

**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BARRIERS
BETWEEN ZULU AND CHINESE STUDENTS
AT SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN DURBAN.**

This work is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Technology Degree: Public Relations Management

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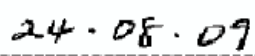
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June 2009



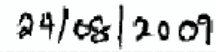
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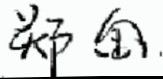
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DECLARATION

With the signature below I, Jin Zheng, hereby declare that the work that I present in this dissertation is based on my own research, and that I have not submitted this dissertation to any other institution of higher education to obtain an academic qualification.



J. Zheng

1 June 2009

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all the people who have supported and encouraged me to complete this Masters, in particular:

My parents,

who have given me the strength and determination to reach this milestone.

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ABSTRACT

This study presents the research of an investigation into the intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students at selected Higher Education Institutions in Durban. To achieve this aim, two sets of questionnaires were administered separately to Zulu and Chinese students at two HEIs in Durban and an observation report was compiled.

This study reviewed theories and literature relevant to defining and understanding the barriers to intercultural communication. The insights gained from this literature review were used to interpret the results which were obtained through a quantitative and qualitative research methodology.

The findings revealed that intercultural communication barriers do exist between Zulu and Chinese students. Findings also found that language problems amongst Zulu and Chinese students are viewed as common barriers, especially where the communicators speak different languages. Comments from respondents revealed that a communicators' accent, different grammar structure and the words they use are confusing during their intercultural communication experience. Cultural differences and language problems were found to be the main intercultural communication barriers. In addition, the problems of nonverbal communication, racism, ethnocentrism, cultural stereotyping were also viewed as obstacles of the intercultural communication process.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE

According to research by the British Council (Study South Africa, 2007), student drive-factors of a choice of a study destination abroad include geographic region, historical connections between countries, language, the perceived quality of a country's education and its accessibility, affordability and the 'employability' of qualifications obtained. Interestingly, growing numbers of students are opting to study in developing countries (Study South Africa, 2007).

Study South Africa (2007) found that South Africa as a popular international student destination uses English as the primary language of instruction, charges lower fees than developed nations, has a lower cost of living and has a large higher education sector that is accessible and offers internationally recognised qualifications. The benefits of having foreign students study in destination countries like South Africa are considerable. The fees and living costs paid by foreign students are a form of foreign investment and those who are charged fees higher than local students help to fund higher education (Study South Africa, 2007).

Statistics from the Ministry of Education show that in 2006 more than 130 000 Chinese went abroad for further study (Gao, 2007). He added that a survey conducted by The China Youth Daily revealed that more than 80% of Chinese university students wanted to study abroad and 66% responded that they believed that an overseas education background would be beneficial to their future career development. He further stated that Chinese students felt that with their overseas university diplomas they were more competitive than graduates from the local universities. China is a great "student-abroad" export country and has considerable potential to influence the development of the education industry than any other country (Gao, 2007).

The number of Chinese students studying abroad is increasing rapidly every year. China has a huge number of students studying abroad and has a great potential to influence the development of the education industry in South Africa. The Chinese embassy in South Africa (2006) indicated that 19 Chinese students were registered in South Africa in 1999, however by September 2006 more than 3 300 Chinese students had come to study at South African tertiary institutions. Therefore, if South Africa's HEIs can seize this opportunity to publicise themselves as a good study destination, more Chinese students will be attracted. South Africa can benefit from the financial investments that Chinese students make, and from the international relations and links forged during their studies. The internationalisation of education is viewed as a valuable means of advancing communication and respect among people of different cultures, of developing scholarship, and of strengthening South Africa's global position (Study South Africa, 2007). There are also benefits to home countries like China when Chinese students return as well qualified citizens with knowledge of and links to other countries (Study South Africa, 2007).

As there is a growing number of Chinese international students in South Africa, communication problems between them and local students are on the increase. According to Avruch and Black (1993) as people from different cultural groups take on the exciting challenge of working together, cultural values sometimes conflict. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Durban are made up of diverse groups of students who bring their own unique languages and cultures with them. Burger (2007: 13) shows that the majority of the people in KwaZulu-Natal speak isiZulu. In comparison to other languages in the province, statistics show that isiZulu is the first language of 80.9% of the population, followed by English (13.6%) and Afrikaans (1.5%).

The problem is that little research has been done which provides a thorough cultural background of Chinese and Zulu students. In addition, limited research has been done on investigating the barriers of effective intercultural communication between Chinese and Zulu students in multicultural learning environments in South Africa.

As a Chinese international student studying at the Durban University of Technology, the researcher interacts with many different cultural groups at the institution. According to a pilot study conducted by the researcher in 2007 at HEIs in Durban, it was found that there are certain barriers to intercultural communication that prevent Chinese and Zulu students from communicating effectively when they involve themselves in complex intercultural environments. The pilot study which was conducted as exploratory research with 10 Chinese students and 10 Zulu students at HEIs in Durban showed that most of the respondents experienced several problems when they communicated with their peers and educators. The results showed that 100% of the Chinese participants said they had experienced intercultural communication problems with Zulu students. 60% of Zulu participants said that they had experienced intercultural communication problems with Chinese students. The pilot study also found that cultural differences led to miscommunication between Zulu and Chinese students.

1.2 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

According to Fielding (1993: 445) intercultural communication is a special type of communication in which people from different cultures communicate with each other. Rampersad (2007) states that as learners enter into intercultural dialogue or collaboration they are often faced with cultural differences. Bruhns *et al.* (cited in Njobe, 2007: 1) also found that numerous studies on language abilities of second language learners' indicate that learners have difficulties learning in a second language. Rampersad (2007) further indicates that learners are either unhappy or reluctant to work or associate with people of other cultures or are shy or intolerant to engage in discussions. The problem in terms of understanding each other is also of great concern.

Sigband and Bell (1990: 76) claim the way to achieve better communication is through knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of cultural differences rather than through acceptance or integration. To address the barriers of intercultural communication between Chinese and Zulu students, the education system needs to encourage learners to become interculturally

competent. Lustig and Koester (1993: 73) articulate that there are three components of intercultural competence, including the interpersonal and situational contexts within which the communication occurs, the degree of appropriateness and effectiveness of the interaction and the importance of knowledge, motivations, and actions. Furthermore, for learners to become interculturally competent, it is essential that all participants in the education system – school administrators, teachers, and staff, become aware of their own cultural background and how their own beliefs and values influence their interactions with learners of other cultural backgrounds (Lustig and Koester, 2006). This study proposes to investigate the intercultural communication barriers between Chinese and Zulu students at selected HEIs in Durban.

1.3 THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

This study is about the unique relationship between communication and culture within a multicultural setting. The objective of this study is to identify intercultural communication barriers that exist between Zulu and Chinese students at university level and to identify strategies to overcome these barriers.

In order to meet the above objectives, this study will address the following:

- 1.3.1 To determine whether intercultural communication problems do exist between Zulu and Chinese students at HEIs in Durban.
- 1.3.2 To identify the intercultural communication problems experienced between Zulu and Chinese students at HEIs in Durban.
- 1.3.3 To examine the reasons why cultural divides exist between Chinese and Zulu students at HEIs in Durban
- 1.3.4 To suggest strategies to enhance communication between Chinese and Zulu students at HEIs in Durban based on the findings from this research.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

The following factors afford potential limitations to this research:

- The research is based in one geographical area (KwaZulu-Natal). Therefore the data generated is not totally representative of all other areas in South Africa.
- As a result of time constraints and because of limited funding, the number of the respondents may affect the result of this study.

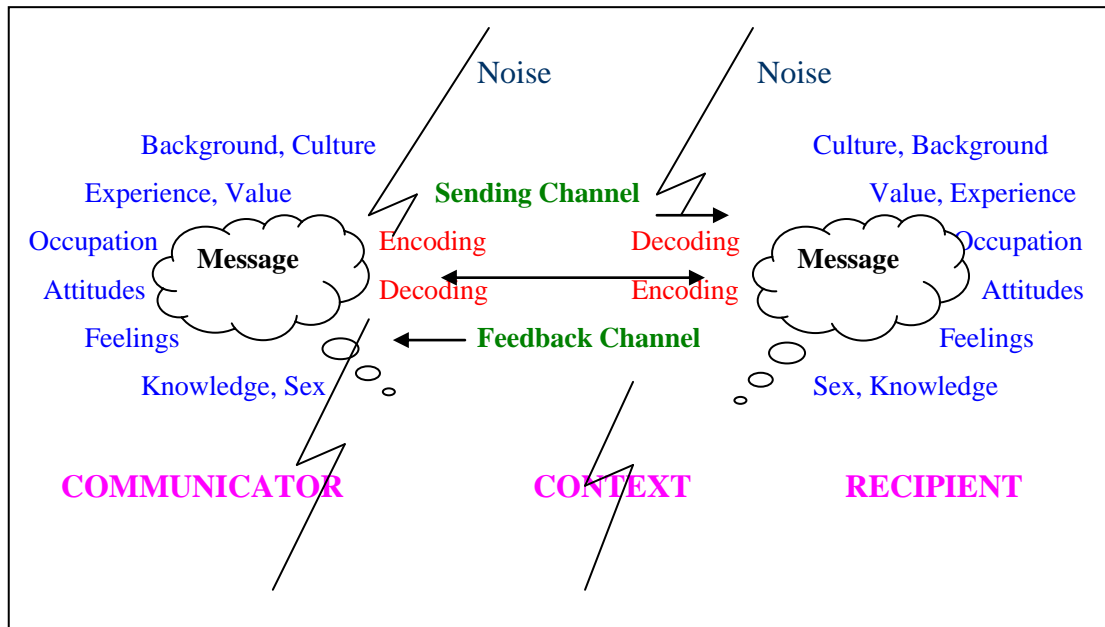
1.5 THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

Communication is defined by Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter (2006: 9) as the process of using messages to generate meaning. Communication is considered a process because it is an activity, an exchange, or a set of behaviours (Pearson *et al.*, 2006: 9). Steinberg (2002: 21) shows that one of the ways in which scholars have sought to understand the nature of communication is by means of models which describe and explain the communication process. The theoretical approach to this study will employ the Transactional Communication Model (Figure 1.1) adapted from Verderber 1990. The Transactional Model uses all the elements of Lasswell's Model of Communication, and Shannon and Weaver's Model, and builds on them to show that communication does not only involve the transmission of messages from one person to another, and that it is not simply an interaction between two people. The communication process becomes a transaction during which the meaning of a message is negotiated (Steinberg, 2002: 33). At the same time, the Transactional Model suggests that the communicator and recipient take turns to express and interpret messages (Steinberg, 2002: 33).

