Intercultural Awareness and Competence: Cultural Differences and Challenges among International Students in a Private Malaysian University

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Abstract

In the past, almost the whole university student population in Malaysia comprised three major ethnic groups, namely Malays, Chinese and Indians as well as other minorities. The make-up of the student population has evolved dramatically and it is common to see students of other cultures in private campuses throughout the country. Tolerance will be a major obstacle until not only each national but the greater student population become more accepting and accommodating. Western literature on intercultural competence abounds, however there are few studies in the local context done on this topic.

There is a need to explore and investigate the awareness of intercultural competence of these foreign students in a private Malaysian University in order to understand the pedagogic implications and the measures to be taken by the university. Therefore, the key questions for the study are: **How do foreign students in this private university cope with the cultural differences and challenges? And what competences do they have and need, other than the English language as lingua franca?** A large scale study was beyond the scope of this paper; therefore, an exploratory study was done with a small, convenient sample of international students in the university. It was the intent that through this study, issues related to awareness of cultural others and the students' own intercultural competence would surface for further direction and a large scale study. The implication of the findings for understanding the awareness of intercultural competence among students in this private university is discussed.

Introduction

In recent years, Malaysia has seen exponential growth in the number of international students. In the past, almost the whole university student population in Malaysia comprised three major ethnic groups, namely Malays, Indians and Chinese, as well as other minorities. From the 1990s, the make-up of the student population evolved dramatically and it is now common to see students of different cultures in campuses throughout the country. These students bring with them not only different ways of thinking and behaving but also diverse cultural idiosyncrasies.

It is increasingly common to find students from Oman, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea, China, and Mongolia in the Malaysian classrooms. There are 4,000 students from over 90 countries in Sunway University, Malaysia. Increasingly, students have significant contact with individuals coming from different backgrounds from their own. The encounters experienced by many of these students are witnessed in increasing frequency, so too the desire by these foreign students to hold on to their cultural identity. This is seen in the emergence of national clubs of every nations and events such as cultural nights to celebrate their unique differences. All parties must be prepared for any kinds of intercultural interactions they are bound to encounter in and out of campus, whether enriching experience or otherwise.

Purpose of Study

There is a need to explore and examine the awareness of intercultural competence of these students in Sunway University in order to understand the pedagogic implications and the measures to be taken by the university. Much needed and increasingly important due to the recent development on the campus, a check reveals that Western literature on intercultural competence abounds, however, very few significant studies in the local context on this topic exist. A large-scale study is beyond the scope of this paper; therefore, an exploratory study was done with a small sample of international students. The aim of this study is to explore and examine intercultural competence in this context.

Research Questions

Therefore, the key questions for this study are: How do foreign students cope with the cultural differences and challenges? Do they have the competence to do so? More importantly, are they aware of their own intercultural competence?

It is hoped that through this study, issues related to intercultural awareness and competence will surface for further direction and study. First, this paper examines the theoretical underpinnings that inform the study. Next, the methodology and the design of the study are presented and subsequently, the findings are discussed. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

Literature review

It is widely accepted that to be a leader, one needs to be not only charismatic but to have skills, especially people skills, or better defined as intercultural communication competence. How can young people — leaders of tomorrow — develop these skills? As noted by Deardorff (2009), to be able to think interculturally, to know the products of a culture such as music, history and language, or having an intercultural experience is not enough for a person to develop intercultural competence. Citing Savicki (2008),

she concurs that other than "building authentic relationship", respect and trust and adequate preparation are needed for intercultural competence development prior to working or studying abroad.

From another perspective, Kim opines that preparation can be acquired through "acculturation" (Kim, 1988, 2001, 2005a), which is the acquisition of new cultural practices whereby one doesn't have to leave home to experience the phenomenon. He suggests that a person can come into contact with foreigners in his country and through the Internet, he is exposed to other cultures. This is now made possible with globalisation. However, he argues that even with intercultural contacts and exposures, acculturative learning will not occur automatically or randomly. Previous internal conditions do not simply happen with the additions of new cultural elements but it is a process in which an individual has control. If, for example, a person wishes to engage in an intercultural dialogue, he needs to be in an intercultural society and have intercultural competence, an inevitably position most foreign students find themselves in.

