weeks 7-9 of the course) and that their WA posts were a part of the instructor's study.

This study attempted to measure learners' intercultural sensitivity growth and development by analyzing their new cultural experiences throughout a specific three week period that was a part of a longer thirteen week semester Spring study abroad course in Segovia, Spain. Secondly, this study monitored the ways in which students used WA in their class activities to reflect on specific aspects of Spanish culture, which formed part of their curriculum in an Advanced Spanish Conversation Course. This study provides valuable insight as to how mobile technology effectively assists in the teaching and learning development process of intercultural sensitivity to guide the immersion student's intercultural interactions.

Participants

The participants (n=12) in this study formed part of a Kentucky Institute for International Studies (KIIS) consortium faculty led study abroad program. The twelve participants attended various universities in Kentucky such as, Western Kentucky University, Louisville University, Marshall University, Centre College, etc. The participants enrolled in the study abroad course and program in Segovia, Spain from February 1st to May 1st of 2019. KIIS is an organization that was founded in 1975 and the KIIS Segovia study abroad program was established 20 years ago. The KIIS Consortium coordinates many study abroad programs in countries outside of Spain, as well.

Prior to joining the study abroad program, none of the participants had ever taken a course in or that focused on aspects of cultural competence, intercultural sensitivity or multiculturalism. Additionally, their use of Spanish had largely been in formal academic settings in the USA and in foreign language classrooms, mostly in Kentucky. Before traveling to Spain for their program, the participants had minimal exposure to using Spanish in their everyday lives outside of the traditional classroom experience in the USA. Some of the students had personal relationships across cultures but few had specifically taken advanced culture of Spain courses (entirely in Spanish) where conversation and intense listening comprehension were crucial course components. The classes met in the mornings, which left afternoons and evenings for the students to explore Segovia and observe and interact with the native speaker Spaniards.

The students also lived with pre-assigned host families. While in Segovia, the students' accommodations were set up so that each student lived with a Spanish host family in a home-stay arrangement, providing students with the opportunity to experience daily life by interacting with the native Spanish speakers on a more personal level and in more intimate settings. Student interaction along with their in-home language and culture practice allowed them to engage with their host families through the following activities: shared meals, conversations with family members or other international students living in the home, participation in interactions with friends and neighbors of their host families by attending parties, interacting in get togethers, and/or running errands or attending local events with native Spanish speakers. The students also engaged in regular conversations with the host families and routinely asked for recommendations for places to travel to

around the city of Segovia as well as requesting their host family's help for ways in which they could enjoy and travel to other places in the region of Castilla y Leon (1 of the 17 autonomous communities in Spain where they lived) and other regions within Spain. The host families were assigned to each student based on their living preferences and many of the students lived with another classmate (from the program) at the host family's house or apartment. The students lived no farther than a 15-minute walk from the physical classroom location of their Spanish courses, which was in the main city center plaza of Segovia. Those host families were assigned by the two study abroad program leaders before the program commenced.

Students in the program were encouraged to interact with other instructors within the school (besides the course instructor) where the classes were held, attend activities outside of the classroom hours to practice their language skills, and discuss more cultural opportunities at the study abroad school through seminars by attending various cultural events sponsored by the city of Segovia. The students were also given resources, such as pamphlets for cultural outings and contact information of other instructors and international students in the city. This allowed them to plan meetups to go to concerts, sporting events, literary readings, museum tours, etc. and to interact with native Spanish speakers more frequently. The two study abroad program leaders encouraged students to attend those cultural events so that the learners could communicate with other instructors, families, and international students in Segovia and across Spain who were studying or working at different universities or within other academic organizations. Additionally, the students traveled to local cultural sites both in and around Segovia (which were

mandatory requirements) as a part of their program experience. These cultural visits were also connected to the 3-4 courses that each student enrolled in.

In this study, it is important to consider the context for the data collection process to understand the importance of the study's impact. For that reason, it is key to note that Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) was the focal point of the analysis since it is now at the cutting edge of teaching and learning languages and cultures (Godwin-Jones, 2013). In the past 15 years, the use of MALL has become more wide-spread in education and learners now feel more comfortable using mobile internet devices to learn languages and cultures when compared to the traditional desktop and laptop computers that were previously part of the computer assisted language-learning (CALL) field (Pegrum, 2004). This shift had led to more studies in mobile learning spaces where mobile technology (i.e. smartphones, tablets, etc.) are being used (Duman, Orhon, & Gedik, 2015). Mobile-based learning has impacted language design for university courses and many higher education institutions argue that more courses should plan to use mobile applications, websites, games, and platforms in their foreign language course design (Godwin-Jones, 2013).

One arena where we have seen mobile devices become more important for students is for teaching and learning languages in study abroad programs (Lee, 2011). Moreover, mobile application integration in study abroad programs can assist the students in developing higher levels of proficiency in the foreign language while growing their intercultural sensitivity. Therefore, the implementation of social media tools (see Lee, 2010) and tasks to facilitate different language learning strategies (see González-Lloret &

Ortega, 2014) that focus on using technology (i.e. the mobile apps) to assist learners in all aspects of language and culture in study abroad programs is an important step in making intercultural learning and sensitivity development more dynamic, engaging, and beneficial for the learners.

Themes Chosen for the WhatsApp Modules

The three themes that were chosen for the WA modules were selected because they were common upper-level culture topics that could be taught in all types of advanced Spanish language courses (in person, hybrid, online, etc.). The themes were related to food, Hispanic people, the history of Spain, and other cultural nuances linked to the role of family in Spain and encompassed how foreign language students typically interact with diverse sets of communities in immersion programs.

Here are the different themes that were covered in the three modules:

Theme 1 (week 7) – Ir de Tapas (Going out for Small Plates in Spain – How Spaniards Socialize and Enjoy the Tapas Tradition, which includes eating and drinking together)

Theme 2 (week 8) – La Tortilla Española (The History, Making, and Importance of the Spanish Omelet in Spain.)

Theme 3 (week 9) – El Famoso Castillo (The Famous Castle) “El Alcázar” en Segovia (Learning about the History, Culture, and Importance of the Alcázar Castle in Segovia, Spain)

Table 1 below shows the course timeline and the dates that were used to start and finish the experiment with as well as listing the various instruments used.

Table 1

Study Abroad Course Timeline

Here is a timeline for the thirteen week course:
Week 1 (February 4 th) – Course Begins
Weeks 2-6 (February 11 th -March 15 th) – Classes meet twice a week in person
Week 7 (March 18 th) – Experiment explained, first module begins
Week 8 (March 25 th) – Second Module Begins
Week 9 (April 1 st) – Third Module Begins
Week 10 (April 8 th) - Assessment #1 (Survey given on April 3 rd)
Week 12 (April 22 nd) – Assessment #2 (Audio Interview performed)
Week 13 (April 29 th) – Last week of course and final exams

During the class periods and time spent with the students discussing the tasks both inside and outside of the physical classroom meetings in the thirteen week program, the instructor kept extensive notes on the students’ interactions amongst each other and with the native Spanish speakers related to his observations to document the following:

- The students’ common obstacles while trying to understand a task.
- The students’ language and cultural progressions and regressions related to their learning and development of ICS.
- Notes and reflections from the class that assisted in identifying ICS growth and development.

-Potential additions/deletions to the students' assignments that connected to ICS or the cultural topics that were studied

A student's common obstacle while trying to understand a task

Example of a Common Student Obstacle: A student does not understand why people in Spain eat smaller portions of food for their meals later in the night compared to people from the USA. Also, a student may not have initially understood why a Spaniard choose to eat a number of small plates in three different bars with three different friends as a way to spend their dinner time.

The student's language and cultural progressions and regressions related to ICS learning development

Example of a Cultural Learning Progression: A student was able to compare their own culture of eating a quiche at a family party (in the U.S.A.) that their family member prepared. The student compared the preparation and food product from the USA to how their host family member in Spain spent time and care preparing the Spaniard family's omelets to prepare one for someone's birthday party in Segovia.

Other notes and reflections from the class that assisted in identifying ICS growth and development.

Example of an Observation: A student reflects on an interaction that they had with another instructor about a famous building that they saw in a separate Spanish city (like

Madrid) that was similar to the castle in Segovia. The student explained the building and the interaction and the researcher recorded the information on his computer.

Potential additions/deletions to the students' assignments related to ICS

Example of an Instructor Correction: The student posted information into one of the WA groups in week 7 (the first module week) that was incorrect related to whether or not a food dish should be served as a tapa and the researcher posted a note in the WA group clarifying the type of food (its meal category designation for Spaniards) and how it should be served (i.e. a correction from the instructor to the student on how the tapa was typically served).

Part I - Procedures

Due to logistical difficulties of having the investigator based in Arizona and the students living in Kentucky, he was unable to do a pretest with the actual study participants. This was a limitation of the study design (see Chapter 5 under Limitations). The researcher did not receive permission from the host institutions in Kentucky to administer a pre-test. The students were not under the researcher's control as they were at different universities and located on the other side of the USA. It was both impossible and impractical to administer a pretest with the study participants.

Instrumentation

Throughout the thirteen weeks of the program, the investigator participated in the study abroad program excursions/workshops related to both the Spanish course that he taught as well as the three workshops that formed part of this investigation. The investigator conducted debriefing sessions with the students after the three course workshops/excursions and kept a daily record of his conversations, observations, and reflections in both notebooks and on his laptop computer and saved them in the Google Drive cloud system. After returning to the USA, he analyzed the data and reflected on his documented program interactions with the students by further analyzing those experiences. For the instruments used for analysis purposes, he used a combination of the framework of the ICS definition from Chen & Starosta (1997), assessment #1 (survey) (Appendix D), assessment #2 (interview) (Appendix E), and Bennett's (1993) DMIS ICS Continuum to measure ICS growth and learning development. Lastly, all real names from the participants were changed for confidentiality purposes.

Part II - Data Collection

This section details how the data collection and analysis procedures connected to the study's thematic and content analysis approach. A thematic analysis is a method for identifying themes in qualitative data research (Dapkus, 1985). The content analysis framework allowed for a controlled analyses of texts within a reliable context of communication, which followed content analytical rules as a valid way to conduct an interpretation of a large amount of data (Silverman, 1993). Both of these theories together (thematic/content analyses) allowed for a mixed-methods study where both quantitative and qualitative designs were used to interpret the ways in which the learners interacted

using WA and allowed for the elicitation of data that informed the researcher on how to measure ICS growth and development.

Mackey & Gass (2016) also describe categorizing and coding in linguistics as a crucial part of any type of mixed methods study because it allows for the imperative organization of data into a manageable and interpretable format. In this study, the majority of the data was posted into the social media platform WA but data collection also included saving audio recordings on a recording device (iPhone), storing written answers to questions from paper surveys, organizing and inputting field notes from observations into a computer and cloud based storage system from both inside and outside of the classroom and on workshop excursions, and writing down any questions asked by the students. The students' interactions from the course were also monitored since the researcher listened to their conversations (in the foreign language) outside of the classroom and his analysis focused on the symbols/emoticons/hashtags they chose to submit as a part of the completion of their tasks that were posted into the app. The students' posted photos were reviewed multiple times, their various encounters with the Spanish native speakers were analyzed, and a comparison and contrastive analysis were used to evaluate both the formal and informal Spanish language use that the students demonstrated.

Another frequent type of data analyzed used in this study was oral discourse. This oral data mostly required interview transcriptions so that they could be put into more organized formats (Mackey & Gass, 2016). The Spanish transcriptions were translated for interpretation purposes as the researcher is bilingual in Spanish and English. The

transcriptions were uploaded into the Dedoose software program for analysis. The transcription process involved transcribing language from the two post assessments and translating the participants' answers, putting them into new documents, and then analyzing/interpreting them in terms of the categorization metrics of Bennett's DMIS ICS Model (1993).

The Thematic Analysis Framework for Data Collection

The thematic framework, when paired with a data analysis strategy (like content analysis), allows for the identification of ICS growth alongside a mobile assisted language learning intervention to review what the students did, how they did it (the student's posting preferences) and finally to interpret the ways in which those interactions evolved. Moreover, the thematic analysis provided a flexible and useful way to interpret rich and detailed data, yet also provide a complex account of how the data were analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

In order to measure ICS growth using multiple data sources, the researcher factored in the information connected to the post study assessments and the three WA groups the students participated in plus the fourth WhatsApp group i.e. the digital reflection journal group posts. Later, the data codes that arose were used, after analyzing the data, to create the coding categories and those were combined as well with other notes and observations on how the learners comprehended the Spanish language as it was used by the students to complete the different cultural tasks. Even though many ICS growth tests use only quantitative data collection and analysis to measure ICS growth and development, it was perfectly acceptable to combine quantitative and qualitative methods

with various ICS theories and definition metrics in order to measure ICS growth in a classroom study like this one.

Figure 5 below shows how the thematic analysis framework was implemented to analyze the data. The data were collected, read through and examined. The coding units were identified and applied and the number of times that the coding units appeared was tallied to complete this process.

Figure 5

Thematic Analysis Process

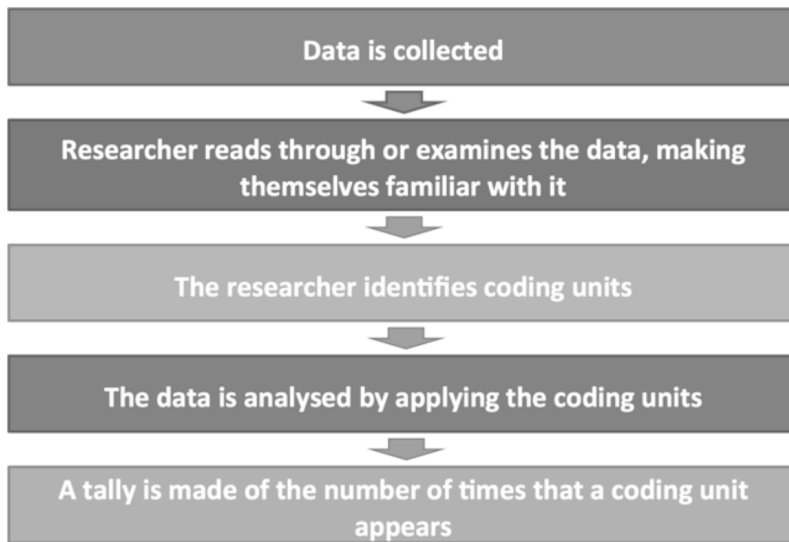
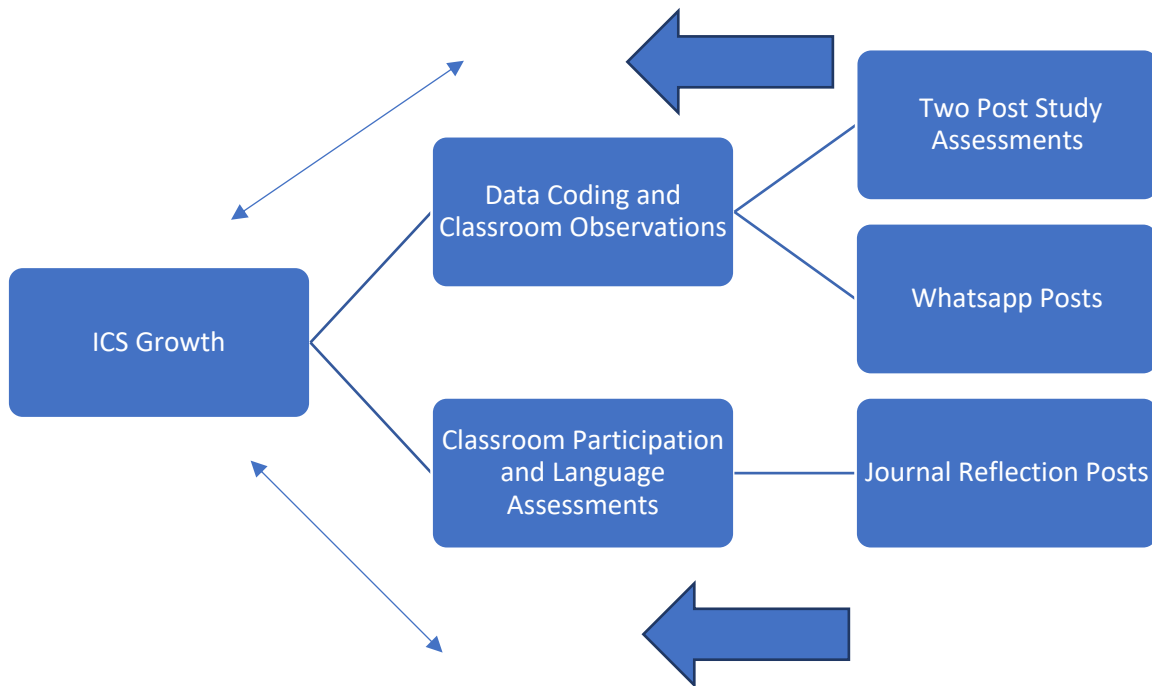


Figure 6 below shows the workflow process of both the content and thematic frameworks in the study. Starting with the data, a variety of codes and assessments were used to finally measure the learners' ICS growth.