The Transactional Model depicts the simultaneous involvement of the participants in the negotiation of meaning (Steinberg, 2006: 18). It also depicts communication as a dynamic process in which the participants are actively engaged in encoding, transmitting, receiving and decoding messages

(Steinberg, 2007: 57). It highlights the differences between communicator and recipient which makes negotiation of meaning necessary.

Figure 1.1: Transactional Communication Model



(Source: Verderber, 1990)

Figure 1.1 represents the communicator and the recipient. In the centre of each circle is the message: the thought, idea or feeling that is communicated using verbal and nonverbal signs. Surrounding the message is in the participant's values, culture, background, knowledge and attitudes. Linde (1997) considers that the factors that can contribute to the incorrect interpretation of the message are differences in language and culture between the transmitter and the receiver. He explains further that a blocking of communication may be due to "noise". The "noise" that is referred to should be understood as obstacles hampering and interfering with the communication process and the intended meaning of the message. A blocking may also be due to covert messages which involve implicit messages that are hidden in the communication (Linde, 1997).

Verderber's Transactional Communication Model for Development will provide a basis for the investigation into intercultural communication barriers between

Zulu and Chinese students. This model will be used to analyze the communicator, recipients and the message. The model will further investigate the interaction between the participants in this study.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted within a qualitative and a quantitative paradigm to investigate the intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students at selected HEIs in Durban. The aim of this study was to identify the possible sources of misunderstanding that exist amongst students in order to enhance communication between Chinese and Zulu learners at Higher Education Institutions.

A pilot study was conducted in 2007 to find out whether there are intercultural communication problems between Chinese and Zulu students. In the pilot study, 10 Chinese and 10 Zulu students who have direct communication opportunities with each other were investigated.

The main method of the research procedure in this study is a structured questionnaire (see Appendix A and Appendix B) which was designed to obtain primary data from students through the survey method. The questionnaire included open-ended and closed-ended questions which were informed by the objectives of this study. The non-participant observation method was also used. The researcher observed Chinese and Zulu students to find the differences between their daily behaviours, customs in order to investigate the intercultural communication barriers between these two groups.

Statistics: Headcount by race at UKZN 2007 and Statistics: Headcount by race at DUT 2007 showed that there are 46 Chinese students at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and 64 Chinese students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The sample in this study therefore focused on a total of 90 Chinese students and 90 Zulu students who had direct communication opportunities with each other, therefore a total of 180 students at selected HEIs in Durban were considered for this study.

The data obtained from the questionnaire survey was analyzed through the SPSS statistical programme.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter two presents a literature review that provides an overview of the historical background of Chinese and Zulu cultures. It also explores the history of the intercultural communication field and presents various approaches to this area of study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Chapter three discusses the research framework employed in this study. The research design and statistical methods utilized in this study are discussed in detail.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Results

Chapter four presents an analysis of the results. This chapter discusses appropriate statistical testing that was used in this study.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter five discusses the conclusions and recommendations on both the literature and empirical findings.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has contained the research objectives of the study. Chapter two highlights literature review of culture, language, nonverbal communication and the Transactional Communication Model, which will be introduced to provide a basis for the investigation into intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication studies in South Africa have been rapidly gaining popularity since 1994 (Dlomo, 2003: 1). Scholars like K. Chick (1985), E. de Kadt (1992), W. L. Kruger (1990) and L. Parry (1993, 2000) have investigated a number of intercultural scenarios involving blacks and whites of different social and economic positions (Dlomo, 2003: 1). Although a large proportion of the research conducted on intercultural communication done by South African scholars involves blacks and whites or Indians and Africans, there seems to be a knowledge gap in terms of communication problems between Zulu and Chinese students.

The objective of this study is to identify the intercultural communication barriers between Chinese and Zulu students and to identify strategies to overcome these barriers. Chapter two will serve to provide a theoretical framework of the study.

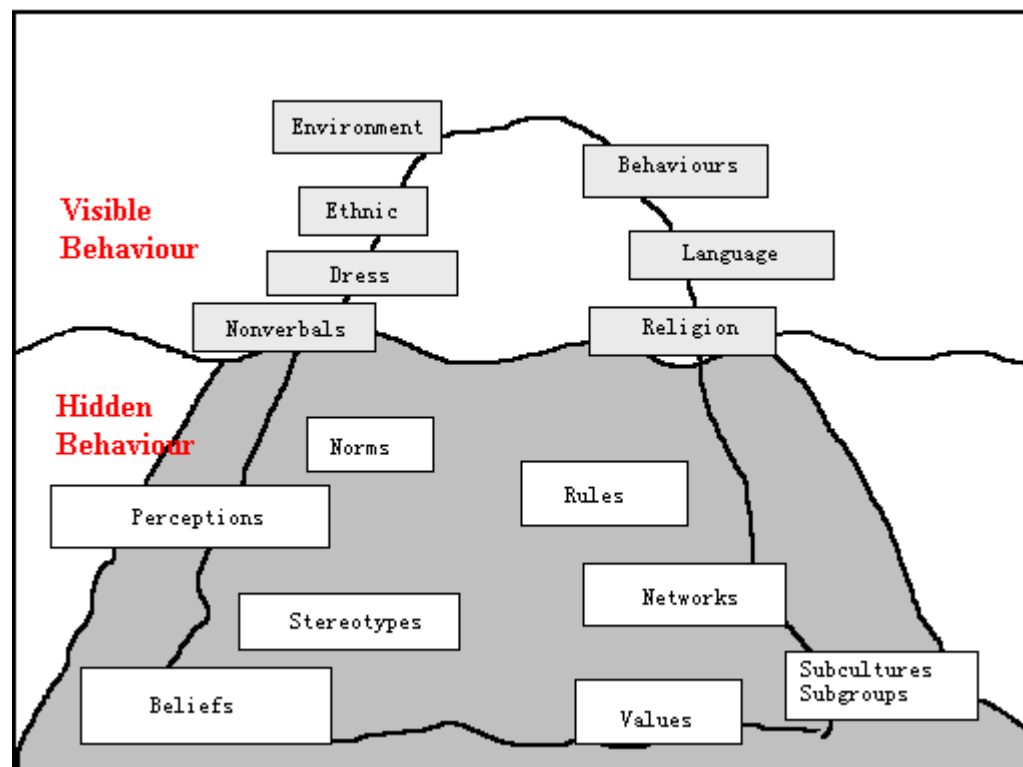
In this chapter, culture will be defined and described, followed by a discussion on language diversity and nonverbal patterns and knowledge. The Transactional Communication Model will be introduced to provide a basis for the investigation into intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students. This model will be used to analyze the communicator, recipients and the message. The model will further investigate the interaction between the participants in this study.

2.2 CULTURE

Martin and Nakayama (2001: 23) point out that culture is often considered the core concept in intercultural communication. In the pilot study, the results also found that the cultural differences led to the miscommunication. Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2007: 35) believe the source of how a culture views the world can be found in its deep structure. It is this deep structure that unifies a

culture, makes each culture unique, and explains the how and why behind a culture's collective action. Ting-Toomey (cited in Sutter, 2004: 2) explains culture as an iceberg (Figure 2.1). Traditions, beliefs and values form the deeper layers of the iceberg which are hidden from the reader. To attain a deeper understanding of culture, it is important to understand the underlying set of beliefs and values that form peoples' behaviour and thinking.

Figure 2.1: The Cultural Iceberg: The Visible and Hidden Layers of Culture



(Source: Ting-Toomey, 1999)

Culture can be defined as a learned set of shared perceptions about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large group of people that are also dynamic and heterogeneous (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 41).

2.2.1 Culture and Perception

According to Martin and Nakayama (2001: 24) people share perceptions or ways of looking at the world. Thus, all of our prior learning, that is, the

information people have already stored in their brains, affects how they interpret new information. Some of this learning and perception is related to the values of the cultural groups they belong to.

Fielding (1993: 19) points out that the need for shared experiences and meanings for successful communication are particularly important in intercultural communication because the idea of a culture implies a group of people. These cultural patterns of perceptions are developed through interactions with different groups. Perceptions are similar to those of other individuals who belong to the same cultural groups (Martin and Nakayama, 2001: 24). A culture can form only if those symbolic ideas are shared with a relatively large group of people (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 42).

Observation from the pilot study showed that Chinese students think it is uncomfortable to accept an impassioned hug from Zulu students when they meet. Gradually, some Chinese students recognised that Zulu students just have a stronger sense of affective passion than Chinese students. Chinese students therefore realized that these differences exist between themselves and other cultures.

Perception is the means by which we make sense of our physical and social world (Samovar, Porter and Stefani, 1998: 56). As Gamble and Gamble (1996: 77) state, perception is the process of selecting, organising, and interpreting sensory data in a way that enables us to make sense of our world. Because our information about and knowledge of our external physical and social world are mediated by perceptual processes, perception is primary in the study of intercultural communication (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 56). The shared symbol systems that form the basis of culture are ideas about beliefs, values, and norms.

2.2.2 Beliefs

Lustig and Koester (1993: 43) define beliefs as the basic understanding of a group of people about what the world is like or what is true or false. Beliefs

affect our conscious and unconscious minds, as well as the manner in which we communicate (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 59). Belief systems are important to students of intercultural communication because they are learned and hence subject to cultural interpretation and cultural diversity (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 58). In other words, as Chinese and Zulu students grow up in different cultures, their culture contributes to each person's unique configuration of ideas and expectations within the larger cultural matrix (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 105). Beliefs are therefore the first cultural influence which may lead to misunderstanding in intercultural communication.