Intercultural competence is in the attitude of the person interacting with people of another culture, with a willingness to suspend one's own ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudice (Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson and del Carmen Garcia, 2009; Deardorff, 2009). Further, the problem of ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudice is a worldwide problem. Overcoming ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and racism requires a commitment both to learning about other cultures and to understanding one's own. This is because they are so familiar and comfortable and overcoming them can be a serious challenge. A willingness not to prejudge is necessary in exploring various cultural experiences and an ability to behave appropriately and effectively with culturally different others, without invoking prejudiced and stereotyped assumptions are required (Hall, 2002).

To handle the pressing but potentially inflammatory issues of prejudice and discrimination in a manner that is both appropriate and effective is the challenge for interculturally competent communicators. Biases can impede the development of interculural competence. No one can completely overcome the obstacles to intercultural competence that naturally exists but the requisite knowledge, motivation, and skill can help minimise the negative effects of prejudice and discrimination (Lustig and Koester, 2013).

As cited by Hall, according to William Sumner, ethnocentrism refers to the view that "one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it". Hall concluded that ethnocentrism is when we are intolerant of differences, indifferent to others' concerns and when one avoids interacting with others. While this may be true, other studies argue on a totally different aspect of a person. They focus on the area of a person's identity stating that identity plays an important role in successful intercultural engagement. The more secure one feels in his or her identity, the better the degree of adaptability, flexibility and cultural empathy (Kim, 2009). Many studies have shown that identity is often juxtaposed with the other cultural group. Identifying oneself through in-group/out-group, a natural human tendency is a great influence in intercultural conflicts and development (Ting-Toomey, 2009; Kim 2009).

Intercultural Competence defined

While this may be so, Deardorff opines that to assess intercultural competence, we must first define the concept. She asserts that it is a complex construct that involves more than one component. Her study reveals that there are multiple definitions of the concept from the intercultural field as well as from the academic disciplines. Many scholars have made various attempts at defining the concept with varying degree of acceptance and success. Simply put, intercultural communication is the interaction between people who speak different languages and intercultural communication competence is how well they interact or communicate (Lustig and Koester, 2013). However, intercultural communication competences are expressed more comprehensively as the five savoirs by Byram (1997). This definition is deemed most appropriate and found to be the most suitable one for this study.

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

Byram further opines that intercultural is an activity which involves affective as well as cognitive and behaviourial issues, as indicated in the extract above. In addition, Byram et al (2009) redefine intercultural competence as the ability to be aware and to recognise other people's identities, to accept and deal with ambiguity constructively, to empathise, to have communicative awareness in order to negotiate rules appropriate for intercultural communication, to have knowledge of social processes, to own skills of interpreting an event and relating it to events from one's own culture, skills of discovering new knowledge of cultural practices, to be able to evaluate critically one's own and other cultures perspectives and practices and lastly, to undertake willingly some activity alone or with others in order to make a contribution to the common good.

What about the field of education? Can education or the university help young people develop these competencies? According to Cushner and Mahon (2009), there is no blueprint for building intercultural competence. Although in education there have been attempts to address society's changing needs and even as international diversity has been increasingly embraced by higher education, concepts related to intercultural understanding and competence remain on the fringe of the institutional mission. Is this the case with Sunway University?

Turner (2007) concurs with Murphy & Ivinson that universities exist as both local and international entities as their participants move within social and educational contexts. And intercultural integration will not provide an educational solution for classroom

inequalities, let alone encourage the development of global perspectives among students unless it is purposively managed. It is the intent of the author that this small study will lead to it. Berg and Paige (2009), quoting Lou and Bosley, recognise that forced immersion in another culture is necessary, though not sufficient, condition for achieving "the transformative experiential learning potential". Further they assert that "cultural mentoring" which facilitates the development of intercultural competence among students is the sufficient condition.

Local students in Sunway University find the international population very appealing as it helps prepare them for an oversea education in the future. Some foreign students appreciate that the college looks after the welfare of the international students. Upon arrival, they are picked up at the airport, provided with quality accommodation and given free counselling. The international student office organises trips, clubs, activities and helps the students in getting along with each other. It also helps in providing practical information such as banking and shopping for daily needs (www.studymalaysia.com/where/profile.php?code=sunway).