Figure 6

The Approach for this Study (ICS Growth is the End Goal – Read from Right to Left and follow the arrows)



The Content Analysis

In this study, the data submissions were coded using a content analysis and this analysis technique required analyzing words and categorizing them into a smaller number of content categories, based on explicit rules of coding. In a more standard content analysis, coding categories are taken directly from the data encompassing the text. Bauer (2000) describes content analysis as an effective way of making large amounts of data more manageable. A content analysis of the data involves classifying and counting text units from a large amount of material to describe its features in a systematic way that can be replicable by others (Bauer, 2000). According to Chávez & Yamamoto (2014), this current study's type of content analysis is acceptable and useful because it is based on a

technique that simply converts open-ended responses and questions into distinct categories. Moreover, this content analysis process is beneficial because it categorizes perceptions from the data samples and explicitly avoids artificially imposed categories that could be created by the researcher. According to Asunka, Chae, & Natriello (2011), data interpretation that uses content analysis requires an enormous amount of reading and re-reading the many textual exchanges to formulate a constant comparative mindset.

This content analysis resulted in the creation of categories and subcategories for the various comments and language exchanges that were posted or created by the participants. The content analysis employed in this study required the counting and comparison of the words against each other so that they could be categorized appropriately and interpreted to understand the many utterances given throughout the students' responses, while also bearing in mind the relevant contexts to see the "when" and "why" related to how the students' messages were posted.

This study collected three types of data:

- 1) Verbal – group discussions, student-instructor and student-native speaker encounters
- 2) Written - responses to worksheets, questions, and surveys
- 3) Written and Listening Together - guided discussion questions/answers and interview prompts that elicited questions and answers

With the immense amount of data collected from these multiple sources, it was not necessary to transcribe hours of interactions between participants, since the researcher was bilingual in the target language. Thus, various responses and posts were coded in detail by also analyzing the written answers and transcribing only the most relevant

examples that connected to or that had occurred during the classroom interactions, modules, and workshop conversations that directly related to the research questions.

The process of coding through observation for this study could be described as the following:

1. During the coding phases, the different sources of data were noted from conversations by reviewing the students' answers to questions on handouts and in their own notebooks. The researcher also took notes and/or recorded observations electronically to monitor the student's participation and understanding of the content throughout the course meetings and excursions/workshops.
2. The participants' actions and other questions posed to the workshop speakers during and after the workshop sessions were recorded and the students' interactions with each other and with the Spanish native speakers were watched and interpreted by the researcher during other program events.

Coding Process and Thematical Organization

The data were collected from the twelve participants and entered into the Dedoose software program for content analysis. The thematic analysis was employed to find the relevant themes that related to the research questions. During the coding process, the different sources of data were analyzed as a complete set.

Table 2 below shows how the investigator used the various phases of the thematic analysis to assist him in his data transcription and coding.

Table 2

Phases of a Thematic Analysis (Adopted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Phase	Description of the Process
1. Familiarizing yourself with the data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading, and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic “map” of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract samples, final analysis of extracted extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Uncategorized notes were also recorded as the researcher tried to understand the answers the students gave him and how the students interacted with each other and with

the native speakers. At this time, he incorporated his analysis techniques into the categories that connected to the learning outcomes for the intercultural sensitivity tasks which were described earlier in this chapter related to how the modules and themes were chosen and planned.

The investigator also created the initial list of categories as they appear below:

Initial Coding Categories

Workshop Importance – Tapas Workshop (TW)

e.g. “Me gusta el aspecto social de ir de tapas y es lo que aprendimos en el taller.”

[I like the social aspect of going out for Tapas which we learned about in the workshop.]

Workshop Importance - Omelet Workshop (OW)

e.g. “Aprendí en el taller de tapas que la tortilla española es un plato típico de aquí porque es barato, fácil para hacer y tiene un buen sabor.”

[I learned in the tapas workshop that the Spanish omelet is a typical dish here because it is cheap, easy to make, and has a good taste.]

Workshop Importance - Castle Workshop (CW)

e.g. “Aprendí mucho en el taller del alcázar. Una cosa que me interesaba mucho era la arquitectura árabe antigua que yo podía ver detrás de todas las cosas cristianas. Eso realmente te permite ver la historia del Alcázar.”

[I learned a lot in the Alcazar workshop. One thing that interested me a lot was the ancient Arab architecture that I could see behind all of the Christian things. That really allows you to see the history of the Alcazar.]

WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU)

e.g. “Poder ver los videos en la aplicación y comentarlos era muy útil: del Chef en el restaurante de tapas y del dueño del restaurante donde aprendimos cosas importantes sobre la cultura con los varios usos de WhatsApp.”

[Being able to watch the videos in the app and comment on them - from the Chef in the tapas restaurant and from the owner of the restaurant where we learned about the omelet was beneficial.]

DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 3 (ICS3)

e.g. “En la cocina de Pasapan (el restaurante del segundo módulo), el cocinero no cocinó para un público, pero ojalá que él reciba satisfacción en su trabajo y en lo que él ha creado para nuestro taller. Fue difícil para mí entenderlo y él trabajó en una cocina muy pequeña, pero fue agradable e intentaba impresionarnos.”

[In the *Pasapan* kitchen (the restaurant of the second module), the chef did not cook for an audience, but I hope he receives satisfaction in his work and in what he has created for our workshop. It was difficult for me to understand him and he worked in a very small kitchen, but he was nice and tried to impress us.]

DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 4 (ICS4)

e.g. “Creo que los estadounidenses van a gustar la tortilla española pero solamente para desayunar porque parece mucho como una comida de desayuno.”

[I believe that Americans (from the U.S.) are going to like the Spanish omelet but only for breakfast because it seems to be like a breakfast food.]

DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ISC Level 5 (ICS5)

e.g. “Un edificio similar en los Estados Unidos al Alcázar es la Casa Blanca del gobierno. Es similar en propósito en que las personas más importantes del país trabajar y vivir allí, pero es diferente en que no está usado por la seguridad - no realmente hay mucha seguridad creado por el edificio, solamente hay guardas y una valla allí. No he visitado la Casa Blanca, pero yo sé todavía que el dentro también está muy lujoso y decorado como el Alcázar.”

[e.g. “A similar building to the Alcazar in the U.S. is the government's White House. It is similar in purpose in that the most important people in the country work and live there, but it is different in that it is not used for security - there is not really much security around the building, there are only guards and a fence there. I have not visited the White House, but I still know that the interior is also very luxurious and decorated like the Alcázar.]

Second Round of Coding Categories

Comparison of Host Food v. Home Food (FCOMP)

e.g. “Escuché a la entrevista de mi colega con su mamá de aquí. Pienso que es interesante que Inma no aprendió a cocinar la tortilla de patata de su mamá. Y que no hay algo similar a ella en los EE. UU, excepto un quiche.”

[I listened to my classmate’s interview with her host mom. I think it is interesting that the host mom (Inma) did not learn how to cook the Spanish Omelet from her mother. And there is not something similar to it in the U.S.A. except for a quiche.]

Native Speaker Interaction (NSINT)

e.g. “Me gustó mucho la entrevista de mi colega. La mujer con quién habló tenía un sentido de humor muy bueno, y me interesó mucho que la mujer le bromeó a ella que las personas en Inglaterra comen su comida en la manera incorrecta.”

[I liked the interview a lot from my classmate. She spoke with a woman who had a very good sense of humor and it was interesting to me that the woman joked with her about how people in England eat their food the wrong way.]

Importance of Food to Spaniards (FIMP)

e.g. “Me interesa mucho la entrevista de mi compañera de clase y el hombre y que el hombre dijo que la comida de los estados unidos es menos tradicional y tiene mucha grasa. Estoy de acuerdo con él. La comida aquí en España es más saludable y deliciosa cuando la comparas a la comida que yo como en nuestro país.”

[I am very interested in the interview of my classmate with the man and he said that the food in the United States is less traditional and has a lot of fat/is greasy. I agree with him. The food here in Spain is healthier and more delicious when you compare it to the food that I eat in our country.]

Recognized Newly Learned Aspect of Spanish Culture (CULIMP)

e.g. “Mi cosa favorita de aprender sobre el Alcázar fue que el arte de los techos es mudéjar.”

[e.g. My favorite thing to learn about the Alcazar was that the ceiling art is Mudejar.]

Cultural Art Event or Food Outing(CEFO)

e.g. “Mi cosa favorita del Alcázar fue oír los cuentos del Alcázar que nos dijo Marian (la guía turística) y también aprender el significado del arte.”

[My favorite thing about the Alcazar was hearing the tales of the Alcazar that Marian (the tourist guide) told us and also learning the meaning of art.]

Family and Cultural Relevance (FAM)

e.g. “Creo que esto plato es una comida típica aquí en España porque es una tradición y la receta se ha transmitido por cada familia.”

[I think that this dish is a typical food here in Spain because it is a tradition and the recipe has been passed down by each family.]

Life at Home (LAH)

e.g. “Sí, voy a aprender de mi señora. Ella cocina bien la tortilla española y después voy a cocinarla para mi novio y para su familia porque a ellos les encanta comer comida rica.”

[Yes, I am going to learn from my host mother. She cooks the Spanish Omelet well and afterwards; I am going to cook it for my boyfriend and his family because they love to eat delicious food.]

After developing the codes from the analysis process, the codes were further analyzed using the Dedoose software program, which was used for coding both the qualitative and quantitative data. It allowed the researcher to both import and export data from the observations and notes, and to facilitate the data management flow to view and interpret the multiple student perspectives. Dedoose was used to revise the importance of the different modalities that the participants choose (after they completed the study tasks) and grouped together patterns of foreign language use.

The first step in the analysis was to upload the WhatsApp posts and both post study assessments (Assessment#1 – Surveys and Assessment #2 – Interviews) and notes into the software program. After that, the coded statements were categorized, and the categories were clustered and interpreted. Lastly, the relevant themes and data points were identified, classified, and given names so they could be identified and further divided into sub themes to address each of the research questions.

The Two Post Assessments (Surveys and Interviews)

The post course survey (post assessment #1, Appendix E) was given to the students to assess their ICS growth at the end of the three week module period. The post assessment (#1) survey questions were developed to see what students thought about the technology and intercultural sensitivity activities and were based upon the specific ICS assessment theories discussed in Chen & Starosta (1997). The learners completed this post assessment #1 (survey) as he asked them to describe how technology and the various forms of interacting with others to describe the content affected their opinions and overall comprehension. Along with incorporating Chen & Starosta's (1997) ideas and

suggestions related to ICS development, the investigator also used the current American Council for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages (ACTFL) teaching and learning culture guidelines to assist him in creating those questions.

The second assessment (interview, Appendix E) was an audio recorded semistructured interview and was given one week after the third module was completed (week twelve of the program). It was executed by the instructor as a part of the students' final exam grade using the teacher's Apple iPhone recording device (in a sit down interview format). The instructor interviewed each participant for 8-10 minutes using the semi structured interview style where there was a script, however, the question script was not rigidly followed so that the participant had more freedom to express themselves with their answers. These interview questions were created to assess the students on their content comprehension and knowledge acquisition related to various cultural themes as well as the intercultural development ideas that were included in the course's tasks. The questions mostly focused on the comprehension of the tasks that related to the themes of the Small Plates (Tapas), Spanish Omelet (Tortilla Española) and Alcazar Castle (Castilla del Alcázar) in the WA Modules (see Appendices D-E).

An Overview of the Modules and their Contents

Module summaries with explanations. The different modalities of the WhatsApp Mobile application allowed for the participants to focus on a specific modality as they completed the three modules. The following information will show the modality goals as well as a brief summary of each module's contents.

Module #1 - A summary of a typical tapas task (see Appendix A). Below is a brief summary of the Tapas activity (see Appendix A). The students had to perform various tasks within this first module to complete it, but here are the main set of instructions that were given to them (see Appendix A).

- Explaining what tapas were.
- Putting photos of tapas into their WA group.
- Recording a native Spanish speaker talk about tapas and then listening to another classmate's recording submission from the WA group.
- Detailing how tapas were different from an American lunch or dinner and comparing/contrasting how this Spanish tradition shaped or influenced other Spanish cultural traditions (and submitted through the WA group).

Table 3 below is a sample schedule of one of the module weeks. As you can see in this sample from Module 1, the students had various due dates throughout the week where they had to post their information into the WA group (see Appendix A). The same schedule was used for all of the module weeks with slight adjustments, due to the students having other trips that may have taken them out of the class or slightly reduced their class meeting times.

This sample schedule model (table 3) shows how the theme was introduced on a Sunday before the students' classes commenced for the week. For example, the students attended the first class meeting on Monday for a typical module week. They attended the module workshop to learn more about the theme from a native speaker on Tuesday. They met again with the investigator/instructor for class on Wednesday and had various

homework assignments due in the WA group before the end of the week to complete the module.

Table 3 below shows how the various phase due dates were structured as a part of the different course weeks for the modules to give the students time to process the information after they had attended the workshops/excursions. It also shows that the reflection tasks was turned in at the end of the module week after all of the other tasks of the module were completed.

Table 3

A Sample Module Schedule – from Week 7 of the course, Week 1 of the experiment

<u>Sunday - Task Instructions and Due Dates/Information Posted to the Google Classroom Course Website – All assignments posted in WA</u>
On Wednesday, the students completed Phase I (The Comprehension Questions).
On Thursday, the students completed Phase II (The Native Speaker Interviews).
On Friday, the students completed Phase III-A (They posted their comments on two other classmates' posts adding something else that they learned or posted some questions.)
On Saturday, the students completed Phase III-B (They posted a photo or produced their own interview.).
On Sunday, the students completed Phase IV (They wrote reflections and submitted them.).

Note. Table 3 is the schedule that was used for every module (with a few exceptions).

Module #2 - A summary of a typical Spanish Omelet task (see Appendix B). The twelve students attended a two hour workshop on the Spanish Omelet as a part of the

course. They did a tour of the kitchen of a Segovian restaurant where the Spanish Omelet was prepared. They had a chance to ask the head chef, patrons, waiters, and restaurant owner a number of questions related to the cultural topic. They watched the head chef prepare a gigantic Spanish Omelet, which would later be shared by the student group. They had various assignments due for that week of the module that they submitted through the WA Group.

Module #3 – A description and summary of a castle visit task (see Appendix C).

The twelve students attended a two hour informational guided tour of the Alcazar Castle. They saw multiple rooms and viewed the castle from both inside and outside after completing a few module tasks. They had a chance to read and learn information about the history of the castle and could ask the tour guide questions about the descriptions she gave related to the castle and its many rooms.

Below is one of the assignments they had to complete that was a part of successfully completing Module #3.

Module #3 - A sample castle task

1. Write a paragraph about your experience in the castle/fortress describing what you saw and felt.

2. Record (audio only) a conversation of 2 to 3 minutes with a friend from the class to answer the following questions (prompt below):

Person #1 will act as the: Journalist

Person #2 will act as the: U.S. Tourist

Prompt: Imagine you are a Telecinco television reporter in Spain. You are making a story about the cultural significance of the Alcazar with a nearby tourist. You stop him or her in front of the fortress after their visit and ask them about their recent trip there.

3. Record your reflections in the WA group to discuss your experience after this module.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results and it is divided into three sections to answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. The results for each research question will be analyzed individually to see how mobile assisted language learning (MALL) affects intercultural sensitivity and language use, bearing in mind that the participants completed tasks in an immersive, study abroad environment.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How do Spanish foreign language learners employ the affordances of WhatsApp (WA) while completing mobile task-based culture activities abroad?
2. Can WhatsApp (WA) be harnessed to facilitate the development of Intercultural Sensitivity?

3. How do Spanish foreign language learners articulate newly acquired intercultural sensitivity?

Part I: Research Question 1

The first part of this chapter will begin by addressing the first research question and describe the results from the various modules. Selected posts were chosen to show the most relevant responses related to the following research question.

Research Question #1: How do Spanish foreign language learners employ the affordances of WhatsApp (WA) while completing mobile task-based culture activities abroad?