2.2.3 Values

Values may another barrier in intercultural communication. Samovar *et al.* (1998: 60) state that one of the most important functions of belief systems is that they are the basis of our values. Although each of us has a unique set of individual values, there are also values that tend to permeate a culture, and these are called cultural values (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 60).

Values have to do with what is judged to be good or bad, or right or wrong, or what it regards as important in a culture (Martin and Nakayama, 2001: 24). Our values get translated into action (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 60). Values are often offered as the explanation for the way in which people communicate (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 107). An understanding of cultural values helps us appreciate the behaviour of other people (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 60).

2.2.4 Norms

Norms refer to rules for appropriate behaviour which provide expectations that people have of one another and of themselves (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 43).

Norms are the surface characteristics that emerge from a culture's beliefs and values. Because norms are evident through behaviours, they can be readily observed (Hall, 1977).

Norms exist for a wide variety of behaviours and include typical social routines (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 109). For example, the greeting behaviours of people within a culture are governed by norms. Social routines exist to guide people's interactions at public functions and they indicate how to engage in conversation, what to talk about and how to disengage from the conversation. All these actions are based on norms for expected communication behaviours (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 109). Due to their different cultural backgrounds, Chinese and Zulu students have their own rules to judge behaviours and social routines. Different norms may cause disagreements especially in an intercultural environment.

2.2.5 Culture is Dynamic and Heterogeneous

According to Martin and Nakayama (2001: 26) another crucial feature of culture is that it is dynamic, or changing, and can often be a source of conflict among different groups. It is important to recognize that cultural patterns are not rigid and homogeneous but they are dynamic and heterogeneous.

Martin and Nakayama (2001: 27) believe that people from a particular culture are not identical, and any culture has many intercultural struggles. For instance, when reference is made to South African culture or Chinese culture, the diversity that resides within that culture is ignored. The "South African" culture may refer to Zulu people, or to Afrikaans people, who speak isZulu or Afrikaans, or to the Xhosa, who speak isXhosa. The label "South African" thus obscures incredible diversity. Similarly, "Chinese culture" could refer to the mainland Chinese, or to the Taiwanese of China, or to the Chinese from Hong Kong.

As intercultural communicators, Zulu and Chinese students deal with the difficulties of establishing fruitful dialogue in the university environment and communicating effectively with others who do not necessarily share the same cultural background. Cultural differences concern not only ethnicity, but also other group cultures that relate to gender, age or generation and social status (Scollon and Scollon, 2001: xii).

2.2.6 Cultural Barriers

Cultural differences cause cultural barriers. Sometimes the message is not given explicitly. Albert (1996: 343) believes that miscommunication occurs when the communication process does not go according to expectations. When these expectations are not confirmed by the speaker's behaviour, the listener is likely to develop a negative attitude about the speaker and this could lead to stereotypes and prejudice.

The major cultural barriers to effective intercultural communication are as follows:

- Racism

Prejudice has been employed by cultures to oppress entire groups of people and to make it virtually impossible for their members to have access to political, economic and social power. In this form, prejudice is best considered as racism (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 282).

Taylor and Katz (1988: 7) recognised that racism can occur at three distinct levels: individual, institutional, and cultural.

At the individual level, racism is conceptually very similar to prejudice. Individual racism involves beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of a given person toward people of a different racial group (Taylor and Katz, 1988: 7).

At the institutional level, racism is the exclusion of people of colour from equal participation in the society's institutions (Blauner, 1972: 185). Institutional racism is built into such social structures as the government, schools, and industry practices. It leads to certain patterns of behaviours and responses to specific racial or cultural groups that allow those groups to be systematically exploited and oppressed (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 284).

At the cultural level, racism denies the existence of the culture of a

particular group (Jones, 1988: 118). Taylor and Katz (1988: 7) add that cultural racism also involves the rejection by one group of the beliefs and values of another, such as the negative evaluations by whites of black cultural values.

- Lack of Trust

According to Samovar *et al.* (2007: 316) the single most important trait associated with people of character is their trustworthiness. Characteristics often associated with the trustworthy person are integrity, honour, altruism, sincerity, and goodwill. It is evident that trust between communicators is very important. The general lack of trust that exists between two complete strangers leads to an uncomfortable situation marred by doubt and suspicion.

- Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to believe that one's own race or ethnic group is the most important and that some or all aspects of its culture are superior to those of other groups (The Free Encyclopaedia, 2009). Lustig and Koester (1993: 277) think all cultures have a strong ethnocentric tendency, that is, the tendency to use the categories of one's own culture to evaluate the actions of others. Ethnocentrism can occur along all of the dimensions of cultural patterns. Because cultures teach people what the world is really like and what is good, people consequently believe that the values of their culture are natural and correct. Thus, people from other cultures, who do things differently, are wrong. Ethnocentrism then becomes an obstacle to intercultural competence.

- Cultural Stereotyping and Prejudices

A stereotype is a type of logical oversimplification in which all the members of a class or set are considered to be definable by an easily distinguishable set of characteristics (The Free Encyclopaedia, 2009). They classify every

member of a culture or ethnic group in the same way. They do not allow for individual differences within the culture that they are stereotyping (Fielding, 1993: 444).

Stereotypes are therefore a form of generalization about a group of people. When people stereotype, they take a category of people and make assertions about the characteristics of all people who belong to that category. The consequence of stereotyping is that the vast degree of differences that exist among the members of any one group may be overlooked and therefore not taken into account in the interpretation of messages (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 278).

According to Dlomo (2003: 43) there are two main reasons for the occurrence of stereotypes and prejudice in intercultural miscommunication. One is that people expect the same behaviour in the target culture that they find in their own culture. The second reason is that people often don't realize that the same behaviour can be interpreted differently in two cultures (Albert, 1996: 343).

Ethnocentrism, stereotyping and prejudice are so familiar and comfortable that overcoming them requires a commitment both to learn about other cultures and to understand one's own. Lustig and Koester (1993: 286) state that a willingness to explore various cultural experiences without prejudgment is necessary. Although no one can completely overcome the obstacles to intercultural competence that naturally exist, the requisite knowledge, motivation and skill can certainly help to minimize the negative effects of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice and other barriers.

2.3 CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF CHINESE AND ZULU STUDENTS

History is very important in understanding intercultural relations and intercultural communication (Martin and Nakayama, 2001: 234). According to Neuliep (2006: 23) because the members of a particular culture share similar values, beliefs, and behaviours, they are identifiable as a distinct group. He

adds that in addition to their shared values, beliefs and behaviours, the members of a particular culture share a common history. Any culture's past inextricably binds it to the present and guides its future. At the core of any culture are traditions that are passed on to future generations (Neuliep, 2006: 23).

The history of intercultural communication is important in understanding the character of a culture. Samovar *et al.* (1998: 111) state that our interest in the study of history is predicated on two assumptions. First, historical events explain the character of a culture. Second, what a culture seeks to remember and pass on to the next generation tells us about the character of that culture. Samovar *et al.* (2007: 70) further explain the deep structure of a culture, which include such elements as family, history (country), and religion (worldview), are important because they carry a culture's most important beliefs. Their messages endure, are deeply felt, and help supply much of a culture's identity. Therefore in the following paragraphs, the Chinese and Zulu history will be introduced to show the character of culture.

2.3.1 Chinese Culture

According to Mente (2000) China is home to one of the world's oldest and most complex civilizations covering a history of over 5000 years. The nation covers a large geographical region with customs and traditions varying greatly between towns, cities and provinces. Chinese culture is a broad term used to describe the cultural foundation, even among Chinese-speaking regions outside of mainland China.

Many ethnic groups have existed in China. In terms of numbers, however, the dominant ethnic group is the Han Chinese. Throughout history, many groups have been assimilated into neighbouring ethnicities while others have disappeared without a trace. At the same time, many within the Han identity have maintained distinct linguistic and regional cultural traditions.

According to *Etiquette in China* (2009), China has often been referred to as the

Nation of Etiquette. According to many westerners, however, Chinese people often act in what appears to be a discourteous manner. The reason for this anomaly lies in the different cultural and historical views of social decorum. In order to avoid mistakes and embarrassment during communication, a better understanding of Chinese etiquette is essential (Etiquette in China, 2009).

2.3.1.1 Humility

Most social values are derived from Confucianism and Taoism combined with conservatism (Baidu, 2007). Behaviours associated with humility are very important in China (The free encyclopedia, 2009). For example, etiquette might demand that a great cook must serve a variety of foods when hosting friend, but the host should not boast about his skill in cooking or he might be viewed as being arrogant. Also people don't like the display of wealth. In the west one may readily accept a compliment from other people, but it is common practice for the Chinese to reject a compliment to show their humility. Humility is a traditional virtue of the Chinese (The free encyclopedia, 2009).

2.3.1.2 Elders

According to The free encyclopedia (2009), special respect is paid to older people in many circumstances in China. This can include standing when older people enter a room, always greeting older people first before greeting others present. Touching the head, shoulders or back of an older person can be considered disrespectful even if the intent is to comfort or indicate affection. Older people are rarely referred to by first names; they are addressed as Mr or Mrs. Sometimes terms such as 'uncle' or 'auntie' are appropriate for older non-relatives (The free encyclopedia, 2009).

2.3.1.3 Touching

The Chinese don't like physical contact, especially when doing business. Be sure not to slap, pat or put an arm around someone's shoulders if you are just a friend.

2.3.1.4 Handshaking

Handshaking is considered to be a formal greeting in China. It is used to show respect, but only if the person is someone important, like a government official or a businessman. Otherwise a smile or a friendly nod is sufficient (Etiquette in China, 2009).