Granted there are some efforts made to help students adjust to the local environment culture mentoring; however, there is largely a lack of integrated holistic effort by the university to identify and develop students' intercultural communication. For example, there are no studies done to measure the effectiveness of its larger strategies and efforts in this area. Therefore, this exploratory study, through a preliminary assessment of a small sample of its international student body, serves as a starting point to address the deficiencies.

Methodology
Defining and measuring students' intercultural competence enables a university to gauge its success in internationalisation strategies (Deardoff, 2009). There is no shortage of instruments or methodologies for assessing intercultural competence. These are discussed in some details by Fantini, A.E. & Smith, E. M. (1997), Deardorff (2006), Holmes & O'Neill (2010), and Van de Vijver, F.J.R. & Kwok, L. (2009) and as exemplified by Hammer, M. R. (2008); however, the instrument selected to assess the students' awareness and competence is the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE) developed for the Council of Europe by Byram et al. (2009).

The Autobiography had been expressly designed to encourage and foster cognitive competences such as interpretation, explanation and relation of cultural information, and the critical evaluation of the perspectives, practices and products of different cultural groups. These cognitive competences are necessary to engage effectively with the cultural other and to appreciate the value and benefits of living within culturally diverse societies. The Autobiography not only offers a framework for an awareness of the individual's intercultural competence, it also provides space and time for reflection as the subjects work on their journal.

I do not claim that it is the only or the best instrument available but under the circumstances, I feel that it is the most appropriate one for this study. The Autobiography's comprehensive framework was found to be in line with the objective of my study and largely level appropriate for my participants. The questions are thought provoking but framed at a level in which the participants could understand and engage in.

At this point, we are only interested in the relationship and response of the participants to the study. The students were required to journal an encounter that has impacted and challenged their own understanding of intercultural competency. Since intercultural competence is reflected in the way we tell our stories, the Autobiography attempts to evaluate the student's position towards intercultural competence by exploring the way each tells the narrative of his or her encounter. Questions in the Autobiography are designed tocreate self-awareness of the participant and awareness of the cultural other; and explore the participants' experience with their cultural other in their encounters. In this study, we seek to evaluate not only the facts but the manner and style in which subjects tell their stories.

Sampling
For this exploratory study, purposive sampling was chosen. The reason is that the sample would be representative of the student body in Sunway University and it was felt that this method of sampling was the best under the circumstance. Admittedly, there will be differences between the sample and the population however insignificant and incidental (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Information on the demographics and other characteristics of the participants will be revealed as the study unfolds. Students of both genders from undergraduate and pre-university programmes were recruited for the study. These students were invited to participate if they meet the criteria, the first of which is that they come from a homogeneous background. The second criterion is that they must have a level of proficiency in the English language (at least an IELTS band 5) in order to communicate their encounter through journaling. Lastly, they must be students of Sunway University.

Two Indonesians, one Kazakh and one Iranian were recruited. Two Malaysians were included as it was felt that their encounter with an international other would enrich the study. However, the paper will focus on the international students due to space constraint. The students were each provided with a copy of the Autobiography and given a time frame of two weeks to complete the Autobiography. The journals were then collected for evaluation and analysis. A summary of the findings in the form of tabulation is included in Appendix 1. Some of the questions framed in the Autobiography are: How would you define yourself? When did you have this encounter? How has this encounter changed you? Will you decide to do something as a result of doing this Autobiography? These questions took the participants through self-awareness before and after an encounter and self-reflection of their intercultural engagement. The Autobiography also challenged them to do something positive in an intercultural encounter in the future. Some of the findings are discussed in the next section. In this early study, expecting more than the participants' self-awareness of their intercultural competence would be unrealistic. However, there are serendipitous moments, as evidenced in the encounters below.

Findings
Encounter 1 — Different yet similar
It is generally agreed that the study of at least one other language is extraordinarily useful in understanding the role of differences in verbal codes in intercultural communication. It also teaches much about the culture of those who use it and the categories of experience the language can create (Lustig and Koester, 2013).

However, Deardorff asserts that language does not guarantee intercultural competence. It appears to resonate in this encounter.

Back home, Margaretha uses the Indonesian language even with her Indonesian friends who speak English. She realised her lack of proficiency in the English language when she first came to pursue her foundation studies in Malaysia. From her perspective, her Malaysian classmates appeared to be more proficient and comfortable with the language than her *(savoir apprendre)*. "English is not my mother tongue, whereas for Malaysian English is just one of another daily language. This is the first time I realised that English is my primary language here after I touched down in Malaysia"[sic].