In order to answer this question, the posts produced by students in module 1 will be analyzed. There were a total of 53 messages and they were categorized as follows: 1) voice message, 2) text message, 3) photo submission, 4) hashtag with caption response, and 5) reflection post.

The results showed that, overall, students' selections were balanced across various types of messages. However, it was interesting to see that a slightly higher number of students would respond with text messages as the most prevalent submission type in this module, despite its listening focus, after listening to those appropriate messages. This may have happened because it was the first participation module for them and they may have felt more comfortable submitting written responses. Table 4 below shows the types of messages and the selections made by each participant.

Table 4

The WhatsApp Posts in Module #1 - Ir de Tapas –53 Total Messages

Student	Voice	Text	Photo	Hashtag	Reflection
Kelly	1	1	2	N/A	1
Margaret	1	1	1	N/A	1
Brad	1	1	1	N/A	2
Taylor	1	2	1	N/A	1
Mary	1	1	1	N/A	1
Caitlin	1	1	1	N/A	1
Lisa	1	2	1	N/A	1
Amy	1	2	1	N/A	1
Sally	1	1	1	N/A	1
Emma	1	1	1	N/A	1
Haley	1	1	1	N/A	1
Barbara	1	1	1	N/A	1
<u>Totals:</u>	12	15	13	N/A	13

For module 2, the same type of analysis was conducted to see students' frequency of responses. Table 5 below shows the responses posted in the Spanish Omelet Module (Module 2). Photos and audio messages were the most frequently used modality out of the 90 total messages.

Table 5

The WhatsApp Posts in Module #2 - Spanish Omelet— 90 Total Messages

Student	Voice	Text	Photo	Hashtag	Reflection
Kelly	1	1	1	1	1
Margaret	3	1	2	1	1
Brad	2	2	2	1	1
Taylor	2	2	2	1	1
Mary	2	1	2	1	1
Caitlin	2	1	2	1	1
Lisa	2	2	3	1	1
Amy	2	1	2	1	1
Sally	2	1	2	1	1
Emma	2	1	2	1	1
Haley	3	1	2	1	1
Barbara	2	1	2	1	1
<u>Totals:</u>	25	15	24	12	12

For
module 3,

the same type of analysis was conducted to see the students' frequency of responses.

Table 6 below shows the responses posted in the Alcazar Castle Module (module #3). Out of a total of 33 messages, text messages were the most frequently used modality with 15 selections.

Table 6

The WhatsApp Posts in Module #3 - The Alcazar Castle – 33 Total Messages

Student	Voice	Text	Photo	Hashtag	Reflection
Kelly	1	1	N/A	N/A	1
Margaret	-	1	N/A	N/A	1
Brad	-	2	N/A	N/A	1
Taylor	1	1	N/A	N/A	1
Mary	-	1	N/A	N/A	1
Caitlin	1	1	N/A	N/A	1
Lisa	1	1	N/A	N/A	1
Amy	1	1	N/A	N/A	1
Sally	-	1	N/A	N/A	1
Emma	-	1	N/A	N/A	1
Haley	-	2	N/A	N/A	1
Barbara	1	2	N/A	N/A	1

<u>Totals:</u>	6	15	N/A	N/A	12
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Across the three modules, text messages were the most frequently selected type of message with 45 selections. The next most frequent response was the reflection post.

The Importance of ICS and Technology Use when Students Engage with Native Speakers

Overall, the students enjoyed using the mobile application in the modules to communicate with each other and with the researcher about the cultural course themes. They participated and engaged in conversations using all of the different modalities and even said they were more motivated to speak in Spanish using the app because it did not give them as much anxiety compared to speaking in class.

The details of the analysis will now briefly segue to a more qualitative description of the students' posts to show how they interacted with one another and with the native speakers via WhatsApp. In the tapas workshop (module 1) and in various encounters with people on the street in Spain, the investigator observed that the students often struggled to describe and understand what had happened in the variety of situations they encountered. The students often explained their encounters in the classroom meetings with the instructor since there were times when they did not understand the questions from their host families related to the module tasks or when they communicated with them through WA. They would sometimes have to ask other classmates for help through the WA groups during various phases of the tasks to understand how they should ask their host families a variety of questions or how to respond to native Speakers when they went out for tapas or if they wanted to discover the significance of a Spanish cultural nuance

(whether at a family party/get together/meal gathering/etc.). One of the students, **Margaret**, told the story of the obstacles she faced when conversing with a native speaker in one interaction about the location of a restaurant and how she used the various functions of WA to guide her in her learning. In one of her reflection posts in module #1 (Tapas), she explicitly said that her willingness and positive feelings toward the app allowed her to quickly resolve an issue on the street with a native speaker so that she could meet with her host family at a restaurant.

Margaret said, “I tried asking someone on the street for directions once because I could not get a signal on my cell phone to use my GPS app. I stopped to ask a man on the street a question, and he did not understand initially what I was saying to him or where I was trying to go. Finally, my GPS signal came back and I used the app to look up some verbs and vocabulary to communicate more effectively with him. I eventually told him the name of the restaurant and why I was trying to go there. Even though I ended up getting directed to a similar type of restaurant on the other side of the village (with the same name), I was able to use the technology to better understand the language and culture and to have a successful conversation with the Spaniard.” This post was coded as **“WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU).”**

In total, there were *three (3) references* related to liking the mobile technology from the students while learning about the culture. Those were coded as **“WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU).”** There were also six (6) discussions later in the reflections group that related to the student’s specific app use and many of

those posts were similar to those of Margaret. Those were also coded as “**WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU).**”

For example, **Lisa said**, “Using the technology in the modules was fun. I was able to access the activities at different times throughout the day and I liked being able to see the sequences of the various message threads when I was outside of class.” This post was thus coded as “**WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU).**”

Similarly, **Sally said**, “I enjoyed being able to listen to the native speaker interviews that most of my fellow students conducted with their host moms. It allowed me to gain a different perspective, which helped me in better understanding the concept that we were studying in class or to comprehend an aspect of one of the tasks. Sally’s post was coded as “**Native Speaker Interaction (NSINT)**” and as “**WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU).**”

Interpreting the Intercultural Sensitivity Aspects of the Posts

The results from the WA posts were analyzed and interpreted as well as the answers given from both post study assessments. Those comments were then separated and categorized by the relevant module number as well as the last category (in tables 4-6 above) to show the total number of comments that were made based on the types of posts.

In the reflection phase of each module, most learners commented on the current module’s activities from that week. However, there were some learners who would incorporate past module commentaries into their reflections to reference various aspects of their intercultural or technology learning from the previous phases of prior modules. Specifically, many learners choose to reference the first module’s tasks in their second

module reflection since both modules related to food and to the Spanish Omelet since the omelet is served as a Tapa or small plate, which was the theme for Module #1's ICS learning.

Table 7

Coding Results Showing Category Responses for All Three Modules

Coding Category Module #1 (TAPAS) Module #2 (OMELET) Module #3 (CASTLE)

REFLECTIONS

States Importance of Attending Tapas Workshop (TW)	5	0	0	2
States Importance of Attending Omelet Workshop (OW)	0	6	9	6
States Importance of Attending Castle Workshop (CW)	0	0	8	4
Mentions technology positively in their intercultural learning (PTU)	3	2	2	6
Discusses home culture in purely comparative way (HC)	2	5	7	5
Compares a specific home food item v. host food item (FCOMP)	2	7	0	8

Mentions another cultural nuance (native speaker interaction, attending event, daily errand, etc.) to show ICS understanding (CN)	5	8	9	4
Comments positively on native speaker interaction or conversation (NSINT)	4	2	3	5
Discusses importance of family nucleus in Spain/USA (FAM)	3	6	0	2
Mentions general importance of food to Spaniards (FIMPT)	8	4	0	3
References learning history of Spain for ICS understanding (LAH)	0	0	9	10
Recognizes Newly Learned aspect of Spanish culture for ICS understanding (CEFO)	3	4	5	0
Totals:	48	58	66	69

Note. The capitalized letters in parenthesis are the coding descriptors that were used in the analysis (see Chapter 3).

To conclude this section, Table 7 above showed a summary of the posts related to each Intercultural Sensitivity coding category relative to the activity or ICS element description. The findings show the number of total posts that all students did as their comments were placed in the appropriate categories for analysis purposes. The coding

categories and other relevant examples were also listed in Chapter 3 (the methodology section).

The results for the second research question will now be addressed. That second research question was as follows:

Question #2 : Can WhatsApp (WA) be harnessed to facilitate the development of Intercultural Sensitivity?

To answer this question, the researcher will use comments by several students to illustrate how they harnessed WA to facilitate the development of ICS through their module posts. For example, **Barbara** added some interesting insight into her posts for the speaking focused module (Module #2) related to the Spanish Omelet. **Barbara said**, “I listened to Emma’s recording and was fascinated by how the man she interviewed learned how to cook the Spanish Omelet when he was like 14 years old. Most learn about the omelet from their parents, but this young man learned how to cook it in a bar for work and said how important it was for his culture”. This post was coded as **“Recognized Newly Learned Aspect of Spanish Culture (CULIMP).”**

In this module, one can see how Barbara showed a deeper intercultural understanding of the nuance by linking a cultural member’s skills that he developed for cooking the Spanish Omelet to her understanding of food’s importance to Spanish culture, which is usually passed down to the younger generation from the parents or from another family member. Barbara was fascinated by this native speaker interaction

because the person she spoke to learned about how to prepare and cook the omelet by working at a bar and from his coworkers. While this is somewhat atypical, Barbara's interactions in the foreign language gave her a deeper ICS understanding of that nuance and her ICS shift (compared to her other posts) could be classified as a category understanding of 4 (Acceptance) and a growth from her previous level of 3 (Minimization).

Additionally, *there were seven (7) other references to the students' intercultural understanding* throughout each of the modules. The following is an example of a student's post from the castle visit and workshop. These references were either coded as **“Workshop Importance - Castle Workshop (CW)”** or **“Cultural Art Event or Food Outing(CEFO).”**

Caitlin commented that, “By attending the castle workshop, I remembered from class how important visiting historical sites was to understand the context of the different groups that have influenced the Spanish culture. I learned a lot through the tour and by referencing the other cultural activities that we did through the app. I was able to learn more about the other cultural topics related to the castle, like royalty and art, too. I wish I had the app active when I did tours where I viewed historical Kentucky buildings a few years ago in a city close to mine since they would have helped me better understand the historical context of my state and how some of those cultural topics still affect our lives today in the U.S.” This was coded as **“DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 4 (ICS4).”**

The References to Cultural Nuances and the Resulting Increased ICS

Understanding via the Modular Technology Work

There were eight (8) mentions of various cultural nuances in Module #2. These were coded as “**Recognized Newly Learned Aspect of Spanish Culture (CULIMP).**” Another code was also used to indicate this type of post **by Haley** when she said, “I had no idea how strong people’s preferences were to how the omelet was prepared and served. I see how this food is important to prepare through steps and to learn about how different places or families serve it.” This post was coded as “**Importance of Food to Spaniards (FIMP).**”

Also, half of the participants, six (6) said in one way or another that it was an eye-opening experience to see how the chefs at the restaurant where the second module was held spent hours preparing the omelet in large quantities to satisfy the needs of their customers who would order it at all different parts of the day.

In one post, **Amy said**, “in the Tapas Module, the owner/Chef of the restaurant explained all of the tapas and their ingredients. I had only really had different types of tapas at the airport restaurants in Spain and I did not know what they were called or what was in them. After asking the owner a couple of questions, I understood the differences between the tapas and how they should be served.”

In another post, **Margaret explained**, in the Spanish Omelet module (module #2), “I spoke with both the chef in the kitchen and the other man who was the owner of the restaurant who led the presentation during the module. He explained how I could make an omelet for my family (whether for my Spanish host family or for my real American

family) and gave me tips on the best quality ingredients to use and where to find them. Both of these posts from **Amy and Margaret** were coded as **“DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 3 (ICS3)”** and **“Mentions another cultural nuance (native speaker interaction, attending event, daily errand, etc.) to show ICS understanding (CN).”**

There were also nine (9) explicit references to the intercultural learning and understanding that took place in the omelet workshop (module #2) (coded as **“Workshop Importance - Omelet Workshop (OW)”**) and *six (6) mentions* referencing the castle workshop (coded as **“Workshop Importance - Castle Workshop (CW)”**) specifically describing how the students liked interacting with the native speakers during the workshops to learn more about the module theme. Many students mentioned that they liked that they got to partake in a very long question and answer session in the second module (as well as in the others) and they recorded specific notes on the native speakers’ references in their posts or would send messages to each other through the app to clarify aspects of all of the module workshops. For example, one can observe this increased participation in the modules through Kelly’s statements about the workshops and her ICS understanding. **Kelly said**, “attending and conversing with the native Spanish speakers during the workshop sessions was awesome and I got to learn how each native speaker thought that the food or castle’s importance was linked to the city and their own culture.” Kelly’s post was coded as **“Native Speaker Interaction (NSINT).”**

Amy also revealed her ICS understanding and development and the importance of interacting with native speakers when she said, “Going to the workshops and having

everything in the app as I asked the restaurant owners questions about my tasks helped me understand a lot more about what we were studying in the class. I loved how I could use my language skills to better comprehend the cultural nuance’s importance to everyday society.” Amy’s post was also coded as “**Native Speaker Interaction (NSINT).**”

In sum, the learners stated that they enjoyed how the various workshops were planned and conducted, which helped them better understand the history, preparation, and cultural importance of the multiple nuances that they learned. More specifically, *there were also four (4) direct references* by learners in their posts that reflected a deeper ICS understanding where those learners moved from a 3 (Minimization) or a lower 4 (Acceptance) to a higher DMIS continuum level (Mid/High 4) in order to become more interculturally sensitive to that cultural phenomenon.

Table 8 below shows the frequency of their ICS posts throughout the experiment. While there were not major jumps in the volume of their posts related to ICS understanding, there was evidence of posts that would suggest that the students understood the cultural nuances on a deeper level and could more fully contemplate the meaning of those ideas in the foreign language.

Table 8

Instances of ICS Understanding/Growth from Module 1 (Week 7) to Module 3 (Week 9)

Coding Category	Module 1 - TAPAS	Module 2 – SPANISH OMELET	Module 3 – CASTLE VISIT	TOTAL REFLECTION POSTS
Shows ICS understanding/growth– Level 3 (ICS3)	4	5	4	4
Shows ICS understanding/growth – Level 4 (ICS4)	5	4	5	4
Shows ICS understanding/growth – Level 5 (ICS5)	4	5	5	6

Table 9 below also shows a comparative look at the calculated means of their ICS related posts starting with their Week 7 ICS scores and comparing those to their final ICS score at the conclusion of the three week experiment. While there is only a modest amount of growth, the comparison here does show that the students' ICS scores did slightly increase.

Table 9

Participants' Specific ICS Growth from Start to Finish of the Experiment (Weeks 7-9)

Week 7 ICS Score Mean=4.3
Week 9 ICS Score Mean=4.6

Table 10 below shows the overall ICS growth by the participants. These designations were calculated by reviewing the total number of posts that those specific students made related to ICS understanding/growth and then combining those scores from the posts to cumulatively assess the student's total ICS movement along the continuum. The data showed that the largest amount of students, five (5) students, moved from Acceptance (4) to Adaptation (5) in just this short three week period of the experiment. One can see the students' ICS growth movement via the DMIS categories below.

Table 10

Total Movement along the ICS Continuum from All Modular Work (Weeks 7-9)

<p><u>DMIS Categories</u></p> <p>Started at <i>Minimization (DMIS Level 3)</i>==7 Students</p> <p>1.Emma, 2. Lexi, 3.Kelly, 4. Mary, 5. Taylor, 6. Amy, 7. Caitlin</p> <p>Started at <i>Acceptance (DMIS Level 4)</i>==5 Students</p> <p>1. Barbara, 2. Brad, 3. Haley, 4. Sally, 5. Margaret</p> <p>Started at <i>Adaptation (DMIS Level 5)</i>==0 Students</p>
<p>Based on their assigned scores from all total posts as well as other coded references in the qualitative section, three (3) students moved from <u>Minimization to Acceptance (3 to 4)</u>.</p> <p>1. Emma</p> <p>2. Lisa</p> <p>3. Kelly</p>
<p>Based on their assigned scores from all total posts as well as other coded references in the qualitative section, four (4) students moved from <u>Minimization to Adaptation (3-5)</u>.</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amy 2. Caitlin 3. Mary 4. Taylor
<p>Based on their assigned scores from all total posts as well as other coded references in the qualitative section, five (5) students moved from <u>Acceptance to Adaptation (4-5)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barbara 2. Brad 3. Haley 4. Margaret 5. Sally

The third research question will now be addressed. That third research question was as follows:

Research Question #3: How do Spanish foreign language learners articulate newly acquired intercultural sensitivity?