2.3.1.5 Gift Giving

According to Etiquette in China (2009) 'courtesy demands reciprocity', goes an old Chinese saying, and the advice is an indispensable part of social interactions. It is important to both private and business relationships. When meeting a Chinese person for the first time, the best choice for the initial meeting is a gift that expresses some unique aspect of your country. The gift packaging should be red or any other festive colour. White or black packaging is ominous and should be avoided. It is not proper, and is even considered to be unfortunate, to give a clock or anything to do with the number four as a gift because four sounds like "death" in Chinese. Do not brag about the gift in front of the recipient. A person should use both hands when presenting it. Generally, the recipient may graciously refuse the present when first offered. In this case, one should correctly assess the situation and present it once again. If the recipient did not open the gift, it does not mean that he or she is not interested in it, as it is polite to open the gift after the guest has left (Etiquette in China, 2009).

2.3.1.6 Family Visiting

In China, a gift is also necessary when visiting a member of the family, but it is not as complex as the above situation. Usually, flowers, common fruits and food are given as gifts (Etiquette in China, 2009).

2.3.2 Zulu Culture

According to Sosibo and Harvey (2000), the Zulu people have a distinct culture that distinguishes them from other ethnic groups. They hold yearly ceremonies to revive their culture and tradition. These ceremonies include, among others, Heritage Day, which is held to celebrate the life of Shaka Zulu, the most powerful king and creator of the Zulu nation (Sosibo and Harvey, 2000). What also distinguishes the Zulu people from other cultures, is the traditional foods, brewing of beer, ancestral worship, places of burial, the dress code for men, women and children, the importance of a man's cattle, the system of compensating a father for the loss of his daughter in marriage, courtship, witchcraft and their superstitions (Far & Wild Safaris, 2003).

2.3.2.1 Zulu Traditions

According to Zulu Traditions & Culture (2007), Zulu woman always pass an artefact to another using her right hand only. The palm of the left hand will be under the right forearm. This custom is significant and serves to assure you that there are no hidden weapons and you have nothing to fear from her (Zulu Traditions & Culture, 2007).

A popular souvenir for visitors is Zulu beadwork. One of the most fascinating manifestations of this traditional craft is its unique language (Zulu Cultural Tour, 2009). Every colour has a different meaning and a Zulu woman can weave a message of love, grief, jealousy, poverty or uncertainty into her patterned creation. Young Zulu girls in particular, use the vocabulary of the beads to send sweet (or bitter) thoughts to their loved ones (Zulu Cultural Tour, 2009).

The military influence of the Shaka regime is reflected in demonstrations of stick fighting with which male teenagers and men settle their personal differences in a public duel (Zulu Traditions & Culture, 2007). A spiritual healer plays a respected and meaningful role in the life of a Zulu community by using roots, herbs, bark, snake skins and dried animal parts to reveal the past, predict the future and cure ailments (Zulu Traditions & Culture, 2007).

2.3.2.2 Etiquette

- Greeting: Sawubona (Hello), response: Yebo, Sawubona, is the greeting in Zulu culture (Zulu Culture, 2008).

- Eye contact: Excessive eye contact is considered to be provocative and is avoided, particularly between women and men (Zulu Etiquette, 2006).

- Handshake: A handshake takes the following form: firstly the conventional shake, then clasping thumbs around thumbs and finally another conventional handshake (Zulu Culture, 2008).

- Walking: Wives walk behind their husbands who, should they encounter another man, pass him on the left enabling both to see the other's weapons (Zulu Culture, 2008).

- Seating: Men always sit on the right of the hut with those of highest standing at the rear. One is always expected to sit on a hide or shield (Zulu Culture, 2008).

- Eating: Eating is hygienic, each member using his own plate and utensils. Hands are washed before eating and mouths are washed after eating.

The men are served first according to their standing, then the women, then the children, boys before girls (Zulu Culture, 2008).

2.3.2.3 Traditional Clothes

According to Sosibo and Harvey (2000), a Zulu woman's traditional clothes include beadwork. Men's traditional clothing consists mainly of cowhide that is used to cover the bottom front and back. Traditionally, women and men walk barefoot when they wear these clothes (Sosibo and Harvey, 2000).

2.4 LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Culture shapes the way people express themselves, verbally or nonverbally (Dlomo, 2003: 15). Neuliep (2006: 15) also indicates that the verbal and nonverbal symbols we use to communicate with our friends and families are strongly influenced by our culture. Perhaps the most obvious verbal communication difference between two cultures is language. Language to a large extent determines thought patterns. There seems to be no question that languages are as much culturally based as they are innate and that language is a part of the culture. It expresses cultural values but also to some extent determines culture (Kaschula and Anthonissen, 1995: 26).

According to Pearson *et al.* (2006: 45) language is a collection of symbols, letters or words with arbitrary meanings which are governed by rules and are used to communicate.

Samovar and Porter (1982: 17) state that language gives people a means of interacting with other members of their culture and a means of thinking. They add that cultural diversity in language behaviour is perhaps one of the most difficult and persistent problems encountered in intercultural communication (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 121). The following paragraphs examine the link between language and culture and investigate the language-based barriers to communication.

2.4.1 Language Varieties

Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995) found that in all communities, language varies. Language varieties include different: accents, linguistic styles, pronunciations, register, lexicon and even different grammatical rules which may contrast with each other for social reasons (Holmes cited in Dlomo, 2003: 21). That is perhaps the reason why Chinese students at selected HEIs in Durban have trouble with English because they first learnt the British version and then came to the South Africa where they encountered a different form of English. The multiple meanings of words and the use of slang that may or may

not sound like dictionary words are confusing. Add to that mixture a different culture and a different set of language rules as well as numerous new experiences, and it's easy to see why non native speakers experience problems with their language use.

According to Dlomo (2003: 20) language varieties can cause communication problems when people who use these varieties have to interact. These problems can be further complicated by the fact that these varieties are linked to culture. Language influences thought and thought influences language, and each is influenced by culture. One may find that people from different cultures may speak the language on different levels of fluency. These varieties also influence the one's perception of the messages one receives from others.

Dlomo (2003: 19) believes that English varieties that are used by different groups are influenced by their mother tongue and their culture. Kaschula and Anthonissen (cited in Dlomo, 2003: 17) believe that one's mother tongue provides one with a series of categories which form a framework for one's perception of things.

Each person speaks somewhat differently from all others. All of these differences relate to their different language styles and different behaviours which are related to their different cultural backgrounds, beliefs and other factors. Seiler and Beall (2008: 100) mention that communicators should also be aware that there are cultures that have greater or lesser expectations for an individual's involvement in communication events. Students in China for example, are expected to listen to their professors and not ask questions during class unless the professor gives them permission to become involved. The Chinese culture seems to prefer low involvement on the part of the students. In South Africa, students are expected to have high involvement in the learning process and are encouraged to ask questions and participate.

It is acknowledged that the English language is used as a medium of instruction throughout South Africa (Njobe, 2007: 2). Chinese students speak English as a foreign language at HEIs in South Africa and the majority of the

Zulu students speak English as a second, third language or foreign language. According to Kaschula and Anthonissen (cited in Dlomo, 2003: 6) speakers from different cultures have varying degrees of linguistic and communicative competence in English. These levels of communicative and linguistic competence have a major impact on the fluency of the speakers in the spoken language.

Due to the lack of a natural learning environment, Chinese students have more difficulties in learning English, especially in terms of pronunciation and oral skills. Speaking has long been recognised as the most difficult skill for Chinese students of English to acquire or master (Wang, 1999). Chinese students have an accent when they speak English. This confuses Zulu students. Zulu students also have accents and they have certain sounds which are not available in English, for example clicks like 'c', 'q', 'gq' and 'xh' (Dlomo, 2003: 7). This creates a problem for Chinese student as they cannot pronounce Zulu students' names fluently. It is considered rude behaviour by Zulu students if one does not call them by their names. Because so many variations in terms of accents, dialects, and regional peculiarities exist in the English language, messages are often misunderstood even when both parties speak the same language. Unfamiliar accents may also present barriers to effective communication.

2.4.2 Language-Based Barriers to Communication

Communication is a symbolic interaction rich in subtlety. It will never be strictly concrete or objective and thus always carries the potential for misunderstanding (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 92). Some of the most common language-based barriers to effective communication are:

2.4.2.1 Meanings Can Be Misunderstood

What is meant by a speaker and what is heard and understood by the listener often differ. Such misunderstanding between a sender and a receiver is called bypassing. Bypassing usually results from the false belief that each word has

only one meaning and that words have meaning in themselves (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 92-93).

According to Seiler and Beall (2008: 93) the interpretation of words becomes even more complex when people from different cultures exchange everyday communication. The problem is magnified when someone uses common phrases that are unfamiliar to non native speakers of English. For instance, sometimes Zulu students would say “see you later” instead of “goodbye”. But Chinese students will misunderstand they will really meet a little bit later. In this case, bypassing occurs because of cultural differences between the two speakers.

2.4.2.2 Language Can Cause Polarization

According to Seiler and Beall (2008: 96) polarization is the tendency to view things in terms of extremes – rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, good or bad – even though most things exist somewhere in between. They explain polarization can be destructive, escalating conflict to the point where two parties simply cannot communicate. This escalation is referred to as the pendulum effect. They further explain that when two individuals disagree in their perceptions of reality, their pendulums begin to move in opposite directions. The distance the pendulum swings represents their differences in opinion or conviction. As the conversation intensifies, each remark provokes a stronger reaction from the party to whom it is directed until both parties are driven to positions at opposite extremes (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 96).

2.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NONVERBAL BEHAVIOUR AND CULTURE

According to Seiler and Beall (2008: 114) nonverbal communication is related to culture. Neuliep (2006: 15) refers to culture as having a dramatic effect on nonverbal communication. Nonverbal symbols, gestures, and perceptions of personal space and time vary significantly from culture to culture. Communication is the dynamic process of encoding and decoding verbal and

nonverbal messages within a defined cultural, physiological, socio-relational and perceptual environment. Although many of our messages are sent intentionally, many others, perhaps our nonverbal messages can unintentionally influence others (Neuliep, 2006: 15).