Her classmates treated her like a Malaysian and for them to accept her indicates their tolerance and respect as they engaged in intercultural dialogue *(savoir s'engager)*. "I thought I still needed to learn a lot in communicating in English [sic] but they thought I was quite good enough."

Stereotype inaccuracy can lead to errors in interpretations and expectations about the behaviours of others. In this case, interpretation errors occur because stereotypes are used by Margaretha not only to categorise specific individuals and events but also to judge them resulting in in inaccurate labels for a group of people (Malaysians), which are then used to interpret subsequent ambiguous events and experiences involving members of those groups (Lustig and Koester, 2013 p 142).

Journaling her encounter made Margaretha more aware of her lack of social confidence, and more appreciative of the fact that her host culture was not too different from her *own (savoir s'engager)*. She observes that "Bahasa Malaysia (BM) and Indonesian are very similar to each other so sometimes it helps if we couldn't explain our mind in English". Through the encounter, she is aware that she has grown and matured as a person as a result of being in a different environment. She also realises her need to improve her proficiency of the English language for better communication which in turn will help her to get out of her comfort zone. She had equated her lack of social confidence to her lack of English proficiency *(savoir comprendre)*.

Encounter 2 — Ability to 'decentre'
This participant exhibits *savoir être* as he was open and curious about the cultural other in his encounter. Nico is an outgoing, friendly Indonesian male who has friends from every nation. He finds other cultures interesting and enjoys the friendship of people from different cultures. An individual who adopts a pluricultural orientation is better adapted, both psychologically and socioculturally (Byram et al., 2009). Although he appears to have a positive attitude and an appreciation of 'the other', which should have reduced the need for toleration, this encounter was an eye-opener for him.

In the course of a casual conversation, Nico and his friends discovered that their mutual friends, an African couple, had been keeping their relationship a secret. Nico discovered, to his amazement, that to keep a boy-girl relationship a secret from people close to them is accordance to African culture. This was baffling for him as it is completely different in the Indonesian culture *(savoirs)*.

Nico grew up in a close-knit Indonesian family. In his culture, once you are in a relationship, you share your happiness with others. Through his reflection in his journal, he discovered awareness of self and knowledge of practices in his own country. He was also willing to suspend disbelief about another culture and belief in his decision to do something as a result of this experience: "I did ask them personally and no need to expose their relationship" [sic]; and he could recognise the difference between both cultures "It is quite interesting and funny about African culture, about boy-girl relationship" [sic] *(savoir s'engager)*.

This encounter has taught him to respect another culture and it has inspired him to want to write about other cultural differences he faces in other encounters. His journal showed that he had the ability to 'decentre' and to acquire new knowledge of his cultural others leading to *savoir apprendre/faire*". In this respect, Nico has intercultural competence as he had the ability to be aware and to recognise other people's identities, to accept and to deal with ambiguity constructively and to have communicative awareness in order to negotiate rules appropriate for intercultural communication (Byram et al., 2009),

Encounter 3 — Cultural 'adept' with a prejudice.

Savoir s'engager is clearly seen in the subject in this next encounter. Bayan is a male student who comes from Kazakhstan. Bayan's encounter took place during a travel to Tarsus with a friend. His friend suggested visiting an Arab acquaintance. Bayan was so impressed with this Syrian Arab who showed gentleness, generosity and hospitality to them although they were total strangers. The Arab expressed surprise at Bayan and his friend's ability and proficiency of the Arabic language. "They probably hadn't met anyone from Kazakhstan before me so it was an unusual experience for them to talk in their own language to a stranger, taking into account that Arabic is losing its popularity [sic]," observes Bayan.

He exhibits cultural and political awareness and knowledge or *savoir s'engager*. "They were surprised to meet two fluent Kazakhs and Arabic and to talk frankly about the political and economic situation which was a taboo in Syria" [sic]. He is able to evaluate his encounter and time with his cultural other critically *(savoir apprendre/faire)*, "I was too frank in my communication with them, and I had to restrain myself in order not to get into trouble, they had to adjust to more literary language and speak more coherently" [sic] and "they must been taught to be respectful to strangers whatever their opinions/visions [sic] are".