A Review of the Findings from Post Assessment #1 – The Post Study Surveys

By analyzing the post study surveys (post assessment #1 – see Appendix D) and by describing many of the learners’ responses to those assessment questions, the researcher arrived at a deeper understanding of the types of ICS comprehension and growth that the learners experienced. Learners answered the first survey after the completion of all three modules (in week 10 of the course). The survey was ten questions (each with multiple sub-questions) and contained cultural experience questions (see

Appendix D) to highlight what they learned and their intercultural experiences throughout the program.

The questions from the Surveys (Post Study Assessment #1 – see Appendix D) addressed the following points:

1. *The students' experiences in previous Spanish courses.* They answered questions about Spanish culture and how they had previously learned about it in the U.S. and how it was related to the Spanish culture that they studied in the Segovia program.
2. *Their expectations and overall feedback related to the course content, which centered on ICS learning in the foreign language.* They gave feedback on the types of tasks they enjoyed and the ones that they felt were most influential in their intercultural learning process.
3. *Their descriptions of the potential advantages of getting to interact with native Spanish speakers on a more intimate level to complete the course assignments.* The students answered questions based on the reactions and experiences they had with their host families and the challenges they faced after interacting with the different types of native Spanish speakers from Segovia.
4. *Feedback from the students to provide suggestions to the researcher regarding the cultural topic design of the modules, which was given to the study abroad director to plan future iterations of the course.* The students suggested Spanish cultural topics that they knew of and why they thought those may be interesting to future students in the program.

5. Questions related to the learners' language abilities which they demonstrated by describing and reflecting on cultural experiences they thought were memorable or specifically assisted them in understanding or growing their ICS. The students also reflected on obstacles and misunderstandings that they had in the foreign language and how understanding someone else's culture was important for their ICS learning development.

To answer this third research question, an analysis of the data of what several students said at the end of week 9 of the experiment regarding the modular work will be reviewed and will list their most interesting posts from the qualitative data collection that were coded to demonstrate their links to the third research question. These comments were taken from the qualitative post study assessments (interviews and surveys) to show the reflective nature of their ICS comments, which is an important part of understanding ICS. The following includes some excerpts from the Post Study Assessment #1 (Surveys) to highlight some of the learners' most interesting responses:

Brad said in post study assessment #1 (surveys),“The WhatsApp groups in the modules helped me to reflect and have more information available during the workshops and class meetings because it was easy to get distracted and forget things when you could not immediately reference the information that the speaker or instructor discussed. I liked being able to go through these tasks and learn more about topics after the workshops ended so that we could discuss the multiple aspects of the workshops after they happened with our course meetings where we looked at all of our notes and comments in the app.”

This post was coded as both “**Workshop Importance – Tapas Workshop (TW)**” and “**DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 4 (ICS4).**”

Another participant, Caitlin, in the **post study assessment #1 (surveys)** mentioned how she used the different cultural experiences to help her in her ICS development. She discussed how she learned about the pace of Spanish life by interacting with native speakers to see how they went about their daily lives. In one post response related to how long Spaniards take to eat meals together, **Caitlin said**, “I learned a lot in this program and course. I especially learned a lot about Spanish culture over my time spent here in Segovia related to the Spaniards’ extended mealtimes (called la sobremesa in Spanish). I noticed that Spaniards are not in a hurry with anything and really enjoy spending time over meals talking with each other. Many people do not walk around the city here as fast as they do in the USA so I feel like I can take my time while I eat and talk here, too. I do not feel rushed and I think enjoying life is a valuable cultural thing for the Spaniards and taking the time to catch up with one another is a critical part of the Spanish culture.” This post was coded as “**Importance of Food to Spaniards (FIMP).**”

In another survey answer reflecting about Module #2 (Spanish Omelet) **Mary said**, “The technology helped me learn more about the Spanish omelet for module 1 and 2. My family always asked me about what size I wanted for the food and if I liked certain types of food or tapas with anything inside (like meat, veggies, cheese, etc.). Often, I could not remember how to say the vocabulary words to express myself about my preferences or what things were typical to put inside the food that sounded good. So, I would reference a task from the modules that I did with some of my classmates’

commentaries and could then explain to my host family how I wanted them to make it for me.” This post was coded as **“Workshop Importance – Omelet Workshop (TW)”** and **“DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 3 (ICS3).”**

When Taylor was asked about what she learned from the course regarding food’s importance to Spaniards and its cultural connection to socializing and Spanish life, she summarized how Spaniards enjoyed preparing food for each other, which she never anticipated seeing outside of a typical restaurant environment. She later went on to say that, “I would have never learned that part about the Spaniards’ culture of food without studying abroad since I could interact with the Spaniards on a deeper level. The technology app also assisted me in learning about how food works here since I could look at a variety of different sources, too.” This post was coded as both **“WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU)”** and **“Recognized Newly Learned Aspect of Spanish Culture (CULIMP).”**

Emma also responded that, “I think people from the U.S. would like to eat the Spanish omelet for any meal because it is so delicious and quick to eat but can be shared amongst friends or family. It is something that can be eaten for a snack or for breakfast and even lunch and dinner, too. I liked both the sandwich and large plate options for the omelet because my host mom took a lot of care in always preparing it for me, especially when we had to prepare lunches to go on program trips to different Spanish cities.” In almost all of her post assessment responses, **Emma** provided a thoughtful explanation of the cultural nuances she had learned and later compared and contrasted them to different

parts of her home culture in Kentucky. These posts were coded as both “**Importance of Food to Spaniards (FIMP)**” and “**Life at Home (LAH)**.”

Regarding the use of WA and its effectiveness in helping her ICS development, **Lisa said** that the impact of using technology in the three modules assisted her greatly in communicating with her classmates and with Spaniards to complete many of the assessments at the end of the module weeks, which made the learning process easier to manage while abroad. **Lisa explicitly stated**, “WhatsApp allowed me to quickly post my photos in the module groups so that we could comment on them and I also liked that I could learn from other people’s opinions by looking at and learning from photos.” **Lisa further** went on to say, “I think that by being able to view and digest the various photos from my classmates, I could learn a lot about what interested other people in the program regarding their food preferences as well as their experiences in their houses here. This was an important part of helping me to answer the questions in the tasks in another language, especially in the first two modules. My classmates posted other cool images to help me think more about the different ways food is prepared here and how the Spaniards like to eat their food together or see it served in various ways.” These posts were coded as “**WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU)**” and “**Importance of Food to Spaniards (FIMP)**.”

The overwhelming response (from both post study assessments) was that the learners felt more confidence, motivation, and generally more in touch with the host culture after performing the tasks together through the app to successfully complete the

modules and interact with different native speakers at the same time. They mentioned feeling less anxious with their speaking abilities after they had finished the in-person workshops and at the end of the experiment. Also, at the end of the study, they repeatedly mentioned that they were now more interested in investigating the experiment themes (i.e. Spanish food, family, and history) because they saw the cultural aspects of Spanish life all around them, especially in all of the bars and restaurants by their houses. They also regularly saw tourists come to Segovia to visit the castle so they mentioned its importance to the city and to Spain's history. Segovia is known as one of the most commonly visited cities for tourists who visit Madrid because of its close proximity to the capital city. Segovia's old town and Aqueduct are UNESCO World Heritage sites so many tourists from all over the world go to Spain to visit their many cultural sites and subsequently take the castle tour and try the local tapas for their meals.

The learners would often have cultural and language misunderstandings that were reviewed in the data analysis, too. As the investigation came to a close, the tasks were discussed with the learners to see which module phases they particularly enjoyed. The learners specifically mentioned in both post study assessments (the surveys and interviews) that they liked the speed of commenting on a post and being able to review information outside of class through WA to help them better understand the cultural content. They responded that they felt more composed and less anxious when recording their speaking activities through the app since they normally felt flustered when having to speak in a traditional, face-to-face classroom if prompted to quickly answer a question. Similarly, they liked that they could look at the information that was posted within the

app and that was also crucial to complete the module tasks and therefore they did not always have to immediately speak and/or write to their other classmates as they simultaneously watched or reacted to them. Finally, the learners enjoyed commenting on their classmates' reflections about the host culture as they could reflect on how their own experiences connected to those of their classmates, which undoubtedly enhanced their overall ICS understanding, growth, and development.

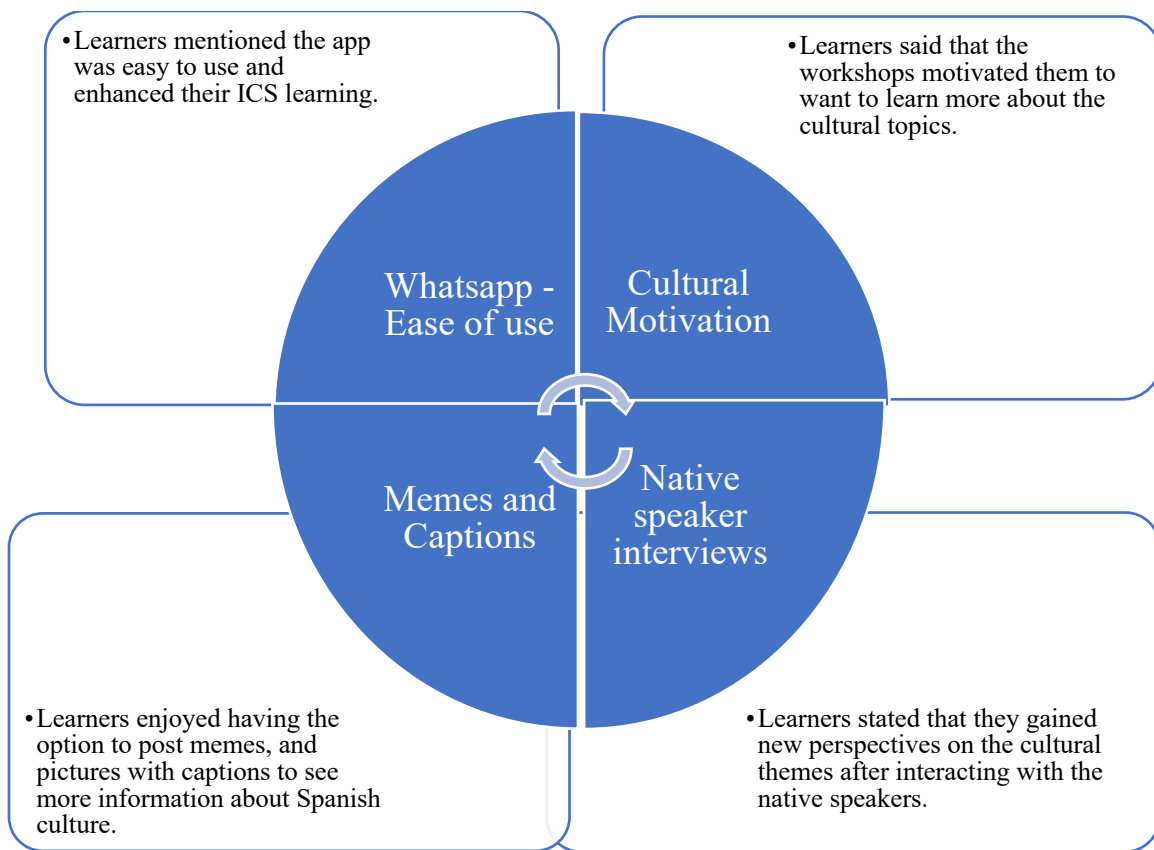
A Review of the Findings in Post Assessment #2 (Interviews)

In the second post study assessment (interviews), the researcher asked the students various questions (see Appendix E) in the form of semi-structured oral interviews. He asked the students a number of questions in Spanish related to what specific course and module elements they saw as vital for their ICS learning and also assessed their cultural knowledge relative to the various elements of the module tasks.

Figure 7 below shows a brief summary of some of their most important comments:

Figure 7 - Post Assessment #2 (Interviews) Findings

A Summary of Student Comments from the Oral Semi-structured Audio Interviews



The Post Assessment Interview (Post Assessment #2) and the Importance of Modular Use in Learning ICS

There were many examples of learners who provided responses that positively addressed the ICS elements they learned and how that learning process affected their motivations to want to research more about the course topics. They specifically mentioned the various ways of submitting the assignments for their modular work and how their WA modality selections were helpful for their learning. A majority of the participants also explicitly mentioned that the native speaker interviews were extremely beneficial as they progressed through the modules since they were able to practice speaking in the foreign language in authentic contexts, which allowed them to think more

critically about their native speaker interactions while discussing foreign foods, how Spaniards socialized, and the global history or importance of monuments or other historical sites.

Here are some examples from the second post study assessment (the interviews) to highlight what the students thought about those ICS Spanish cultural nuances:

Brad said, “For me, tapas are the best to have later in the day and also a few hours before dinner. Because here in Spain, people do not eat much for dinner, and I am always hungry later in the day and that is why going for tapas is great because here the typical dinner time is around 9:30pm. It is a great way to relieve my hunger and spend time with friends.” This post was coded as “**Workshop Importance – Tapas Workshop (TW)** and “**DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 5 (ICS5).**”

Margaret also talked about the importance of food and tapas when she said, “I was very intrigued by Caitlin’s interview in the first module (Tapas). The man she spoke with said he sometimes likes to go to the bar for breakfast. I have never thought of the bars as a place to go for food and drink unless it is in the early afternoon. But, I was also interested in the man’s response to how the tapas were prepared. The man said to her, “it was terrible that the restaurant served him a few cold tapas in the morning.” While I agree that most tapas are better served hot, I thought it was very common to serve them cold too, especially in bars and in the morning. From this interaction that my classmate described, I learned that it is more common here in Spain to serve the tapas hot and that people are very passionate about how they like to eat their tapas.” This post was coded as

both **“Native Speaker Interaction (NSINT)”** and **“Importance of Food to Spaniards (FIMP).”**

Sally also said, “I think workshops are an important part of the overall experience of studying abroad to learn about culture. The workshops went very well for the most part. I really liked learning about the culture of Spain. I had always liked learning about different cultures in general because I am an anthropology minor, but I do not know how to say the words for anthropology interactions to describe that to you right now in Spanish. In general, the workshops went very well, I really liked them. I liked the second food workshop and the castle module, because I love eating and going to museums.” This post was coded as both **“Native Speaker Interaction (NSINT)”** and **Mentions Another Cultural Nuance (native speaker interaction, attending event, daily errand, etc.) to show ICS understanding (CN).”**

In another example, **Lisa said**, “when we were in the Tapas workshop or something like that, one of the workers put his hand on my shoulder and it was there that I thought about his closeness and understood that he was talking to all of us like we were his close friends and that he and the others working there wanted to establish this contact with each of us to make the learning more comfortable. That one on one interaction and how they all took the time to explain the food to us in the first restaurant workshop made me realize the importance of socializing around the food, which was really important for me to learn about Spanish culture.” This post was coded as, **“Native Speaker Interaction (NSINT)”** and **“Mentions Another Cultural Nuance (native speaker interaction, attending event, daily errand, etc.) to show ICS understanding (CN).**

Understanding the Context– A Perspective Offered by the Qualitative Data Analysis

The learners were able to see the context of the intercultural content by engaging with it in different ways. Being able to visualize the information as it was modeled before them was important for their ICS development, such as when one of the students (Haley) went on the castle tour that was a part of the third module workshop. **Haley said,** “Although I did not leave with perfect knowledge of the entire history of the castle (fortress), the tour and module gave me an impression of its rich history and also an important cultural context to both understand and interpret the castle’s importance. I saw it had been influenced by the Romans, used as a medieval fortress, a royal palace, a royal treasure by important state officials, a state prison, and more. You can see the mix of influences in the rooms - with decorations of the Catholic Kings and the Mudejar-style ceilings. It is a very impressive castle that shows us the importance of Segovia as a Spanish city, past and present.” This post was coded as both “**Workshop Importance - Castle Workshop (CW)**” and “**DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 4 (ICS4).**”

Self-Cultural Awareness

A vital part of understanding someone else’s culture is to reflect on it and then also compare and contrast it to their own way of living. It is often the case that Spaniards and other members of the Hispanic world tend to live in much tighter living quarters where multiple people share a bedroom or a bathroom. It is a very common place occurrence in countries like Spain to have four to five people living in a small apartment and sharing only one bathroom together. This idea can often come as a cultural shock to

students from the U.S. who are more accustomed to living in bigger, more spread out houses where each person has access to their own bedroom and bathroom. **Emma commented** on how those close living quarters in Spain made her recognize a new cultural nuance that she quickly realized made her more aware of her own culture. **Emma said**, “I was very surprised when I entered my house here in Segovia and did not have my own bathroom and had to share it with another American student, my host mom, and my host mom’s daughter. In my house in the U.S., I have a bathroom for myself, so it was tough to adjust to at first and I certainly did not see it as a bad thing that is a part of their lives for most Spaniards here but thinking about this definitely gave me a different view of how other people live in the world.” This post was coded as both “**Life at Home (LAH)**” and “**Recognized Newly Learned Aspect of Spanish Culture (CULIMP)**.”