Neuliep (2006: 23) adds that nonverbal communication includes the use of body language, gestures, facial expressions, voice, smell, personal and geographical space, time and artifacts.

Body language has different meanings in different cultures. The way people interpret body language depends on the situation at hand, the culture, the relationship they have with the person as well as the gender of the other. For instance, the way people make eye contact can communicate different and important messages across cultures. In the Zulu culture, excessive eye contact is considered to be provocative and is avoided, particularly between women and men. However in Chinese culture eye contact shows that people are listening seriously. Nonverbal expressions are culture specific and these differences may therefore create barriers in the communication process.

2.5.1 Types of Nonverbal Behaviour

Dlomo (2003: 45) explains three ways in which nonverbal behaviour differs from culture to culture. These differences are as follows:

Firstly, cultures differ in the specific repertoire of behaviours that are enacted (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 187). Movements, body positions, postures, vocal intonations, gestures, dress codes, spatial movements, dances and other ritualized actions are specific to a particular culture (Dlomo, 2003: 45).

Secondly, all cultures have display rules that govern when and under what circumstances various nonverbal expressions are required or prohibited (Dlomo, 2003: 46). Display rules indicate such things as how far apart people should stand while talking, whom to touch and where. These rules also indicate the speed and timing of movements and gestures, when to look

directly at others in a conversation and when to look away, whether loud talking and expansive gestures or quietness and controlled movements should be used, when to smile and when to frown, and the overall pacing of communication (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 188).

Thirdly, cultures vary in the interpretation of meanings that are attributed to particular nonverbal behaviours (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 188). Lustig and Koester (1993: 188) identify three possible interpretations that can be ascribed to a given instance of nonverbal behaviour. They state that nonverbal behaviour can either be random, idiosyncratic, or shared. An interpretation that the behaviour is random means that it has no particular meaning to anyone, like the ordinary blinking of the eyes, which everyone does because of the inherent physiological nature of human beings. An idiosyncratic interpretation suggests that the behaviours are unique to special individuals or relationships, and they therefore have particular meaning only to these specific people. The third interpretation, which is more relevant to intercultural communication, is that the behaviours have shared meaning and significance, like when a group of people jointly attribute the same meaning to a particular nonverbal act (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 188).

2.5.2 Characteristics of Nonverbal Behaviour

According to Dlomo (2003) there are three important characteristics of nonverbal behaviour. The first is that it is multi-channelled. This means that it uses a number of mediums to send a message to the receiver, e.g. body movements, facial expressions, touch, paralinguistic features, space and territory, time, etc. Messages can be sent using either one of these channels or a combination of different body movements (Samovar *et al.*, 1998: 153). For instance, a person may wave a hand to someone and smile at the same time within one message context. When the person interprets this message s/he will focus on the totality of the message and the context in which it is used (Dlomo, 2003: 41).

According to Dlomo (2003: 42) the second characteristic of nonverbal cues is

that they are sometimes ambiguous. There can be two or more interpretations and meanings offered for one nonverbal cue, depending on the context of the communication, the cultures of the participants and their affective mode. Singelis (cited in Dromo, 2003: 42) confirms this view by saying that the meaning of nonverbal behaviour is, most of the time, determined by the receiver, who seldom confirms it with the sender. In other words, the meaning depends on the interpretation that the receiver wants to attach to the nonverbal cues displayed by the communicator. For instance, one rarely asks the speaker to repeat the gaze or the eye-movement the speaker has just displayed in order to confirm one's interpretation, but with verbal behaviour it is acceptable to ask the speaker to repeat the statement s/he has just uttered so that one can clearly understand what has been said.

The third characteristic that is stated by Singelis (cited in Dromo, 2003: 42) relates to the unintentional and spontaneous nature of nonverbal behaviour. People use nonverbal behaviour to make unconscious decisions about the nature of the relationship that exists between two or more people who are involved in communication. The onlookers can interpret the gestures and body language used by participants as indicating the type of relationship that they have with each other. Generally, people interpret physical closeness to mean an intimate or friendly relationship, the opposite is true where there is physical distance between them. But this situation can have other interpretations in different cultures. Occasionally, people may behave in ways which give a different message to others about their emotional and mental state from what was intended. A situation like this will lead to misinterpretation of the sender's intentions, thus causing miscommunication (Dromo, 2003: 43).

2.5.3 Roles of Nonverbal Communication

Mitchell (2005: 181) identifies six major communication roles in nonverbal communication that are closely related to verbal communication. The six roles are repetition, contradiction, substitution, accentuation, complement, and regulation (Mitchell, 2005: 161).

The first role of nonverbal communication is repetition. Nonverbal communication often reinforces what is also being conveyed in the verbal code (Mitchell, 2005: 161). By repeating the verbal message nonverbally, there is a better chance that the message will be clear to the audience (Mitchell, 2005: 161). But most repeated messages are sent without much thought. They are simply a natural part of people's communicative behaviour (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 117).

Contradiction is the second role of nonverbal communication. Although nonverbal messages often repeat and thus support our verbal messages, they may also contradict them. When people purposely mislead others by using nonverbal cues to create false impressions or to convey incorrect information, it is referred to as contradiction (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 117).

The third role played by nonverbal communication is substitution. Using nonverbal messages in place of verbal messages is known as substituting (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 117). It is common when speaking is impossible, undesirable, or inappropriate. These nonverbal ways of expression do not require any verbal communication to get their meaning across and in that sense can be viewed as substituting for a verbal message (Mitchell, 2005: 161).

Accentuation is another role of nonverbal communication. Sometimes nonverbal cues do much more than just repeat a verbal message. They emphasize it and bring increased meaning to what has been said.

Nonverbal cues can be used to complete, describe or accent verbal cues. This use is called complementing (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 116). The complementary nonverbal cues are used to accent verbal behaviour by emphasizing or punctuating the spoken words. This complementary redundancy helps people to communicate effectively.

The last role of nonverbal communication is regulation. Nonverbal communication is also used for controlling the flow of communication, a

behaviour known as regulating (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 117). According to Seiler and Beall (2008: 117) senders might not even realize that they are sending regulating cues but receivers are usually aware of such signals. In this way, nonverbal communication shapes and changes the flow of a conversation.

2.5.4 Types of Nonverbal Communication

According to Seiler and Beall (2008: 119) because nonverbal communication is diverse, complex, common, and informative, people need to be sensitive to its many manifestations. In this study, some of the more significant forms of nonverbal communication such as proxemics (space), haptics (touch), kinesics (body movements including gestures, facial expressions, and eye behaviour) will be examined.

2.5.4.1 *Space*

According to Bi (1999: 128) there are four main distances in American social and business relations: intimate, personal, social and public. Intimate distance is for people whose relation and activities are private and close, for example, distance between a husband and wife. The range of intimate distance is about 45 centimeters. Personal distance is about 45 - 80 centimeters and used among common friends, acquaintances and relatives. Social distance maybe anywhere from about 1.30 meters to 3 meters, for people who work together, who do business together, or those in conversation at social gatherings who tend to keep a distance farther than any of the above (Bi, 1999: 128). Culture creates a wealth of differences in the way individuals use distance for communication. The important thing is to recognize that not all cultures view distance in the same way.

2.5.4.2 *Touch*

According to Seiler and Beall (2008: 126) touching is referred to as either

tactile communication or haptics. Haptics is one of the most basic forms of communication.

Some researchers have set up categories to describe these variations in touch. The categories are functional-professional, social-polite, friendship-warmth, love-intimacy, and sexual arousal (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 126).

The meaning of a particular touch depends on the type of touch, the situation in which the touch occurs, who is doing the touching, and the cultural background of those involved. Some cultures are more prone to touching behaviour than others. For example, in Zulu culture, many women hug and kiss, it also occurs frequently between husband and wife and other members of the family. In China, though, this action is seldom seen as they just shake hands. The matter of physical contact between members of the same sex is also a delicate issue in China.

2.5.4.3 Body Movements

People use body movements like gestures, facial expressions, and eye behaviour to create an infinite number of nonverbal messages.

- Eye Behaviour

Eye behaviour is a subcategory of facial expressions that includes any movement or behaviour of the eyes and is also referred to as oculusics, which is the study of the eye movement or eye behaviour (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 119). The primary function of establishing relationships may be made through eye contact.

- Facial Expressions

Facial expressions include configurations of the face that can reflect, augment, contradict, or appear unrelated to a speaker's spoken message (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 119).

Facial expressions are windows to our emotions. They provide clues about people's emotional states which at times can be very complex and difficult to interpret accurately (Seiler and Beall, 2008: 120).

- Gestures

Gestures can be particularly troublesome, as a slight difference in making the gesture itself can mean something quite different from that intended. A wrong interpretation of a gesture can arouse quite unexpected reactions. For example, Zulu students have varied and their own style of handshaking when they meet, but Chinese students do not know this and are not good at these handshake greetings.

2.6 COMMUNICATION

2.6.1 Understanding of Communication

According to Lustig and Koester (1993: 25) to understand intercultural communication events, one must study the more general process involved in all human communication transactions. In this section, the transactional model will be used to describe and examine the process of communication in order to achieve and understand the nature of communication. This model will also be used to analyze the communicator, recipients and the message. The model will further investigate the interaction between the participants in this study to provide a basis for investigating the intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students at selected HEIs in Durban.

Pearson *et al.* (2006: 9) defined communication as the process of using messages to generate meaning. Communication is considered a process because it is an activity, an exchange, or a set of behaviours.

2.6.2 From The Transactional Communication Model to Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process in which people from different cultures create shared meanings (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 51). According to Samovar *et al.* (1998: 25), the study of intercultural communication is both the study of culture and communication. The relationship between communication and culture is also explored by Potlane (1991: 18) who says communication is a process through which a group's culture is transmitted from one generation to the next or from one group to another (Dlomo, 2003: 15). Culture shapes communication and communication is culture bound (Neuliep, 2006: 15).