Bayan's observation that this man was not a "typical ignorant Arab" reveals ethnocentrism, stereotype and prejudice about Arabs in general without him even realising it. Prejudiced attitudes include irrational feelings of dislike and even hatred for certain groups, biased perceptions and beliefs about the group members that are not based on direct experiences and first-hand knowledge, and a readiness to behave in negative and unjust ways toward member of the group (Lustig and Koester, 2013). Similarly, Allport (1954) argues that prejudiced people ignore evidence that is inconsistent with their biased viewpoint, or they distort the evidence to fit their prejudices. In his writing of the nature of prejudice, he explains that by virtue of kinship, an individual not only becomes the victim of whatever prejudice is directed

against his primary caregivers, the individual also takes on the prejudices of those primary caregivers. This might explain Bayam's prejudice.

On the other hand, he displays *savoir comprendre* in his observation that the culture of hospitality is common to both cultures — Kazakh and Syrian Arab. "For example, I wanted to know why they were so hospitable to us, strangers. I compared this aspect to our own, according to our customs, any guest is a sign of bliss and whenever a guest comes, a family can't reject and must always be hospitable" [sic].

The encounter has taught him to respect others and to treat strangers in a foreign country hospitably. From his journal, Bayan expressed confidence and an awareness of a high level of interculturality in "that he has matured and can be a respected guest of anyone in any country". Ironically, with all his prejudices and ethnocentrism, he considers himself highly competent interculturally.

Encounter 4 — Cultural faux pas and confusion
The last participant, Hamid, an Iranian appears to have a lack of savoirs and an identity crisis. He reported an encounter while working in Iran about three years ago. In the Iranian culture, men greet each other with a kiss to the cheeks the second time they meet as a mark of respect. Not knowing that it is not acceptable in the European context, Hamid greeted his German clients with a kiss. It was a shocking moment for everyone at the meeting, including four of his colleagues. In his confusion and to cover up his faux pas, he pretended nothing had happened. In his reflections, Hamid says that this was his first contact with foreigners. He confessed that at that time he didn't understand other cultures.

Clearly, although ethnocentrism had not resulted in any damaging conflict (Hall, 2002), it was used by Hamid as his reference in this context. He had honestly thought that greeting both genders with a kiss was socially acceptable even in the Western context. Although he was embarrassed by the encounter, he was able to self-reflect through journaling. This shows a certain *savoir s'engager* as he felt challenged and was encouraged to learn more about other cultures.

As Kim (2009) argues, the more secure one feels in his identity, the better the degree of adaptability and cultural empathy. Many studies have shown that identity is often juxtaposed with the other cultural group. Identifying oneself through in-group/out-group, a natural human tendency is a great influence in intercultural conflicts and development (Ting-Toomey 2009, Kim 2009). Clearly, it is lacking in this encounter.

Discussion
The discussion revolves around the objectives of the study: to explore and examine the awareness of intercultural competence of these students in Sunway University in order to understand the pedagogic implications and the measures to be taken by the university.

In light of this, three definable patterns have emerged from this study. This includes
- a need for students to discover and be aware of self first,
- the students' discovery of the cultural other and their idiosyncrasies, and
- the students' discovery of their own vulnerability and a new level of awareness of their own intercultural competence and development.

Some other important points that should be mentioned include:

- Self-perception of intercultural competence is different from the reality as captured in some of the encounters.
- Whether you come from a mono or pluricultural/multicultural background is no guarantee of immunity from prejudice, stereotyping or the challenges of an encounter.
- Surprisingly, the international students from homogenous background seemed to fare better than the Malaysian students in their encounters. This could be explained by the fact that international students have certain expectations, however limited before they go abroad. To some extent, this forced immersion has prepared them for new encounters, though it appears to be inadequate.
- The Autobiography has helped all participants to be more aware of themselves and their level of intercultural competencies. One of the key objectives of the study was to explore the cultural awareness of the students. This study has helped to achieve this goal. Although intercultural communication can be learned from lectures, textbooks and research articles, direct involvement in an encounter or experiential learning, is more impactful (Campbell & Li, 2008).
- The Autobiography has helped them to focus on their own ethnocentrism and brought self-awareness of their stereotyping and prejudices. In Encounter 3, although the participant believes himself to be open-minded and non-judgemental, ethnocentrism and his prejudice are obvious. His identity, as expressed in his race, faith, values and where he comes from is important to him (Kim, 2009; Deardorff, 2009) and so he gets upset about "the ignorance and stereotyping of other races". Experiential learning requires self-reflection (Holmes & O'Neill, 2010; Kolb, 1984). Through reflection, students in the study achieved self-awareness and increased sensitivity to differences (Gu & Maley, 2008).
- Through it, their beliefs were challenges in one way or another if not turned on its head, and all walked away from the experience changed for the better. This study helped students to challenge their ethnocentrism and stereotypes, increase their cultural awareness and expand their worldviews. This led to a better understanding and appreciation of cultural differences. However, this is just the beginning.
- The interest in the study expressed by some of the students indicates there is a need for more study of this nature.