One of the students **Sally also said that the castle module** allowed her to understand Spanish culture and history on a deeper level since the module information was available for her to access during the Alcazar visit. She was able to match images with other intercultural ideas that she had learned through the multiple classroom conversations and she was able to review her classmates’ posts to gain a better intercultural understanding of the meaning of the historic Alcázar (castle) to see how the many Spanish rulers and royalty lived there. **Sally** described her experience in this way: “The quality of the Alcázar's preservation has maintained a magical and mysterious essence of the history of the Middle Ages. When I went to the Alcázar, I could imagine people from the Middle Ages walking through the doors. Before this visit, I did not know much about the Alcázar. But, later, I learned more about the cultural references and the

meaning of the Alcázar to the Spanish Catholic Kings. The halls and towers were magnificent, and I continue to be interested in the mixture of Christianity and Islam in history because I saw that in the Mudejar art of the ceilings in the castle.” This post was coded as both **DMIS Continuum Category “Marker - ICS Level 4 (ICS4)”** and **“Workshop Importance - Castle Workshop (CW).”**

ICS Growth through the Digital Reflection Journals

The learners gave a lot of interesting insight with their digital reflection posts, which they considered their weekly journals to detail their intercultural experiences in Segovia. Additionally, they used the digital journal entries to add more depth to some of their earlier posts from that specific week while also trying to explain their various experiences and encounters in more detail and how those interactions helped in their understanding of one of the course themes or of another general Spanish cultural nuance.

One example was provided by a student named **Taylor**. In one of her reflection posts for module #2 (Spanish Omelet), **Taylor said**, “I also learned that many of the things here are rural or local and that influences how they do their cooking and dining. I expected more of a suburban lifestyle here since we are only about one hour north of Madrid (the Spanish capital). For example, I experienced cultural learning when we talked to a man we met who was at the restaurant where we learned about the Spanish Omelet. Well, so this man was one of the cooks in the kitchen and had the short hair and told us the history of the types of eggs that are used in the Castilla y León region (where Segovia is) and about the eggs’ origins coming from Segovia as well as the ingredient’s connection to other nearby cities. He explained that the egg was such a crucial ingredient

for the Spanish omelet and it was intriguing for me to learn about how eggs were classified, processed, made, and used in Spain. I learned how that was all specifically tied to their processing and distribution in the region where we were living. It was interesting too because before starting these modules, I did not know it was a thing here to have such a deep understanding of the food ingredients used for the meals in restaurants, because as far as I know, we do not have people who know so much about food or talk about those things in Kentucky restaurants. In other states, maybe these types of historical classifications of eggs exist and people might know about them, but I have never experienced this in Kentucky. It was great to be able to interact with that man and then post my interaction story in the module #2 (Spanish Omelet) reflection group. This post was coded as the following: **“Workshop Importance - Omelet Workshop (OW)”**, **“Comparison of Host Food v. Home Food (FCOMP)”**, and **“Importance of Food to Spaniards (FIMP).”**

In another post, **Mary** talked about how much she loved doing digital journaling in her own personal life, so the WA reflection posts did not feel like homework but were considered just another way to reflect about what she had learned and to do so in an interesting way to document her unique experiences as a foreigner living in Segovia. **Mary said** in a reflection post in Module #1 (Tapas) after completing the various phases of said module: “Yes, I loved learning about the “Tapas” (Small Plates) and trying all of them. The photos we saw beforehand did not do the food justice until we saw it before our own eyes when the restaurant owner brought in all of the different little plates. I immediately knew I wanted to take a picture of the “patatas bravas” (spicy potatoes with

sauce) because I had seen them on Instagram before coming over to Spain for the program and knew I would love them. During the Tapas workshop (module #1), I was reading other people's comments in WA about what their favorite tapas were, and the app really helped me to identify and appreciate the numerous little types of different foods because it was at first very difficult to understand the accent of the owner when he explained them to us. Viewing and discussing the pictures in the Tapas workshop (module #1) and later in class as well with our reflections helped me learn about the history of Tapas and the reasons why people in Spain love to eat them so much." This post was coded as follows: **"Workshop Importance – Tapas Workshop (TW)"**, **"DMIS Continuum Category Marker - ICS Level 3 (ICS3)"**, and **"WhatsApp Recognition - Positive Technology Use (PTU)."**

Summary of Qualitative Findings

After reviewing the qualitative findings, the students' ICS understanding, and their growth progress, the data show that their comprehension of the material was largely influenced by both the digital reflection journals and the impact the module workshops had on their learning development. The students disclosed that they not only enjoyed being able to quickly access or comment on situations with their fellow classmates but that the native speaker interactions along with the design of the tasks within each module were a key part to their new understanding of Spanish culture. More specifically, the students' ICS growth was demonstrated through their language use since they showed on multiple post study assessments that they had arrived at a more thorough understanding of the intercultural connections as a result of completing the modules. In sum, the

learners' ICS growth was enhanced by their more effective way of communicating in the foreign language to answer comprehension and reflection prompts to describe their various immersion experiences.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

Research Objectives

Chapter four presented the results for this study. The results showed how the students how the students engaged with WhatsApp to communicate important aspects of ICS understanding. The data analysis also documented how the students' participation in

the reflection group posts allowed them to form a deeper intercultural understanding of the topics in the study abroad course. By using the technology assistance (i.e. WhatsApp) to reflect on the module materials, all participants showed some evidence of using a mobile application to better understand the intercultural significance of the multiple nuances within the Spanish language and culture. This particular way of teaching and learning resulted in modest intercultural sensitivity growth in just a short, three week time period.

Here is how each research question was answered in this study and the conclusions that the researcher arrived at:

1. How do Spanish foreign language learners employ the affordances of WhatsApp while completing mobile task-based culture activities abroad?

The students displayed their positivity and expressed their enjoyment working with the app throughout the study. WA motivated the students to feel more comfortable and less anxious using the various modalities of the app to complete the multiple module phases. Firstly, the app's accessibility and ease of use allowed the instructor to quickly train the students on how to use the app for the course and the students showed that they could quickly reference the app to complete their coursework and participate more intensely in the module workshops. Secondly, the app's ability to document and archive multiple types of commentaries so the students could work collaboratively to complete the tasks in an immersive environment highlighted how this type of technology resource could be employed to organize coursework in a small, mobile device application so that the students felt comfortable using it while simultaneously interacting with the native

Spanish speakers. Additionally, the app made it possible for students to learn from their comments, refresh their ideas and reflect on the comments of the others in the class to prepare for quizzes and exams, see relevant posts and information related to composing written work, and add more insight into the projects that they needed to complete for successful course complete. Furthermore, WA made it easy to return to listen to the recorded native speaker interviews, which the students mentioned various times throughout the study was an important tool that they used to prepare for the course assessments and the final exams.

2. Can WhatsApp (WA) be harnessed to facilitate the development of Intercultural Sensitivity?

The findings showed that WA did facilitate the development of ICS learning since it allowed for structured groups to be constructed and designed in different ways, which permitted the researcher to add in and craft multiple types of tasks that could be integrated in myriad ways to enhance the course objectives and make the students' reactions more dynamic and meaningful. The app allowed for them to simultaneously compare information with other online sources so they could smoothly and efficiently investigate more cultural themes related to the course objectives. Moreover, the students commented throughout the study that the digital journal aspect was meaningful for their intercultural understanding because they could think more critically about what they had seen and heard throughout their engagements.

3. How do Spanish foreign language learners articulate newly acquired intercultural sensitivity?

The students exhibited ICS understanding and eventually growth as they gained more experience with understanding the words and expressions mentioned in the native speaker interviews and interactions. After participating and engaging with people from new and different communities and getting outside of their comfort zone, they were able to interact with different ages and genders within the native speaker communities to acquire more ICS knowledge. Similarly, they showcased their ICS skills through their ability to reflect on (in their digital reflection journals) various aspects of excursions and workshops where they interpreted and discussed what they learned about Spanish culture to describe how their experiences were valuable. Lastly, the students expressed that their intercultural understanding increased because of the cultural events that were a part of the course and explained how the other program activities they did on the weekends and/or in their free time, where they worked collaboratively and with their host families or other native speakers, also enabled them to learn more about the ICS themes.

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The Contributions to the Field

The connections between MALL and ICS in study abroad learning. By using technology as a guiding mediator, this study showed that a mobile application could be utilized to create an interactive and engaging learning environment in a study abroad program when an intercultural sensitivity framework was used to teach the foreign language and culture. Thus, when teaching ICS in immersion environments, the lessons

can become more meaningful for the learners when they focus on completing the ICS tasks to improve their ICS development as they make more critical inquiries through a modular format. This study showed that immersive ICS learning that integrates MALL with additional reflection components allows the learners to analyze the views of their classmates while also considering the commentaries from other community members to gain a respect and better understanding for the various cultural realities that exist throughout the world. By adding the use of mobile technology to facilitate that intercultural learning and sensitivity growth process, students could recognize how their necessary engagement with native speakers was beneficial for their language growth, too. Thus, the use of ICS pedagogical frameworks that is accompanied by mobile technology reiterates the need for learners to practice both language and culture together to better observe ICS practices.

Additionally, this study added more data and relevant observations to an existing field of study abroad intercultural sensitivity investigations, which will get researchers closer to understanding how learners interact with native speakers and other community members in new host country exchanges that occur abroad. Furthermore, in line with Peng (2005) and Gantt (2014), it is important to remember that recognizing cultural differences not only raises awareness and brings more intercultural understanding to multilingual and multicultural environments but also allows for more ICS growth to take place since learners must adjust their world views as they learn. As confirmed by Dwyer (2004) and Lee (2010), seeing how someone else's behavior affects a person's own mindset while then comparing those insights back to previously held cultural beliefs

results in an eye opening experience for the participants, as evidenced by this study. This research represents another important way in which the development of learners' ICS can be documented by having students complete various phases of ICS modules to accomplish an instructor's goals of having students participate more intimately in cultural learning by using the target language through a mobile, social media tool app.

In the context of learning the Spanish language by also understanding the culture abroad, it can be concluded that the development of ICS is crucial to accompany the potential for greater cultural comprehension when the course modules are programmed in a way similar to the way in which the was done in this study (supplementing the tasks with cultural workshops, native speaker interviews, and digital reflection journals). Therefore, a logical conclusion is that an instructor should work toward guiding the students in their communicative ICS tasks by incorporating those ICS focused workshops so that students also understand how to better grow their ICS as they interact with those new native speakers in hyperpersonal ways to make their native speaker exchanges more beneficial for their ICS development.

The instruments that were used to gather and analyze the data on ICS permitted the researcher to present multiple student vantage points and preferences in ICS learning where he could analyze ICS development while giving him access to more data related to the students' ICS growth to see how the students used WA. As mentioned in the literature review, most of the studies done in foreign language courses in study abroad programs have investigated either the development of intercultural awareness, or sensitivity, but very few have paired ICS growth with technology and a variety of different types of tasks

(see Lee, 2010, 2011 & Landon, Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2017). Therefore, the evidence of this study not only supported intercultural development and sensitivity learning through mobile devices, with the addition of more native speaker engagements and workshops while abroad, but also allowed the for the reflection of how learning culture abroad through ICS planned tasks allows for more foreign language use to understand the relevance of those new foreign encounters.

Mobile Device Integration May Help Facilitate ICS Development

In this study, the learners used their mobile devices to investigate course themes to assist them in communicating with different people in the foreign language. WA allowed them to participate quickly with native speakers and to also engage with each other through the modular course work along with their participation in in-person workshops for the purposes of swiftly accessing their instructor's lessons, commentaries, and feedback. The learners made calls, recorded themselves, posted pictures, and sent messages to their friends or host families to gather more information about the ICS course content to solve tasks incorporating the various modalities of WA. WA not only acted as a conduit for their search inquires but also allowed them to quickly post information in the classroom discussion groups (whether as a requirement of a module or simply to add something relevant to a conversation or task) while they continued to research, analyze, and reflect on the importance of those ICS tasks.

The data in this study also demonstrated that mobile-based interactions amongst the learners allowed them to quickly communicate with each other to both problem solve and work through cultural obstacles to better understand each other and grasp the culture

meanings behind what that they had studied. The students mostly reflected on a deeper level at the end of each ICS module week as they tried to gather meaning from and add thoughts to the questions that they were tasked to complete. Moreover, they often tried to remedy misunderstandings as a group during the physical workshop meetings or after the native speaker interview sessions to try to learn more about the cultural nuance or language use exchange. For example, they often times completed each phase of the three modules to complete the project tasks to assist each other by reminding their fellow students where to find information for one of the module phases or what they were supposed to do after an assignment or video was posted. Some of these posts demonstrated that many of the students tried to use the technology together and rely on one another for support throughout the experiment.

The Importance of Students' Interactions with Host Country Locals

While it can be hard at first to initially have learners fully immerse themselves into the host culture while also interacting hyperpersonally (see Thorne, 2003) with their host families as they aim to improve their language comprehension, this study further emphasized the need for the instructor to encourage the students to reflect on their native speaker encounters in order for them to step outside of their comfort zones. As previously stated, it can be concluded that those native speaker interactions were most effective when paired with module workshops, program sponsored events or talks, and/or volunteer opportunities in the host country community that focus on arts and crafts, sports, games, food, movies, short tours of the city, etc. More specifically, the creation and promotion of said activities and events helps to encourage the learners to attend many

of those events allowing them to interact with the native speakers in more authentic exchanges where their ICS can develop and grow. Similarly, after seeing the learners participate in a variety of different interactions using the target language throughout the course to learn about culture, it can be said that the students are generally more motivated by the ICS learning process and that the instructors can emphasize that the learners need to overcome their fears of interacting with those native speakers outside of the classroom activities and in more uncomfortable settings to become more engaged for the purposes of strengthening their intercultural adaptation abilities.

In sum, this study reinforced the idea that study abroad programs must be structured and designed so that the participants can improve their advanced language learning skills by interacting with locals in a variety of ways where ICS learning is the focal point of the task design and execution. Instructors should focus on understanding the value of ICS learning through the mentioned examples of the types of workshops and excursions they can attend while also having the instructors frame the relevance of those activities to show the students how and why those tasks are a crucial part of their ICS development. Thus, by using a mobile technology tool (i.e. WhatsApp) to help facilitate those intercultural activities, instructors can also help fill in the student learning gaps and make their intercultural communication priorities more pronounced, which often leads to more proficient and conducive ICS growth in the foreign language from their students.

The Importance of Reflection (through Digital Journals) in ICS Learning

Throughout the study, the importance of using digital reflection journals was noted as a factor that drove more critical thinking by the students in the classroom

discussions since the journal post responses were based off of questions that were designed with ICS development and sensitivity theories and themes in mind. The technology use throughout the modules centered around digital journaling to reflect on intercultural exchanges in the Spanish course allowing the learners to also experience increased linguistic development and cultural awareness in the foreign language, even though specific linguistic growth patterns were not measured in this investigation. However, the hope for future studies is that the learner will also embark on understanding how their language is used and perhaps study the ways in which students behave relative to their cognitive processing skills. Future studies could examine how the learner's attitude, motivation, or enjoyment is affected by completing the ICS tasks with technology and/or how students work toward increased meaning making in the foreign language, which also usually can enhance their ICS development. Similarly, future studies could focus on the pragmatic elements of their utterances by using different types of tasks to see how they use their target language knowledge could allow them to discuss the cultural nuances of the tasks.

As a result of this study, the data showed that the prolonged use of mobile applications to learn ICS resulted in students making more valuable intercultural connections via a technology platform like WA. The digital journaling that the learners performed at the end of each module allowed them to converse and think more critically about the new cultural activities that they had experienced and the ways in which they interacted with host country natives. Those host country native speakers came from different cultural backgrounds, so it was at first difficult for the students to build new

relationships with them while abroad. Having an outlet to reflect on those interactions shortly after their assignments were submitted for each module phase allowed them to contemplate how their own home society and way of living (i.e. their behaviors, perspectives, etc.) differed from the target ones. For each module, the goal was for the learners to focus on not only the theme for that week's module in their reflections, but also to recall how they had chosen to communicate with others in those specific tasks. Furthermore, in this study, the learners eventually reflected on how their intercultural interactions allowed them to observe how they could live peacefully and harmoniously with people from different cultural backgrounds. The most compelling insight related to the nature of their reflections was that the data showed that implementing digital reflection journals as a piece of the course curricula allowed the learners to think more critically about their ICS learning to gain a more profound appreciation of the target culture as they participated more hyperpersonally with each other and with the native Spanish speakers to grow their ICS development.