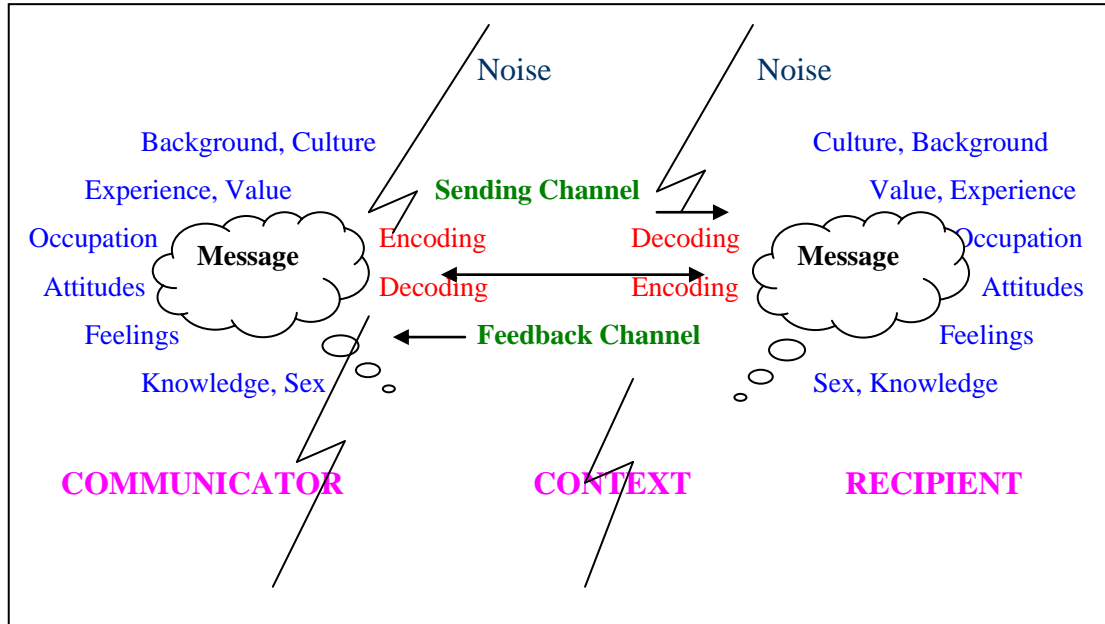
In chapter one, Verderber's Transactional Communication Model was discussed briefly. To suggest that communication is transactional implies that all participants in the communication process work together to create and sustain the meanings that develop. A transactional view holds that communicators are simultaneously sending and receiving messages at every instant that they are involved in conversations (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 25).

According to Lustig and Koester (1993: 25) the transactional view of communication emphasizes the construction or shared creation of messages and meanings. The transactional view recognizes that the goal of communication is not merely to influence and persuade others but also to improve one's knowledge, to seek understanding, to develop agreements, and to negotiate shared meanings.

The transactional view also recognizes that multiple messages are simultaneously being interpreted by participants at the same time. These messages include not only the meaning of the words that are said but also the meaning conveyed by the tone of voice, the types of gestures, the frequency of body movements, the motion of the eyes, the distances between people, the formality of the language, the seating arrangements, the clothing worn, the length of pauses, the words unsaid, and much more. Thus, in the transactional

view it is impossible to describe one person as exclusively the sender and the other as exclusively the receiver.

Figure 2.2: A Transactional Model of Communication



(Source: Verderber, 1990)

This model can be applied into a conversational situation between Zulu and Chinese students. Both of them assume the role of sender and receiver since both are encoder and decoder of messages. As they send messages back and forth they are constantly changing roles. As they continue the transactions, they arrive at an understanding. However, the sender and receiver do not share all their experiences and meanings (Fielding, 1993: 18) because of the factors surrounding the message such as background, culture, value. Therefore communication is a dynamic process, as the variables in the process are interrelated and influence each other (Berlo cited in Jandt, 2004: 30).

The following section introduces ten components of communication as they relate to this study.

2.6.3 Components of Communication

According to Jandt (2004: 30), there are ten components of communication: source, encoding, message, channel, noise, receiver, decoding, receiver response, feedback and context.

2.6.3.1 *Source*

When people want to communicate, there must be an idea he or she desires to communicate, that is the “source” (Jandt, 2004: 30). This “source” is the purpose of the communication. According to Steinberg (2007: 19) it is generally agreed that we communicate with some purpose, that is, to satisfy a personal or social need. For example, Chinese students need to communicate in order to make friends with Zulu students. The “source” also can be the physical and psychological needs. We communicate with others because we have basic physiological needs to fulfil in order to survive (food, water, air and shelter) (Steinberg, 2007: 19). He adds that to develop and maintain relationships with others is another prime purpose for communication (Steinberg, 2007: 19).

People also need to communicate when they want to obtain and share information with others, for example, when Chinese and Zulu students want to talk about an interesting topic, they need to communicate; or when they want to make a decision together with others, for example Chinese and Zulu students need to discuss something during team work, or when they want to persuade others to think the way they think.

2.6.3.2 *Encoding*

Humans are not able to share thoughts directly. Their communication is in the form of a symbol representing the idea they desire to communicate. Encoding is the process of putting an idea into a symbol (Jandt, 2004: 30). As Steinberg (2007: 30) explains, people always formulate their thoughts in “concepts”, i.e. a word to which all scientists in a field of study assign the same meaning so that

they can understand each other. People should encode their mental image or concept before they communicate. A simple example is when Chinese students want to talk with Zulu students, they cannot just speak Chinese, they must encode their language into a common language, i.e. English, and then share the idea with the Zulu students.

2.6.3.3 Message

The term message identifies the encoded thought. Encoding is the process, the verb and the message is the resulting object (Jandt, 2004: 30). The message can be oral or written or nonverbal such as a smile or a nod.

2.6.3.4 Channel

The term channel is used technically to refer to the means by which the verbal or nonverbal encoded message is transmitted (Jandt, 2004: 30). Sometimes there are barriers in terms of the channel. As Steinberg (2007: 41) says, people who speak the same language understand one another because they usually ascribe similar meanings to words, but in this study, communicators who speak different mother tongues use the medium of English to communicate, so barriers exist. Although nonverbal signs have socially shared meanings, such meanings are not always universal (Steinberg, 2007: 41).

2.6.3.5 Noise

Noise refers to anything that distorts the message.

Jandt (2004: 31) indicates that noise can be in many forms: external noise can be the sights, sounds, and other stimuli that draw your attention away from the message; internal noise refers to your thoughts and feelings that can interfere with the message; “semantic noise” refers to how alternative meanings of the source message symbols can be distracting.

Figure 2.2 (on page 34) shows “internal noise” and “semantic noise” for example people’s background, communicator’s culture, home language,

experience, value, attitudes, feelings and knowledge, even gender can affect message construction.

The receiver and the sender in this study can be Chinese students or Zulu students, the people who attend to the message. The sender comes from a specific cultural background. This background means that the sender has a specific language and view of the world, giving him or her certain experiences and ideas of how to do things. The receiver might not have the same culture or language background. Communication between the two may therefore be difficult unless each is sensitive to the other's needs. For example one may have a strong need for recognition, whereas another may have a need to get the work done as quickly as possible. Their goals would therefore differ and communication might be difficult.

All the above are examples of "noise" during intercultural communication.

2.6.3.6 Decoding

Decoding is the opposite process of encoding and just as much an active process. The receiver is actively involved in the communication process by assigning meaning to the symbols received (Jandt, 2004: 32), but communicators can decode in different ways. As Seiler and Beall (2008: 88) explain words mean different things to different people, based on each person's experiences and the direct relationship of those experiences to particular words.

2.6.3.7 The Receiver's Response

The receiver's response refers to anything the receiver does after having attended to and decoded the message. That response can range from doing nothing to taking some action or actions that may or may not be the action desired by the source (Jandt, 2004: 32). For example, the Zulu receivers' response to a compliment may be pleasure and to say "thank you", but some Chinese receivers would refuse this compliment. Therefore, if a Zulu

communicator gives a Chinese person a compliment, the response of the Chinese person may not be the action desired by the Zulu person.

2.6.3.8 Feedback

According to Jandt (2004: 33) feedback refers to that portion of the receivers response to which the source has knowledge and to which the source attends and assigns meaning. Feedback makes communication a two-way or interactive process (Jandt, 2004: 33). In face-to-face communication, feedback will be direct. Both sender and receiver will be giving constant feedback to each other as they exchange messages. If the sender is delivering a speech, s/he needs to be sensitive to the audience's reactions and questions as these are ways of receiving feedback. A good communicator should always be sensitive to feedback, and should constantly adjust her or his message as a result of the feedback (Fielding, 2006: 23).

It is important for communicators to arrange for and receive feedback. According to Fielding (2006: 24) senders and receivers should always arrange for feedback and be prepared to receive feedback, even if it is negative. Feedback tells the sender how the receiver has interpreted the message.

2.6.3.9 Context

Context can be defined as the environment in which the communication takes place and which helps define the communication (Jandt, 2004: 33).

The component of context helps to recognize the extent to which the source and receiver have similar meanings for the communicated symbols and similar understandings of the culture in which the communication takes place which are critical for the success of communication (Jandt, 2004: 33).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced Zulu and Chinese cultures. It was evident that cultural differences exist between these two cultures. Differences among cultures produce motivations that inhibit people as they communicate interculturally (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 96). Therefore, cultural differences created intercultural communication barriers.

Language, culture, and thought are bound together. Effective communicators are aware of how to interact with people from other cultures. Competent communicators avoid unfamiliar words, seek to be sensitive toward another's culture and command of the language and exercise patience in an effort to create and share understanding. The words and manner of speaking people choose to use can make their ideas clearer and more meaningful

People communicate with each other not only through verbal communication but also through nonverbal communication, moreover, the latter plays an essential role. Verbal and nonverbal communication individually may help one to understand the source of certain intercultural difficulties, but in the long run intercultural communication may be better understood if people consider both forms of communication and their relationship with each other.