Conclusions

The study reveals an interesting mix of response from the international students — each narrative as unique, diverse and complex as each character. Surprisingly, Malaysians, who come from a multi-cultural environment, faced struggles in their encounters, too. This indicates that challenges from intercultural encounters are to be expected regardless of one's cultural background or heritage and whether one comes from monocultural or pluricultural/multicultural environment.

The study shows that whatever background a person comes from, in order to engage in intercultural dialogue effectively, he or she must have most, if not all, intercultural competencies. The framework in the Autobiography was helpful in directing the student's focus to their own intercultural competence. Arguably, there is a clear need

for intercultural competence awareness and development among the students — and possibly the educators — in Sunway University. There is clear evidence these Sunway University students have intercultural competence but at different levels. There appears to be acculturation among some students, which is hardly surprising. Turner observes that although social benefits may arise from student integration, there is a need to explore and establish what is meant and what might be achieved from integrating learner.

Implications for teachers

As educators, knowing that students learn intercultural competence through experiential understanding, using a constructivist approach to teaching will have a greater impact than a behaviourist style of teaching.

It is believed that this small study will benefit teachers with international students under them, and other who wish to engage with intercultural competence, whether personally, socially or academically for better management of intercultural encounters. A further study on a bigger scale may be explored such as a bigger sampling of international students from more diverse countries. It is also recommended that a face-to-face interview of individuals be done to clarify any incoherent or confusing issues in addition to a longitudinal ethnography study for a more comprehensive study.

Implications for Sunway University

The university's internationalisation, through its vision of being the 'Harvard of the East', has resulted in the introduction of prestigious programmes such as Le Cordon Bleu and partnership with renowned schools such as the Manchester Business School. Other than providing programmes of international standard, there is a clear need for the university to actively address the intercultural competence of its student population. This could be done through a large-scale survey using the Autobiography framework or other similar surveys as a starting point to determine the level and needs of international students and using the study to incorporate purposeful programmes in the curriculum for international education. It is hoped that this study will be the starting point for many other studies.

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APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

	ENCOUNTER 1	ENCOUNTER 2
Name	Margaretha	Nico Fernando
Age [gender]	19 years old [F]	19 years old [M]
Nationality	Indonesian [Chinese-Javanese]	Indonesian Chinese
Language spoken	Javanese, Bahasa Indonesia	B. Indonesia, English
Title of encounter	When English is my daily language	BGR-Intercultural Exchange
Where? Encounter	Sunway university	Christian Fellowship meeting
When?	Foundation year - July 2010	After dinner 29 Sept 2011
Who with?	Pre-University coursemates	2 Africans at Christians fellowship
Changes after Encounter	Learnt to get out from comfort zone/to be more open-minded to improve communication in English	Felt maybe he should have asked them personally instead of wrongly judging them

	ENCOUNTER 3	ENCOUNTER 4
Name	Bayan	Hamid
Age [gender]	18 years old [M]	29 years old [M]
Nationality	Kazakhstan	Iran
Language spoken	Kazakh, Arabic, English	Farsi, Arabic, Turkish, English
Title of encounter	Generous Arab	Men kissing
Where? Encounter	Tarsus on a holiday	Iran - office
When?	Summer 2009	2008
Who with?	Muslim Syrian Arab	2 German businessmen
Changes after Encounter	Will act differently towards strangers in a foreign country/ Sure that he can be a respected guest in any country	Tried to learn more about different cultures [business point of view] Will read about business etiquette in other cultures