LIMITATIONS

The investigator was based in Arizona with the study participants living primarily in Kentucky so he was unable to do a pretest with them due to logistical difficulties and the inability to connect with them made it difficult to assess their ICS abilities before the study commenced. The investigator would have liked to do a pretest to calculate a

baseline mark for how students intercultural skills stood at their time of their arrival for the study abroad program so that he could determine which ICS category level(s) (reading, writing, speaking, etc.) the students most likely possessed.

Number of Participants

Having more students in the study as well as having the chance to perform other class activities with them to see how they would have responded to the treatment and to assess their use of the mobile application during the phases of the module work would have been beneficial. The expansion of the data collection process would also have been useful so that the activities specifically related to the investigation could have included more tasks that the instructor observed during other study abroad events that took place outside of the class he led.

Additionally, while most of the technology training for the learners at the start of the investigation did not present problems, there were a few difficulties and obstacles that some of the students faced using WA. While the difficulties mostly centered around interpreting the content and not understanding the directions or timelines for the days to submit the phases of the project compared to how to use the technology itself, there were still some students who initially felt overwhelmed at the start, due to the multiple steps within each module phase that they had to complete. In this sense, the study facilitator (i.e. normally the course instructor) needs to be active in demonstrating how to not only use the various features of the app for the initial training process but should actively monitor questions and concerns during the first week of a comparable study. Most

importantly, the future study facilitator also needs to explain the various tasks in different ways so that they learners find the tasks more comprehensible and do not become overwhelmed by the increased technology use.

The Difficulty of ICS Investigations in Study Abroad Programs

In order to be successful with ICS learning in a study abroad program, it is necessary to have knowledge of and respect for cultural differences that guide students toward understanding how their own cultural knowledge will undoubtedly affect their ICS understanding related to how another person speaks, interacts, and behaves. It is neither clear nor easy to measure and analyze ICS due to its complexities. However, the circumstances and ways in which the learners can develop their skills over the duration of the course in a study like this one allows them to more accurately interpret utterances, exchanges, and encounters. While the researcher noted ICS growth by every student, it is still crucial to remember that ICS remains to be a very difficult phenomenon to study due to its multiple factors and identification patterns, however, it remains a relevant topic in language learning that merits trying to understand. ICS's various components and complexities do allow for the instructor to assess how their students evaluate foreign behaviors and patterns so that the students can later more fully realize how to compare and contrast what they have seen through their study abroad experiences. Moreover, in this study, the students gained a new perspective on ICS learning, which was also important since a majority of the students had never traveled abroad before. One could see examples of those references under the **“WhatsApp Recognition - Positive**

Technology Use (PTU)” coding tags and other examples listed in the **“Recognized Newly Learned Aspect of Spanish Culture (CULIMP)”** categories in Chapters 3 and 4.

Even though it is apparent that investigating ICS with technology is not a simple way to analyze language and cultural understanding, the results in this study showed that it was imperative for the students to continue to exchange ideas through WA to further enhance their critical thinking skills and also expose them to more impactful interactions in the foreign language and culture. Moreover, the learners reflected on their experiences throughout each part of their study abroad experience in the course and that type of critical thinking and reflection made them more aware of their own paths in studying language and culture and how that process could benefit their future careers and/or language development. Most importantly, by engaging with the Spanish native speakers through those immersive module tasks, they could see how global technology tools (like WA) helped them more intimately study people in a new and different culture, which many commented would allow them to potentially have new opportunities (through diverse relationship building) after they graduated college.

In more general terms, the reflection process that they partook in will hopefully guide them in both the remainder of their academic careers and eventually assist them in forming relationships in their professional careers after completing their undergraduate degrees. Thus, as technology and mobile applications continue to become more advanced and remain as an integral aspect of everyday student life (and hopefully as a part of every academic course), the students showed that they could learn from each other as a result of

using WA. Lastly, the learners demonstrated how to use the WA modalities in a foreign language learning setting to express their opinions and showcase their cultural development, which allowed them to harness the power of that technology tool to successfully complete the module tasks in order to develop and grow their ICS skills.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Teaching ICS

According to Wills (2012), learners who attempt to think and act in a culturally appropriate way acquire various new perspectives of the world by studying language and culture. Specifically, study abroad learners pay more attention to how culture works while abroad, which can positively influence or add perspective to their world views. Therefore, it is crucial that a learner maintain and grow their new global perspective upon returning to their home country and that they reflect on and identify more similarities and differences and compare/contrast them to their previously held world views. Due to the reflective component this experiment's study abroad experience, the instructor emphasized inclusion and respect for others while working to promote all types of critical thinking through his course design and task creation. These course diverse and inclusive creation strategies for coursework planning allow ICS learners to view the content through a more global lens where all different perspectives are acknowledged, appreciated, and integrated into the classroom and content discussions.

In this study, there were many learners who had never studied outside of their home country and who may never have encountered someone from an unfamiliar ethnicity and/or learned about how different global communities function due to their limited exposure as inhabitants of an isolated home community. For that reason, the facilitator of an intercultural sensitivity study (like the one this researcher did) must facilitate the activities both in the host country and for those students upon returning home in a way that stresses intercultural diversity, openness, and inclusive collaboration. The insight gained from this specific study indicates that the language activities and tasks should be structured and planned so that learners can confront relevant issues in their own

lives like gender inequalities, diversity of religions, and social class discrimination or injustices as they consider the target culture's various perspectives on those issues. The idea for the ICS instructor is that the learners' home country return will prompt reflections on the content they learned so they can more critically compare those new viewpoints (gained abroad) to previously held beliefs while continuing to grow their ICS development. These ICS informed viewpoints will have hopefully changed after having studied and lived abroad as they participated in encounters with members from other communities who looked and acted different from them. Thus, the learners will hopefully be able to further contemplate how their newly changed mindset(s) will continue to impact the different groups of people in their local communities where they can engage with those community members to further exchange ideas and solve community problems through a shared understanding of language and culture.

Wills (2012) provided some other ways in which instructors can add more interculturally sensitive tasks to their teaching repertoire both at home and on future study abroad trips. These ideas were confirmed by the observations and insight gained from this study and will be described below. Here is a review of those ICS reflections and their applicability to this study:

1) *Identify and analyze how diversity issues affect and have influenced the academic experiences, lives, opinions, views, and philosophies of the learners.* In this study, the learners discussed community issues with Spaniards who came from different parts of Spain but the students also had to engage with Spanish speakers from other Spanish speaking countries who did not look like typical Spaniards.

2) *Integrate major concepts, theories, projects, and tasks related to diversity into the curricula of those Spanish courses.* Using this strategy to teach language and culture will make the learners think about multicultural issues that affect their local and global communities. In this study, the learners discussed how Spain's diverse history with its mix of various religious groups has affected the construction of monuments and neighborhoods located in various Spanish cities, including Segovia.

3) *Show the learners how individual and institutional discrimination affect their ICS learning both in the U.S. and while abroad and its relation to their interactions with people from different cultures.* In this study, the learners conversed with people from the community who described their upbringing in various institutions where they or others around them experienced discrimination in one way or another.

4) *Evaluate motivations, attitudes, classroom practices, and examples of multicultural integration within the classroom to better guide the instructor as they teach the course(s).* In this study, the learners showed that a better ICS understanding motivated them to want to learn more about the cultural nuances to become more integrated into the local community.

5) *Demonstrate to the learners through the analysis of certain exchanges how important it is for them to practice the foreign language so they can better respect cultural variations amongst different populations throughout the world.* In this study, the learners discussed how their host families saw immigrants and how they interacted and viewed those immigrants who lived throughout the city and host country where they studied and lived.

6) *Assess how the learner can communicate multiple ideas both amongst themselves and with the instructor. Those ideas should relate to more ICS issues around diversity (i.e. social class differences, understanding multiple religions, gender disputes, ethnicity arguments, etc.).* In this study, the instructor pushed the students to think about how they interpreted the diverse history of Spain and if the learners felt that some community members could raise their social class and/or awareness by becoming more educated on the issues.

7) *Provide the students with relevant cultural information to join local community groups and associations by giving them investigative tasks to research how a varied diversity of culture affects how people behave in daily situations; whether at the university, at home, or in their local communities.* In this study, the data suggests that the implementation of the diverse cultural events for the students was beneficial since the learners were provided with information on the city's diversity, cultural guides, and local events to help them better understand how those cultural programs connected to issues in the community abroad.

8) *Show other instructors in their department(s) how they can evaluate the students' development in the foreign language as well as their ICS growth by training them with the relevant pedagogical methods to plan more culturally aware courses.* In this study, the instructor collaborated with three other instructors to plan joint activities and events where he could suggest to them how the intersection of various discipline themes could be combined with his own course so that ICS development was at the forefront of the cultural learning process. For example, in one excursion to a museum

for an art class the students took, there was a planned class activity in the investigator's class that link directly to the art class where the task focused not only on identifying the type of art in the museum but also comparing it to something else they had seen in his course in order for them to connect all of the cultural ideas back to something that they learned in their home country.

After performing this study, the investigator arrived at the conclusion that a culturally relevant pedagogy course should be implemented as a mandatory requirement for undergraduate Spanish majors/minors and Spanish graduate students. Having ICS as the core course theme would be an important step in creating more interculturally sensitive classrooms so that diverse groups of students could unite to learn language and culture together. This study shows that previously planned activities in the program along with the tasks associated with the course textbook did not incorporate ICS elements. Those elements were shown to the researcher before he taught the course and he realized that the curriculum needed to be adjusted to better incorporate ICS frameworks and course objectives. Hence, this suggested ICS pedagogy course could be provided in both an in person (or hybrid) format and/or in an online only delivery method to make it accessible for all types of students and instructors. Even though the mode of the course would be delivered, planned, and distributed in different ways (depending on how the institution saw it as fitting the student's learning sequence),yet it would still provide important insight for their studies or future careers.

Lastly, in order to provide resources or more course strategy education for both Spanish majors/minors and graduate students, Spanish departments around the country

should strive to create these ICS courses to encourage more diversity of environment amongst the various stakeholders. Furthermore, based on the literature review's evidence and after teaching this advanced language and culture course abroad in multiple settings, the researcher believes that these ICS courses would help encourage both undergraduate and graduate students to participate more in study abroad programs and to create and program more ICS tasks where both students and instructors alike would eventually become more aware of ICS development and growth. Learning about ICS to become a more global citizen is crucial for language learners since it allows both instructors and students to actively communicate across cultures and in shared languages to better understand how people outside of their communities think, act, behave, and engage with one other.

Language Connections to Future Instructor ICS Training

Foreign language instructors must be tasked with creating courses that continue to develop more linguistic and intercultural sensitivity for their students. Instructors should be trained in relevant areas by those intercultural sensitivity experts in their department(s) to think more critically and plan strategies that facilitate the development of ICS.

The following strategies can be used for instructors and pre-service teachers to train them to understand how ICS should be presented:

- ICS teaching should foster knowledge acquisition through effective learning processes. The ways in which this study focused around modular was to have multiple ICS tasks that encouraged native speaker interactions in more intimate settings for the students.

-ICS teaching should assist learners to become aware of acculturation processes. The investigator facilitated the workshop processes in this study and also previewed/debriefed the students on the importance of each workshop session so they could more accurately learn about ICS.

-ICS teaching should recognize communities of practice and cultures of faults through immersive and hyperpersonal social interactions. The students were encouraged to speak in the foreign language at all times in Segovia and were required to attend many cultural events both with and without the course instructor in attendance.

-ICS teaching should encourage students to better understand the meaning making and negotiation processes in the foreign language by using enhanced social interactions where reflection later occurs. The students reflected on their native speaker interactions by submitting digital journal entries and by completing other types of assessments to show how they interacted with each other and with the native speakers to better understand the target culture.

-ICS teaching should be couched in a social-cultural learning framework that develops a common understanding of meaning creation through its various activities and modules. The students were shown the importance of socializing and interacting with others to effectively complete their ICS tasks and to also learn from their obstacles and challenges throughout the course.

Foreign language departments at universities should thus plan pedagogical training sessions as service requirements that incorporate professional development

seminars, workshops, or conference opportunities where instructors can learn more about how to create ICS foreign language tasks. There are many professional associations and organizations that provide resources for ICS training (such as ACTFL, CERCLL, AATSP, LLTI, CASLS, etc.; see Van Houten & Shelton, 2018) where course instructors can take classes and attend workshops to improve their ICS understanding and pedagogical skills. Study abroad program administrators cannot anticipate that new language instructors will be skilled enough at teaching ICS in their courses (even after reviewing these aforementioned resources) since learning how ICS works takes a considerable amount of time and also involves training other teachers to monitor how their students adjust to understanding their individual ICS development. Moreover, just as this study confirmed, instructors need to understand and eventually teach ICS themselves so that they can assist the learners in understanding different sets of cultural knowledge, reinforce language skills, and recognize cultural diversity which all form a necessary part of learning a foreign language. Hence, ICS learning is almost equal to acquiring a collective potpourri of cultural understanding, however, the learner's attitude towards the host culture may still either motivate or directly affect their ability to acquire those target language skills. Moreover, university language departments must promote this type of professional development and training so that instructors will participate in those aforementioned training sessions, especially if those instructors plan to lead study abroad programs. In sum, if those instructors combine their study abroad training program preparation with strategic ICS course planning and development, they will

more effectively assist their future students abroad in adapting to the host culture and to enhance their students' ICS development.

Some Ideas for Planning an ICS Focused Curriculum

Here are some ideas for how an instructor can plan, create, and implement an interculturally sensitive based curriculum for a study abroad course:

1. *Create assessments that are aligned to cultural ACTFL standards (see Van Houten and Shelton, 2018) and connect them to many of the theories mentioned in this study's literature review that relate to the importance of ICS.* In this experiment, the course planning was focused specifically on ICS assessment creation related to vocabulary activities and word search games related to the various cultural nuances of Spain. There were also comprehension activities where the students had to compare what they were seeing in the host county to cultural items in the USA that were couched in ICS ideas and contained a plethora of different thematical structures.

2. *Design training sessions for teaching assistants or other program instructors who do not have as much experience teaching culture as the focal point of language courses.* This would require that the ICS course instructor also understand or eventually learn the contemporary history, politics, traditions, etc. of the host country to accurately design said courses. In the case of this Segovia experiment, the researcher also assisted in planning and documenting some course themes for future

study abroad programs in Spain through the KIIS organization that would be cross curricular so that students could learn about the Spanish culture while also investigating topics like Spanish for business, Spanish Art, Spanish literature, etc.

3. Plan and continuously update the study abroad curricula for more specialized training for instructors and strategize for how to create more creative and innovative plans for future Spanish programs to assure that the material was relevant and impactful for the younger generations of students. After the conclusion of this experiment, the researcher also planned and designed rubrics for future study abroad programs that would incorporate these ICS metrics so that the students' comprehension, speaking, and learning about the cultural themes could be used to evaluate different types of tasks.

4. Design activities that connect to the student's attitude, current knowledge base, and/or required skills for a culturally competent global citizen. This type of task design will lead students to be more successful in an upper division language course and will also guide them toward a better understanding of more appropriate global intercultural behaviors. The investigator in this study spoke to the head coordinators of the study abroad programs in Spain that he collaborated with to brainstorm how some of the cultural course activities could be changed or how other additional activities could be added to the study abroad program plan that related more directly to the students' interests but also incorporated ICS learning principles related to Spanish cultural learning.

5. *Propose and implement cross cultural connections or interdisciplinary ways of planning and teaching the content.* In study abroad programs, students will often take courses in specific disciplines like health, business, politics, science, sociology, etc. Therefore, the study abroad Spanish language and culture instructors should intend to plan and teach theories/activities that incorporate the content from those other disciplines in a logical way. The researcher spoke with two other instructors who led courses in other disciplines to discuss elements of their courses, such as immersion trips and day excursions that could be done jointly with this conversation course to incorporate those other various disciplines in a way that showed the students how to learn about Spanish culture while also working toward achieving the objectives of the other courses.