In most cases, miscommunication is a result of nonverbal behaviour and may be attributed to cultural rather than individual differences because culture plays a major role in the display of nonverbal behaviour.

Chapter three will present an outline of the research design and the methodology of this study. The data collection instruments to be used will be described. The sample, design and sampling method techniques employed during the study will also be addressed.

CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology that was used in this study. This chapter commences with a review of the research methodology. It discusses how the research was designed, provides insight into the sampling method, the questionnaire and other techniques used. The ethical issues were also considered.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research is an organized, systematic, data-based, critical, objective, scientific inquiry or investigation into a specific problem, undertaken with the purpose of finding answers or solutions to it (Sekaran, 2006: 5). According to Welman and Kruger (1999: 46), a research design is the plan according to which we obtain research participants (subjects) and collect information from them. It includes the aims of the research, the final selection of the appropriate methodology, the data collection techniques to be used, the chosen methods of data analysis and interpretation and how all this fits in with the literature (White, 2000: 25).

According to White (2000: 25) two important concepts that must be built into the design are validity and reliability. Validity is concerned with the idea that the research design fully addresses the research questions and objectives one is trying to answer and achieve. Reliability is about consistency and research and whether another researcher could use the design and obtain similar findings (White, 2000: 25).

In this study, internal validity was checked against the related literature review to measure the accuracy of the measurement instrument which had been chosen. A representative sample of the population was chosen to ensure external validity (Abbu, 2006: 63). Attempts were made to select as large a sample as possible. To ensure reliability within this process, attempts were

made to prepare a well designed questionnaire and the observation was carefully planned. Validity was checked by pre-testing. A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire among ten Chinese students and ten Zulu students at DUT and UKZN and the results were analysed by a statistician.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND STRATEGY

The objective of this study is to identify intercultural communication barriers that exist between Zulu and Chinese students at university level and to identify strategies to overcome these barriers.

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003: 92) the survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach. They allow the collection of a large amount for data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way. Often obtained by using a questionnaire, these data are standardised, allowing easy comparison. In addition the survey strategy is perceived as authoritative by people in general. This is because it is easily understood. They add that using a survey strategy should provide more control over the research process (Saunders *et al.*, 2003: 85). However, it is not the only data collection method that belongs to the survey strategy. Structured observation, the type most frequently associated with organization and methods of research can also be used.

3.4 DATA SOURCES

According to Sekaran (2006: 219) data can be obtained from primary or secondary sources. Primary data refers to information obtained firsthand by the researcher on the variables of interest for the specific purpose of the study. Secondary data refers to information gathered from sources already existing. Examples of secondary sources include internet sites and web pages; studies and reports of institutions and departments such as universities, language departments and other research institutes, chambers of commerce and foreign missions such as embassies and consulates; textbooks and other published material directly or indirectly related to the problem area; academic as well as

organizational journals and newsletters relevant to the problem area; census reports on demographics from university faculty; and, theses and reports written by other students in the university and in other institutions.

Secondary data alone cannot help to answer the research questions. In this study, primary data were collected from observations and a survey relevant to this particular study and its research problem.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES

Collecting data is frequently regarded as one of the core activities in the research process (Blaikie, 2000: 30). Primary data collection in this study helped the researcher identify whether there are problems between Chinese and Zulu students when they communicate with each other and to find out what these problems are. It also helped the researcher to find the differences between Chinese and Zulu students' daily behaviours, customs.

3.5.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research is a descriptive, non-numerical way to collect and interpret information (White, 2000: 28), the kind of data required to answer the proposed questions in this study. Qualitative research carried out for this study include of observations and questionnaires which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In the quantitative method, results are given numerical values and the researcher used a mathematical and statistical treatment to help evaluate the results (White, 2003: 24). The survey approach, using questionnaires were conducted in this study where responses were given numerical values.

3.5.2 Collecting Primary Data through Observation

Observation as a data collection tool entails listening and watching other people's behaviour in a way that allows some type of learning and analytical

interpretation (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002: 90).

In non-participant observations, the observer or researcher observes a natural setting but is not part of the situation her/himself (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002: 91). In this study, the non-participant observation method was used. The researcher observes Chinese and Zulu students to find the differences between their daily behaviours, customs.

3.5.2.1 Observation Design and Content

According to Sekaran (2006: 252) observation means that the observer has a predetermined set of categories or activities or phenomena planned to be studied. According to Saunders *et al.* (2003: 221) if your research question(s) and objectives are concerned with what people do, an obvious way in which to discover this is to watch them do it. This is essentially what observation involves: the systematic observation, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of people's behaviour (Saunders *et al.*, 2003). In this study, the non-participant observation method was used. Formats for recording the observations can be specially designed and tailored to suit the goal of the research.

In this study some situations such as daily behaviours, customs, and characteristics of verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Chinese and Zulu students were observed.

Observation focused on the following areas:

Types	Focus on	Group	
		Zulu Respondents	Chinese Respondents
Daily behaviours	Greeting behaviour		
	Compliment and response behaviour		
Customs	Accepting goods		
	Sitting		
	Manners		
Characteristic of verbal communication	Pronunciation		
	Tone		
	Language		
	Phrasing of sentences		
Characteristics of nonverbal communication	Content of dialogue		
	Eye contact		
	Gestures		
	Facial expressions		

Observations were recorded in worksheets and then systematically analyzed with minimal personal inferences made by the investigator. Categories were then developed for further analysis as described in the later discussions.

3.5.3 Collecting Primary Data through Surveys: Questionnaires

Questionnaires generate data in a very systematic and ordered fashion. The responses to the questions were quantified, categorized and subjected to statistical analysis (White, 2000: 50). The questionnaire was informed by the objectives of this study and the pilot study conducted.

Naoum (2001: 44) articulates that surveys are used to gather data from a relatively large number of respondents within a limited time frame. It is thus concerned with a generalized result when data is abstracted from a particular sample or population. Questionnaires are used to collect quantitative data from larger number of individuals in a relatively quick and convenient manner (Joseph, Hair, Babin, Money and Samouel, 2003: 130).

Data was collected through the use of questionnaires administered to respondents. This study used open-ended and closed questions to obtain primary data from Zulu and Chinese students through the survey method. Questionnaires were used to identify whether there are problems and what the problems are between Chinese and Zulu students when they communicate with each other.

3.5.3.1 Questionnaire Design

According to Sekaran (2006: 237) sound questionnaire design principles should focus on three areas. The first relates to the wording of the questions. The second refers to the planning of issues of how the variables will be categorized, scaled, and coded after receipt of the responses. The third pertains to the general appearance of the questionnaire. All three are important issues in questionnaire design because they can minimize bias in research. Sekaran (2006: 244) sums up that certain principles of wording need

to be followed when designing a questionnaire.

Two sets of questionnaires were completed separately by Zulu and Chinese respondents. These questionnaires were delivered by hand to each respondent and collected later by fieldworkers.

In broad terms, two forms of questions were used in the questionnaires. The two types are known as closed and open questions. Open questions allow respondents to give answers in their own way (Dillman, 2000; Fink, 1995). Closed questions provide a number of alternative answers from which the respondent is instructed to choose (deVaus, 2002; Dillman, 2000).

Both questionnaires had a total of seventeen questions each. The preliminary questionnaire structure followed a three-part sequence in this study. The initial questions referred to classification questions that helped the researcher gather information about the background such as age, educational level and race group of respondents in order to understand the results better. These were followed by open-ended questions, usually the first couple of questions are designed to establish rapport with the respondent by gaining their attention and stimulating their interest in the topic (Joseph *et al.*, 2003: 195). This series of questions typically asks about such things as attitudes, beliefs, opinions, behaviours. These questions usually are grouped into sections by topic, because respondents then find it easier to respond, and it helps maintain interest and avoid confusion. The final section therefore had questions directed specifically at the topics addressed by the research objectives.

3.5.3.2 *Individual Questions*

- Closed Questions

Three types of closed questions were used in this study, namely: list, category, and scale or rating.

- List: where the respondent was offered a list of items, any of which could be

chosen by respondents. This was included in question 16, which listed five language problems. Otherwise, a catch-all category of “other” was added which intended to complete the list of answers.

- Category: where only one response could be selected from a given set of categories, such as question six.

- Scale or rating: in which a rating device was used to record responses. Question seventeen was designed to collect opinion data. In this rating question, an even number of points, that is, four was used to get the respondent to express their feelings toward an implicitly positive statement.

In questions six and seven the respondents’ attitudes were captured on a 7-point numeric rating scale. In such questions it was important that the numbers reflected the feelings of the respondents.

- Open Question

Open-ended questions were included to test the opinions of the participants. The researcher used different types of questions, i.e., multiple-choice questions, dichotomous and open-ended questions.

Questions 8-15 were open questions. These questions progressed from dichotomous questions, Likert Scale ratings and open-ended questions to determine whether intercultural communication problems do exist between Zulu and Chinese students, to identify the intercultural communication problems experienced and to examine the reasons why cultural divides exist.

According to (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 322-333) the dichotomous “yes” and “no” questions provided structured responses and enabled the analysis of the nominal data gathered. Open-ended questions were utilized to allow the respondent to answer freely without being limited to a specific category. The questions were presented differently but designed to enable the test for relationships and significance through the application of different tests.

3.5.3.3 *The Layout of the Questionnaire*

The layout of questionnaires should be designed to make reading questions and filling in responses easy (Saunders *et al.*, 2003: 302). This study included a five page questionnaire which kept both the visual appearance of the questions in order to obtain valid responses and the wording of each question simple. The covering letter was the first part of the questionnaire which explained the purpose of the survey.

In the questionnaire, the researcher explained clearly and concisely at the start of questionnaire what the research is about, why it is useful, and why the recipient's response is important. This was followed by a promise of confidentiality and a statement of how, the results will be used.