Recommendations for Future Work with ICS and Technology in Study Abroad

Strategies for instructors who want to teach ICS abroad. Teaching culture in a foreign language course that incorporates intercultural sensitivity requires an enormous amount of planning and task alignment by the instructor before leaving to go abroad with the students to the host country. Instructors need to be reminded that this often requires a complex set of plans that will sometimes be difficult to implement. This study demonstrates that the course facilitator was successful in planning the various tasks with multiple phases well in advance of his departure to go abroad and nevertheless, there were still specific aspects of those ICS task phases that still did not always yield the originally intended results. This is important to consider because those ICS tasks should

try to elicit dynamic engagement with the participants as well as being couched in the intersection of language and intercultural behavioral tendencies. The idea of the students having intercultural experiences in immersion programs should focus on them being put on a path to comprehend this complex intersection by targeting their predicted behaviors over the course of multiple weeks. Moreover, from an instructor's perspective, valuable insight was gained from this study and he would like to remind fellow language instructors that it can be difficult to quickly judge and later assess how each learner recognizes their own linguistic and intercultural sensitivity throughout their performance in trying to complete those ICS tasks, even when taking into account their reflective opinions on said tasks. Nevertheless, regarding the ICS development of one's students, the use of the classroom discussion time the following weeks after each of the modules allows for the debriefing of the learners' experiences and assists in clearing up any misunderstandings, which were extremely beneficial for their ICS development. The intervention from the instructor in these physical classroom discussions allowed him to review a variety of language and cultural aspects from the various module phases that the learners may have struggled with or did not fully understand. Thus, another recommendation is that instructors who do similar studies in the future constantly check in with learners as they complete each task/module since in this study it was crucial for the changing of assessments to further review how the students enjoyed and understood the content while also analyze how they resolved their occasional task obstacles.

Another recommendation that is offered based on the study's data points is for the study abroad instructor to continually stress to the students that they are a part of an

intercultural experience that requires them to maintain a positive attitude in order for intercultural development to progress even when difficulties or awkward moments arise. Thus, it is vitally important for the students' ICS comprehension that they ask, deliberate, and always continue to investigate the cultural themes being studied so that their ICS learning evolves as they work toward completing the modules. Due to the results and reflective processes observed in this study, it was apparent that future instructors who lead study abroad programs also continue to design ICS learning activities that focus on hyperpersonal student interactions in order for the student's ICS growth to develop, thus, they should work to guide their students toward full participation and engagement with others in the host community which will hopefully lead them to have more fruitful encounters with those host country native speaker participants. Moreover, this increased engagement on the learners' part will simultaneously allow for the expansion of their intercultural development where they can focus on understanding the importance of recognizing the various communities that exist in a foreign country as they will be sure to often hear multiple viewpoints related to the ideas they choose to study and can aim to forge relationships and/or make friends with other international students and community members within that host country who may push back on many of their ideas.

Future Research

Given that mobile assisted language learning applications and social media tools like WhatsApp assist in mediating intercultural learning and sensitivity growth, and may lead to sustainable intercultural learning outcomes, it is imperative to ask how this present study can lead to future research.

Firstly, the evidence provided in this study on ICS learning recommends that future research should incorporate digital reflection journals and stress that the students fully participate and attend cultural events and workshops to help them achieve their course goals. Data was presented in this investigation to study the students' learning processes of intercultural development as they progressed with their language use, which was beneficial in analyzing their ICS growth. Moreover, future studies in this area might look deeper into the specific cognitive processes that become enabled during human-mobile interactions, which can also lead to an increased recognition of ICS development. Additionally, future studies could focus on how the incorporation of different types of tasks can influence mobile-assisted and computer-assisted language learning to make students more aware of their own ICS growth. For instance, investigators may ask whether it would be beneficial to revise existing MALL pedagogical frameworks to incorporate different types of technology tools in study abroad/immersion ICS learning frameworks to see how they would affect a student's motivation and enjoyment as they learn about intercultural themes abroad. In order to do this, it might be necessary to advocate for a more intentional research shift toward the topic of ICS learning, which could combine with hyperpersonal engagement opportunities where students could focus on interacting much more intimately with native speakers during cultural events. Finally, another area where further investigations could proceed relates to the continued study of the student's preference in text, audio, or video when posting responses to tasks and reflections and how they use the mobile modalities to increase their ICS learning while abroad. Lastly, MALL researchers who study ICS learning can look at the development

of various pedagogical frameworks in immersion environments that not only integrate intercultural tasks and workshop participation as a part of the in course modules, but that also focus on intercultural learning tasks where a student's capacity to understand their own ICS growth may be tied to their preferences for that modality (text message v. audio submission v. video post) use.

The findings from this exploratory study should also remind those in the field that more research is needed in study abroad programs to see the various connections between second language acquisition and intercultural sensitivity in immersion environments. There is a need for more ICS studies in multicultural environments where learners continue to study in those types of immersion and multicultural environments (including after a language course has concluded) to help them reflect on their native speaker interactions. Moreover, learners who complete study abroad programs are also more likely to have built more positive and constructive relationships with people from other countries so future studies could also investigate those relationships with those target country community members.

In this study, the researcher saw that positive intercultural interactions allowed learners to step outside of their comfort zones and embrace their hyperpersonal interactions which led them to have a more culturally enhanced global perspective where their language development also improved. Therefore, the integration of ICS teaching in study abroad courses promotes interactions in foreign environments for those learners where they can acquire more ICS skills in the foreign language as they converse with people from different backgrounds. Most importantly, university leaders and language

department administrators must continue to strive to promote the idea of global learning abroad and ICS development to promote their study abroad programs so that these types of experiences can take place. Becoming a global citizen and communicating intensely with those who are different from you is an important element that can lead to a greater understanding of ICS development. Moreover, when a student eventually learns more about the host culture through a variety of experiences and by communicating with native speakers, they could become more adept at interacting with those speakers. This study confirmed that ICS growth occurred in those native speaker interactions for the participants and the researcher reiterates the need for more study abroad learning studies to occur in the future in order to help build more global citizens within our university undergraduate language learner populations and classrooms.

In our interculturally connected world, learners of foreign languages are a crucial component to allow relationships across cultures to transpire and having those speakers communicate more effectively in a shared language with one another is a vital component of those relationships. Thus, being an interculturally sensitive communicator should not simply be the objective of the learner for that specific time abroad but must be an undertaking that extends throughout their entire life if they are to form a greater intercultural understanding of others. Moreover, foreign language learners (after having completed various courses with ICS frameworks) need to help other people (including outside of the university and academic environments) to obtain more cultural knowledge, awareness, development and build other relevant skills connected to ISC development so that other global citizens can be formed and managed with those new community

members who will also want to have exchanges with foreigners who are markedly different from them.

This study principally showed that learners can experience a deeper sense of ICS understanding to better appreciate and later reflect on their ICS development as they try to understand the social contexts of their interactions. The social context was crucial for recognizing how they became more adept at recognizing intercultural communication cues in this study through those more intense native speaker interactions. Since the learners used the various modalities of WA in these new intercultural social contexts in Segovia, they were able to work toward more thoroughly comprehending the various parts of the cultural modules, thus becoming more interculturally sensitive. A learner who wants to become interculturally aware of communication cues in a new culture should focus on their ability to adapt to the new culture and should be consciously changing their viewpoint(s) to better learn about and adapt to those new social situations abroad. In this study, the learners became more aware of cultural clues by interacting together and with native speakers to learn about food, history, and other cultural nuances through the use of probing questions, receiving more input, and engaging in exchanges in restaurants, cultural sites, and other places outside of the traditional physical classroom environment.

Another ICS theme that has not been investigated explicitly in this study that also merits more research is how a study abroad learner's attitude, motivation, identity, and emotions can change when an ICS focus on learning a foreign language is implemented in their activities. For this type of study, a reasonable suggestion is that those future studies use more participants and even a control group in order to perform various

statistical analyses. Regarding other recommendations for replicating this type of study, another recommendation would be to have a longer-term study with a larger sample population that includes a control group. This replicable study could be a study abroad program that covers an entire academic year abroad or one that compares its students to another study abroad group such as one that would include that same group of students. This type of study could also compare a study abroad group to an in person, traditional direct instruction type of course in the student's home country.

A final recommendation for a future study is where one would incorporate elements from this study to research how the students behaved 1-2 months after returning home with the use of an ICS assessment tool that could measure additional movement on the DMIS assessment scale. A post assessment like the aforementioned ones here (post assessments #1/2) could be used to monitor how the students' ICS movement behaved months later to see if they remained in either the same stage of the DMIS Continuum scale (1-6) or if they moved into another stage that could be 1-2 levels apart from their initial entering stage. Additionally, more qualitative methods of data collection could be used in future ICS studies like this one which would incorporate various types of interviews, more digital journal reflections and/or discussion board posts, as well as having the students participate in focus groups to capture the students' voices or messages as more data was collected. That said, while it is recommended that the study facilitator be the one who distributes and monitors these different types of data collection strategies, it is not necessary that the same person assume both roles (of investigator and instructor) in the data collection process since these ICS assessments can be performed

with students having someone other than the course instructor administer the experiment and/or could also be distributed online to the students.

This study also found that using a multimodal mobile application (like WhatsApp) in an advanced language and culture course led to more ICS growth amongst its participants when they understood how to interpret the cultural nuances that they had experienced. If the study abroad course is therefore structured in a way that allows for the implantation of tasks in modules that is performed with the assistance of ICS frameworks where students can express themselves in the foreign language by both reflecting on the accompanying workshops while also discussing the material through the classroom meetings, the students will develop more ICS growth. When the instructor puts an emphasis on deeper language understanding and intercultural knowledge as a part of the task completion, the learner will be able to more effectively perform those ICS tasks, thus, the result will be more motivating for the learners to continue to investigate the cultural course topics. ICS learners can extend their knowledge to their language acquisition repertoires when they become adept at learning about culture through explicit knowledge building based around the target host culture. This study confirmed that instructors should also be mindful of developing ICS frameworks and activities in their courses that actively allow learners to build on and study the foreign language use to show how they can better understand the new content that they encounter.

CONCLUSIONS

The Study Summary

While the results of this study should not be used to categorize all university advanced Spanish language and culture students, the data and the researcher's interpretations do highlight some very important topics and provide insight related to increasing the quality of the digital resources and ICS learning opportunities that are available for instructors who want to utilize more interculturally based tasks to improve ICS growth in their courses. The activities in this study were structured around the most recent mobile assisted language learning ideas and ICS teaching theories and methods and allowed the students to investigate relevant themes related to Spanish culture as they also simultaneously improved their foreign language use and development.

Regarding undergraduate American based students studying abroad in Spanish-speaking countries, it should also be mentioned (due to this study's data analysis) that immersing a foreign language student in a new environment abroad will most likely strengthen the students' motivation to want to learn more about various cultural nuances if the technology is used to aid them in their native speaker exchanges. More specifically, incorporating ICS learning with native speaker interactions showed that learners were more prone to investigate the foreign culture as the native speakers engaged them since they were exposed to the foreign language more intensively, and thus the learners in this study wanted to continue to learn and to try to access more available resources to assist them in better understanding their ICS encounters. Furthermore, in this study, the learners had more frequent experiences interacting with each other and with the native speakers

by using the technology app to complete their modules, which allowed them to acquire more knowledge, empathy, compassion, and ultimately guide them to improve their ICS development and eventually show modest ICS growth. That ICS growth was accompanied by them also appreciating the diverse elements of their community engagement within their new host country culture, which led them to be more culturally aware, acceptive, and deeper reflective thinkers. Thus, given the immersive atmosphere in this study, learners wanted to show progress in their language development to also better understand the intercultural differences to not only be successful in the course activities but to become more fully active global citizens.

In conclusion, this study confirmed that intercultural development and sensitivity not only revolve around the curiosity that the learners have toward becoming immersed in the new host culture but that when they are given the right technology tools to engage with native speakers, they show more engagement in wanting to discover and reflect more intensively on the target cultural nuances. Moreover, the conclusion can be made that adding a powerful technology component like WA to the course allows the learners to develop more linguistic competence and language awareness as they gradually add more skills to their ICS repertoires. Thus, if instructors are given opportunities to also develop courses and curricula for those students where they can incorporate ICS principles and elements into their learning processes, the instructors will become more focused on intently building tasks and modules that enhance the knowledge, motivation, and skills of their learners to make the entire study abroad experience more dynamic. Similarly, if the instructors plan tasks within the course modules with the assistance from

the MALL technology tools that engage students on a more hyperpersonal level, more ICS growth will occur. More specifically, the data indicated that when learners go abroad to learn culture, they will not only naturally learn how to arrive at a greater ICS understanding through their task completion, but they will also make greater connection with their home culture as a result of the process. Lastly, the learners will have had more hyperpersonal interactions with native speakers in the foreign language throughout their experiences, which will have also allowed them to further appreciate their own cultural differences. After performing this study, it is clear that there must be more research done on the different aspects related to the development of ICS in foreign language learning to see how the students' behaviors and those new cultural exchanges can link to both their ICS growth as well as their overall language development gains.

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APPENDIX A

TASK 1 GOALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Task Goals and Instructions

FOCUS ON LISTENING COMPRHENSION (IN WHATSAPP) – LEARNING ABOUT THE CULTURE OF SPANISH TAPAS

- Students will attend a tapas dinner/workshop with two professors and a team of native Spaniard restaurant workers in the evening (as part of their class workshop) and talk with them in Spanish.
- Students will watch several video clips about going out for tapas with information and descriptions of the events and connect the topics of that day’s class with the nighttime excursion.

Students will be tasked with:

- explaining what tapas are
- putting photos of tapas into their WhatsApp group
- recording a native Spanish speaker talk about tapas and then listening to another student’s recording submission from the WhatsApp group
- detailing how “tapas are different from an American lunch or dinner” and comparing/contrasting how this Spanish tradition shapes or influences other Spanish cultural traditions (and submit through the WA group).

Phase 1: Task to Do During the Workshop

**Questions to respond to during the Workshop (on Monday night, complete before leaving the workshop) - Please write your answers in the WhatsApp Group in Spanish.

1. What is a tapa?
2. What types of ingredients does a tapa have?
3. What kinds of tapas did you learn about in the workshop? Have you tried any of them before coming to this workshop? Which one was your favorite to learn about and/or taste and why?
4. Why are “tapas” called tapas?
5. What is another name for “tapas” in the central and northern parts of Spain?
6. What does “ir de tapas” or “tapear” mean? Why is it such a unique phenomenon in Spain?
7. What is celebrated on the 16th of June every year and why?
8. List three common tapas and what they are made of.
9. What are 2-3 different ways you can eat tapas if you have them at a bar as far as how you order/receive them?
10. For you, what is the best time of the day to go for tapas and why? Explain your answer.

Phase II: Interview with a Native Speaker about Tapas (Homework for Wednesday's class, due before class begins)

Record a 2-3 minute conversation with a native Spanish speaker talking about how they like to “ir de tapas” within WhatsApp (*You can ask questions that are not listed in these sample questions.*)

Sample Questions for your conversation participant:

*Where do you usually go out for tapas and why?

*What is your favorite tapa and how often do you eat it?

*Have you ever eaten a meal in the United States or in the United Kingdom? How would you compare the food in those countries to the style of eating tapas here?

* Do you prefer to eat tapas during a certain part of the day? Why?

*Have you ever had a party where you preferred tapas or gone to a special occasion where tapas were served in someone's house? Why was it enjoyable? Or, was there an experience you had where you did not like the tapas? What would you change?

Phase III: Communicating with your classmates about the “Tapas Experience” Workshop

(due Friday night at midnight)

You will now look at your classmates’ responses and listen to their recordings that they did with the native speakers. Each student needs to either write or record an audio response with 3-4 sentences (speaking/recording or writing in Spanish) to answer the following questions.

Please make sure to answer the following questions in your post:

*What did you find most interesting about your classmate’s interview and why?

*Was there anything you learned that was new for you after hearing this interview? Explain what you learned.

*Find a picture that relates to one of the ideas that your classmate or the native speaker explained in the interview and put that picture in the group after you write/record your sentences. Put a hashtag to caption the picture as well.

Phase IV: WhatsApp Reflection (Submit a journal entry, due Sunday night at midnight)

Answer the following questions in your reflection by submitting an audio recording (of 3-4 minutes in Spanish).

1. What was your favorite part of the “Tapas Restaurant Workshop Experience” and why?
2. Did you talk about the experience with anyone back in the United States? If so, who? And, what did you tell them about tapas?
3. Did you find WhatsApp easy or hard to use? Did you prefer to use the writing, uploading photos, or recording function the best?
4. Have you ever had anything similar to tapas in another country, like in the USA?
4. Besides learning about food and kitchen vocabulary, how did these activities help you learn more about Spanish and the Spanish culture? Support your answer.

APPENDIX B

TASK #2 - GOALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Task #2 – Goals and Instructions

FOCUS ON SPEAKING (IN WHATSAPP) – UNDERSTANDING THE SPANISH OMELET

April 1 - Monday - Conversation class project - Tortilla de Tapas Workshop

Phase 1: The Activity of the Tapas workshop

**** Instructions: Questions to answer. Please answer these questions in the WHATSAPP group - DO NOT write them down!**

Record (with audio) your answers before Wednesday's class (for the class of April 3).

1. What is a Spanish omelet?
2. What ingredients does a Spanish omelet have?
3. How do you see the history, preparing of, and eating of the Spanish Omelet as part of the Spanish culture?
4. Why and how did this tradition of eating the Spanish Omelet start?
5. Do you think the Spaniards like to eat the tortilla more at home or in restaurants?
6. What does tapas mean?
7. What does the verb “curdle” mean and what does it have to do with tortilla preparation?

8. Do you think your family and your friends would like to eat the Spanish omelet? Why or why not? Provide details.

Phase 2: Interview with a Spanish Native about their preferences regarding the Spanish

Omelet

Instructions: Record (audio only) a 2 to 3 minute conversation with a native Spanish speaker and talk with them about the topic of the Spanish Omelet and enter the information into WhatsApp (you can ask questions that are not listed in these sample questions). *Please complete it before Thursday (4/4/19).*

Sample questions for your conversation participant:

1. Where do you usually go out to eat a Spanish omelet and why?
1. Do you prefer to eat the omelet at home or in a restaurant? Why/Why not?
2. Have you ever eaten something similar in the United States or the United Kingdom?
3. How would you compare the food in those countries with the style of eating the Spanish omelet here in Spain?
4. Do you prefer to eat “eating the Spanish omelet” during a specific part of the day? When? Why?
5. Who taught you how to prepare / cook the Spanish Omelet?

6. Was as there an experience you had where you didn't like the tortilla at a restaurant or in someone's house? Why? What would you change to make that situation better?

Phase # 3: (Submit the answers to these questions and the questions on the sheet before Friday (PICK UP PHOTOS OF THE SHEET YOU PASS IN ON BY MONDAY) (use the mobile application Genius Scan to scan/post it into the WhatsApp group).

*Please do so before Thursday (4/4) 11:59 p. in the WHATSAPP group.

Part A: Please watch the video the instructor posted in the Google classroom for homework before beginning these questions. Read and review the PowerPoint that the instructor published and also complete the packet activities before answering these questions.

Questions to Answer:

1. What did you learn from the video about the Spanish Omelet that you did not know before?
2. Was there anything about the omelet workshop that was different than a typical food workshop in the United States?

3. Do you think Americans would like to eat a Spanish omelet for breakfast, lunch, dinner or just 1 or 2 of those meals?
4. Will you try to cook a Spanish Omelet here in Spain now that you know how to do it?
5. Will you try to cook a Spanish Omelet when you return to the United States?
6. Why do you think this dish is so typical and important for Spaniards?
7. Do you like the tortilla more in a sandwich / as a tapa / or as a larger dish?

Part B:

Now you will see the responses of your classmates and listen to the recordings that they made with the native speakers.

Each student must write or record an audio response with 3-4 sentences (speaking, recording someone else with analysis or writing in Spanish) to answer the following questions.

* What interested you the most in your classmate's interview and why?

* Was there something you learned that was new to you after listening to this interview?

Explain what you learned.

* Find a picture that relates to one of the ideas that your classmate or the native speaker explained in the interview and put that picture in the group after writing / recording your sentences.

*Put a hashtag to caption the image, too.

Phase IV:

WhatsApp Reflection (Turn in a journal entry, which must be sent by Sunday night (4/7) in the WhatsApp - Reflection group by midnight).

Answer the following questions in your reflection by sending an audio recording (3 to 4 minutes in Spanish).

1. What was your favorite part of the “Spanish Omelet Workshop Experience” and why?
2. Did you talk about the experience with someone in the United States? If so, who and how long did it last?
3. And what did you tell that person in the U.S. about this dish?
4. Did you find WhatsApp easy or difficult to use when learning about this special dish?
5. Do you prefer to better use the function of writing, uploading photos or recording?

6. Have you ever had something similar to the Spanish Omelet in another country? In the USA perhaps?

7. In addition to learning about the cooking process and words related to cooking vocabulary, how did these activities help you learn more in Spanish and Spanish culture?

Support your answer with details.

APPENDIX C

TASK #3 – GOALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Task #3 – Goals and Instructions

FOCUS ON SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING (IN WHATSAPP) – THE VISIT TO THE CASTLE

April 7th, 2019 - Monday - Conversation Class Project – The Workshop of “El Alcazar”

Phase 1: Writing

** Instructions: A paragraph (4-6 sentences) Please answer these questions in the WHATSAPP group!

Part #A: * Write your answers before Wednesday's class (for the class of April 10).

Write a paragraph about your experience in the castle/fortress.

*What did you feel during the excursion?

*Did you know a lot about history in Spain before entering?

*What impression did the experience leave you with?

*How would you describe the types of rooms you saw?

Phase 2: Interview with a classmate about the Following Questions

Instructions: Record (audio only) a conversation of 2 to 3 minutes with a friend from the class to answer the questions below:

Person # 1: Journalist

Person # 2: US Tourist

**Please do it before Wednesday (4/8/19) at 11:59 pm

Imagine you are a TeleCinco television reporter in Spain. You are making a story about the cultural significance of the Alcazar with a nearby tourist. You stop him in front of the fortress after his visit and ask him about his recent experience there.

Sample Questions for your conversation participant:

1. Did you enjoy the visit? Why/why not?
2. Have you ever visited historic buildings in the United States before?
3. What makes this fortress and castle different?
4. What surprised you from your experience?
5. Would you recommend this visit to another person from the United States? Why or why not?

Phase III: WhatsApp Reflection

(Submit a journal entry, which must be turned in Sunday night (4/11/19) in the Reflection group - at midnight).

Answer the following questions (do not record, write). Write at least 400 words.

1. What did you think about your experience?
2. What did you like about the alcazar? What was your favorite thing and why?
3. Which room did you find most interesting?
4. How will you describe the Alcazar to your best friend back in the USA?
5. Choose a building you have studied before and compare it to the Alcázar.

APPENDIX D
POST STUDY ASSESSMENT #1

Post Study Assessment #1 – Survey Questions – Exploratory Study – April 2019 (Administered in and Translated to Spanish)

1. Can you explain what you liked about the WhatsApp activity when you shared your homework activity answers and/or diary reflections when trying to better understand the study abroad experience and the culture of Spain?
2. Did your study abroad experience enhance your knowledge of Spanish culture and language learning? How do you think learning about Spanish culture helped you get a better sense of your own culture? Did you prefer to share that new knowledge with photos, voice recordings, or written text?
3. Can you think of an example of a travel situation that helped you build your cultural understanding of Spain or the theme related to Spain that was being studied in one of your classes? How did this encounter assist you in understanding an element of Spanish culture? Did you immediately post about it in WhatsApp or did you wait to talk to your classmates or other friends/host family mates/members of your social circle first?
4. How has your international experience (whether recent or in the last few years) improved your skills in communicating with others in Spanish? Share a way in which you feel more comfortable interacting with people from a different culture

- and what you may not have known before. Did you think it was easy to reflect on that experience by using WhatsApp instead of a laptop or pen/paper?
5. How did you have to adapt to your new cultural surroundings? Did you listen to recordings on your phone from previous assignments to help you remember the pronunciation or significance of certain aspects of the language/culture? How did these above examples affect your ability to interact effectively with others?
 6. Share an experience from your program in which you had to resolve a conflict or work through a cultural misunderstanding? What skills and personal qualities did you use to navigate through the experience? How did the experience affect your cultural understanding of living and studying in a different country?
 7. Share an example of an experience you had while abroad where you took initiative to achieve a greater result. How did the experience affect your cultural knowledge and awareness? Did you post it in one of the WhatsApp groups? Explain how often you used your phone and the WhatsApp mobile application outside of class to talk/post/write about your experiences in Spain.
 8. Can you provide an example of a time when you may have been in danger or felt afraid/nervous while abroad? Did you try to explain this situation to anyone through a text or call (whether the person was located in Spain or abroad)? What

- did you learn from it? Why did that alter your cultural understanding when engaging in your second language?
9. What was the most significant thing you learned about yourself through your study abroad experience? How did using technology while abroad (either in the classroom or while traveling) help you learn about the new host language/culture?

 10. How do you think your identity and cultural understanding has changed after studying more than one month in another country? Can you provide a specific example? Did you notice any abbreviations or ways that people from other countries communicate through apps like WhatsApp compared to how Americans interact digitally (like through FB Messenger, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.)?

APPENDIX E
POST STUDY ASSESSMENT #2

Post Study #2 Interview Questions – Exploratory Study – Abril 2019 (Administered and Translated in Spanish)

SEMISTRUCTURED AUDIO ORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did this experience help you to improve your knowledge about Spanish language and culture?

2. Do you think that learning one thing about the culture here helped you get a better sense of your own culture to learn to think more or reflect on meals or certain ways of celebrating that you may do in the United States?

3. Do you like to learn about new things when you travel? Also, when you travel, do you like to share photos and comments on social networks like Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat?

4. Did you like the WhatsApp activities we did as a part of the workshop modules? Why or why not? Was there a specific sub-task you really enjoyed?

5. Which of the three modules was your favorite and why?

6. Did you prefer to share on WhatsApp with photos, voice recordings, or reading other people's comments? What was the easiest and/or most fun for you?

7. Do you normally like to write things in a journal, either with pen and paper or electronically?
8. Which photo was the most eye opening for you after seeing all of the photos in the WhatsApp groups?
9. What did you think of the interview with the native speaker you did for one of the modules?
10. Can you mention one or two interesting things that you learned from this course?
11. In which workshop do you feel you learned the most?
12. Why do you think learning about culture is important in a language course?
13. For you, why is culture in Spain so different compared to your culture in the U.S.A?
More specifically, why is the culture in your hometown in Kentucky so different than the culture here in Segovia?
14. Is the food in your Kentucky hometown very different from here?

15. In Kentucky, what is a typical lunch or dinner for you? How did those typical meals compare to those same typical meals in Segovia?

APPENDIX F
IRB CONSENT FORM

SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Study: The Role WhatsApp Plays in Impacting L2 Spanish Learners' Intercultural Sensitivity Development in a Language/ Study Abroad Immersion Context

Investigators: David Bryan Smith and Timothy Ashe, Jr.

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

We invite you to take part in this research study because you are a second language learner of Spanish and also interested in learning about Spanish culture while studying abroad as a part of your coursework.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this study is to explore how students use mobile applications to interact with each other while engaged in cultural activities by using the audio, video, and texting components of the WhatsApp Mobile Application. The activities will be mostly integrated into your language classes, but you may be asked to complete some tasks outside of the classroom using the mobile application above.

Recruitment Materials and Academy Setting

Students will be recruited for this study from a Spanish language study abroad program taking place in Spain. They will have varying levels of Spanish language proficiency. The researcher will ask interested students taking part in the program to sign up for the study. The student must be 18 years or older to participate in the study. Once notified of their interest, the investigator will brief the students on the study, provide details, and review information/consent forms with them.

Classroom Setting

The student's work with the mobile application will be done in conjunction with the investigator's classes that are connected to the study abroad program, including occasional homework assignments and excursions/tasks related to the coursework per the course syllabus. The total number of participants will be between 15 and 30 people.

What Will You Be Expected to Do in This Study?

The average class period will last around 2 hours. The average WhatsApp activity will last 30-45 minutes where you will be exclusively using your mobile device to perform the task or communicate with classmates. The student will be asked to spend 1 hour each week of the class outside of the regular class participation to work with the researcher on the study. At the end of the study, the student will be asked to give the researcher feedback and answer a post-test survey for about 1-2 hours regarding their reflections on the project. The student's conversations and tasks will be collected and stored via the WhatsApp Mobile Application. The study's procedures will be executed in the following way:

1. The researcher will use a Mixed Methods (Quantitative and Qualitative) approach.
2. The researcher will distribute a task to the student (i.e. a video clip to write on, a song to listen to, a writing prompt to respond to, etc.).
3. Each day in class, the researcher will follow the same procedure for the study period so that students can perform the task(s) and understand the directions.
4. Each class period or block of time, the teacher will ask the students to complete the task(s). They will have 30-45 minutes to complete the task. For example, each student may watch a movie clip of

what people may eat in Spain. Then, you'll discuss it with a partner, and then relate your discussion to the cultural theme for the day (Spanish food, restaurants, films, palaces, cultural nuances, etc.).

5. During some tasks, the student may be asked to audio record some of their interactions to respond to the task questions or comment on the recordings of their classmates.
6. Subsequent to each task or for homework on certain days, they will be asked to text their fellow classmates via the WhatsApp Application to give responses to task related questions or course related work. They will also be asked to reflect on those tasks during the week that the task occurs as a separate assignment or as a part of an in-class project and discussion.
7. They will be asked to repeat the same procedure for a different thematic unit, such as a theme like family unity, which can be seen in Spanish movies. For example, they may then watch a different movie clip from a Spanish movie on Netflix as a part of the task. They will then have to perform follow up activities in order to give feedback to their other group members based on the audios/tasks.
8. The teacher will often intervene to provide clarity or additional questions as he listens in to the task execution and conversations.
9. There will be roughly 2 tasks over the course of one week. At the end of each week, the researcher will upload the transcripts from the WhatsApp mobile application.

Here are the different themes to be covered in the study:

- Week 1 – Socialization/Tapas
- Week 2 – Food (Spanish Omelet)
- Week 3 –History (the Castles of Spain)

10. During the class period, the teacher will write down (i.e. per the field notes) various observations such as:

- The student's common obstacles
- The student's language and cultural growth
- other mental notes and reflections from the class that will assist in analyzing the student's language use or cultural recognition

11. The post course survey will be written down with pen and paper at the end of the study period and recorded by the student as a part of the study. The researchers will also distribute various instruction sheets throughout the course in which respondents will answer in either English and/or Spain to detail their experiences in the course using the technology tools while also reflecting on their intercultural sensitivity.

*All data will be kept confidential and for research purposes only.

How long will the research last?

The actual data collection will last around 5 weeks. With the two phases, the research will last from March until August of 2019. After the study concludes (in August 2019), you may be asked to participate for 2-3 hours to discuss your experience in the study.

How many people will be studied?

We expect about 15-30 people will participate in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

You are free to decide whether you wish to participate in this study. The research opportunity will allow additional opportunities for you to practice Spanish and learn more about the culture of Spain as well as other places around the world.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

The student can leave the research at any time.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Your personal information and identity will not be revealed in this study. Only the researcher will be able to identify you individually. If you choose to participate in the study, the researcher will analyze the data you produce during the class for his research. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. If you choose to NOT participate in the study, your data will NOT be analyzed as part of his research study. The information collected in this study may be used for publications, conference presentations, and for other academic purposes. Your data will be stored on a secure University server at Arizona State University for a period of 5 years and then destroyed. If you have any additional questions regarding how your data will be used, please discuss these questions or concerns with the investigative team.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, talk to the research team at **David Bryan Smith- BryanSmith@asu.edu or at *Tim Ashe, Jr.* tashejr@asu.edu**

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Behavioral IRB. You may talk to them at (480) 965-6788 or by email at research.integrity@asu.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

Signature of participant

Date

Printed name of participant

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Printed name of person obtaining consent

****My signature above also grants my permission for the research team to use my classroom participation in the above referenced activities and coursework, including audio and video recordings, to be used in the study.**

My signature below documents that the information in the consent document and any other written information was accurately explained to, and apparently understood by, the participant, and that consent was freely given by the participant.

Signature of witness to consent process

Date

Printed name of person witnessing consent process

APPENDIX G
IRB APPROVAL FORM



EXEMPTION GRANTED

David Smith
 CLAS-H: English
 bryansmith@asu.edu

Dear David Smith:

On 4/22/2019 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	The Role WhatsApp Plays in L2 Spanish Learners' Developing Intercultural Sensitivity in a Study Abroad Context
Investigator:	David Smith
IRB ID:	STUDY00009508
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol Document, Category: IRB Protocol; • Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • Sample Task, Category: Participant materials (specific directions for them); • Recruitment Measures Document, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Post Test Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 4/22/2019.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Timothy Ashe Jr
Timothy Ashe Jr