3.5.3.4 *Pilot Study*

According to Hussey and Hussey (2000: 87), pre-testing the questionnaire is used in order to ensure that respondents interpret the questions correctly and to enable the collection of the required information. The questionnaire was submitted to the supervisors to check whether the questions would provide information that would answer the research questions. The wording of the questions was checked to determine if there were leading questions and to detect if there was order bias in the sequence of the questions. For the final stage in the questionnaire construction, the questionnaire was tested amongst Chinese and Zulu students.

The questionnaire was tested amongst ten Chinese students and ten Zulu students at two HEIs in Durban. Feedback from this pilot test indicated that some of the students did not really understand or they were confused by some of the questions - these questions were reconstructed after the pilot test.

3.6 SAMPLING APPROACHES IN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Sekaran (2006: 264) defines sampling as the process of selecting the right individuals, objects or events for this study.

3.6.1 Defining the Target Population

A population refers to the entire group of people, events or topics of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran, 2006: 265). The population of interest is called the target population (Abbu, 2006: 64).

The target population in this research were male or female Chinese and Zulu students at selected HEIs within the Durban area who have direct communication opportunities with each other. The sampling frame focused on the students whose departments included both Chinese and Zulu students, or who were involved in a social setting or social group such as sports clubs, education clubs, etc.

3.6.2 Choosing the Sampling Frame

The sampling frame provides a working definition of the target population (Joseph *et al.*, 2003: 211). The sampling frame focused on those students whose departments included both Chinese and Zulu students or who were involved in social settings or social groups such as sports clubs, education clubs etc. Therefore, all of them had many opportunities to meet Zulu and Chinese students accordingly giving them more opportunity to have direct communication with each other.

The sample was drawn from the Marketing, Human Resources Management, Tourism Management and the Mechanical Engineering Departments at the Durban University of Technology; and students from Management and Engineering Departments at the University of KwaZulu–Natal. Participants were chosen from these departments because it was assumed that interaction between Zulu students and Chinese students took place more in those

departments than in the other academic sectors.

3.6.3 Selecting the Sampling Method

According to Joseph *et al.* (2003: 211) selection of the sampling method depends on a number of related theoretical and practical issues. This study used non-probability sampling which is typically used in the exploratory phase of a study. The objective in such situations is to collect data quickly and inexpensively. Also, non-probability designs are widely used in selecting individuals from focus groups and pre-tests of survey questionnaires (Joseph *et al.*, 2003: 208).

Judgmental sampling was used in this study which enabled the use of judgment to select cases that best enabled the researcher to meet the objectives (Neuman, 2000). This form of sampling is often used when working with small samples such as this study. Because of the particularity of the sample in this study, i.e. Chinese and Zulu students who have direct communication opportunity with each other, judgment sampling was considered the most appropriate sampling. Judgmental sampling was used as the places which are believed to be representative of the target population had to be chosen subjectively (Crask, 2000: 177).

The second method was snowball sampling. This sampling method requires the researcher to follow a chain of personal contacts when choosing a sample; a process that is used when it is very difficult to find appropriate research subjects, as new respondents are located *via* the previous respondents (Page and Meyer, 2000: 44). In this study the researcher made contact with one or two cases, i.e. any Chinese and/or Zulu student in the population. These cases were asked to identify further cases.

3.6.4 Sample Size

A sample is a subset of the population. It comprises some members selected from the population (Yao, 2007: 58).

According to Sekaran (2003: 295) sample sizes larger than 20 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. The sampling size was administrated for a non-probability judgment sample of 90 Zulu students and 90 Chinese students who have direct communication opportunities with each other, 180 students at selected HEIs in Durban in total were considered in this research. The sample in this study was drawn from the following departments at the Durban University of Technology: Marketing, Human Resources Management, Tourism Management and Engineering. The sample from the University of KwaZulu-Natal was drawn from the Management and Engineering departments at the Howard College and Westville campuses. Participants were chosen from these departments because it was assumed that interaction between Zulu students and Chinese students took place more often in these departments as there are a sizeable number of Chinese students within these departments.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

3.7.1 Analysing Quantitative Data

Quantitative data refers to all numerical data or data that could usefully be quantified to answer the research question and can be a product of all research strategies (Saunders *et al.*, 2003: 327). To be useful these data need to be analysed and interpreted. Quantitative analysis techniques assist this process. These range from creating simple tables or diagrams that show the frequency of occurrence through establishing statistical relationships between variables to complex statistical modeling (Saunders *et al.*, 2003).

3.7.2 Analysing Qualitative Data

The researcher carried out in-depth observations to further understand the intercultural communication barriers between Chinese and Zulu participants. During the observations, these two groups were expected to reflect on their different daily behaviours, different customs, and different features toward their verbal and nonverbal modes of communication. Field notes were taken during

the interviews. They contained the descriptive data and the researcher's comments on the data. All observations were recorded and transcribed into detailed notes.

3.7.3 Analysis Software – SPSS Version 16

A computerized statistical analysis of the data was necessary to describe and interpret the data that was obtained from the questionnaires. The statistical software package which is the latest version of the programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS V16) was used in this study. SPSS V16 offered extensive data-handling capabilities and numerous statistical analysis routines by analyzing the data statistics and dealing with the interaction among variables in the natural data.

The data was analyzed in order to identify the barriers of intercultural communication between Zulu and Chinese students at selected HEIs in Durban.

3.7.4 Data Preparation and Capturing

The questionnaire produced a mass of raw data that would be meaningless unless it could be processed and meaning extracted from it. All the questionnaires were edited, missing data was dealt with, coded, transformed and entered (Joseph *et al.*, 2003: 227). Data preparation according to Nel, Radel and Laubser (1990) includes two operations: editing and coding. Editing is the process of ascertaining whether questionnaires are filled out properly and completely. This involves checking for interviewer and respondent errors. Coding refers to the process of grouping and assigning numeric codes identifying various respondents with a particular question (McDaniel and Gates, 2002).

The coded data in the spreadsheet were entered into the SPSS version 16.0 statistics package where a variety of statistical analyses were conducted on the captured data in order to provide interpretable answers to the objectives

set out. The purpose of the statistical analysis was to show that certain factors have a significant influence on intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students at selected HEIs in Durban. The results were displayed by means of pie charts and bar charts to make the frequencies easier to read.

3.7.5 Tabulation and Basic Analysis

Tabulation was done through the utilization of the SPSS programme and enabled the accurate coding, analysis and interpretation of the results.

The statistical analysis of the data was done through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe and characterize the sample being examined. In contrast, inferential statistics enable the researcher to draw conclusions about a population from a sample (Arsham, 1994). In this study, the applicable descriptive and inferential analyses techniques were applied.

3.7.5.1 *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive statistics involve transformation of raw data into a form that would provide information to describe a set of factors in a situation. This is done through ordering and manipulation of the raw data collected. Descriptive statistics are provided by frequencies, measures of central tendency and dispersion (Sekaran, 2006: 395).

According to Sekaran (2000: 396) frequencies refer to the number of times various sub-categories of a certain phenomenon occur, from which the percentage and cumulative of their occurrence can easily be calculated. This information can be presented in the form of a histogram or a bar chart (Sekaran, 2006: 396). Question seven used frequencies to clearly show the number of each option chosen by respondents with regards to communicators' communication ability. From the histogram it is easy to compare which option was chosen by most of the respondents. This method also applied to question

seventeen, which showed the differences between Zulu and Chinese students' perception with regards to each statement relating to cultural differences.

The percentage is the proportion of respondents who answer a question a certain way, multiplied by 100 (Aaker, Kumar and Day, 2001). Percentages serve two purposes in data presentation. They simplify data by reducing all numbers to a range from 0 to 100. Secondly, they translate the data into standard form, with a base for relative comparisons (McDaniel and Gates, 2002: 292). Percentages were used to present the data in most of the questions to show figures or differences between the Zulu and Chinese communicators' answers.

According to Sekaran (2006: 396) measures of central tendencies and dispersions describe a series of observations in a data set parsimoniously, and in a meaningful way, which would enable individuals to get an idea of, or a feel for the basic characteristics of the data. Question 7 used this method to find the characteristics of the data regarding levels of respondents' communication ability.

There are three measures of central tendencies: mean, median and mode. These are explained by (Sekaran, 2000: 117) as follows:

- Mean: The mean is the average value of the variable, computed across all cases.
- Median: The median refers to the score which has one half of the scores on either side of it when the scores have been arranged in ascending and descending order.
- Mode: The mode can be described by the most frequently occurring phenomenon.

3.7.5.2 Correlation

Dillon, Madden and Firtle (1994) observed that the method or procedure used to measure the degree of association between two variables depends on the

measurement scale to which the variables refer. In this study, inter-correlations were done for each of the variables in question sixteen which made up the team cohesiveness scores in contrast to team effectiveness. It showed how each statement regarding language problems correlated with and influenced each other. Inter-correlations also applied to question 15a and question 15b to test the relationship between “interests sharing” and “sharing interesting topics”.

3.7.5.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The statistical technique used when testing two or more means is called the analysis of variance (ANOVA) (Aaker *et al.*, 2001). ANOVA is a statistical procedure that assesses the likelihood that the means of groups are equal to a common population mean by comparing an estimate of the population variance determined between groups with an estimate of the same population variance determined within groups (McDaniel and Gates, 2002: 315). In this study, ANOVA was used to determine whether intercultural problems were influenced by the demographic variables (gender, age, home language, race and education). Where it was found that a demographic variable did influence intercultural communication, crosstabs were also done.

3.7.5.4 Crosstabs

Levesque (2007) explained “crosstabs” as a procedure which forms two-way and multiway tables and provides a variety of tests and measures of association. In this study, crosstabs were used to find out how intercultural problems were influenced by demographic factors.

3.7.5.5 Chi-Square Test

Chi-square distribution is the most commonly used method of comparing proportions to establish whether relationships are dependent or independent of each other (McDaniel and Gates, 2002: 516). In this study, Chi-square test was applied to question sixteen to identify the influencing factors of each

specific language problem.

3.7.6 Reliability and Validity

Consistency is associated with the term reliability while accuracy is associated with the term validity (Joseph *et al.*, 2003: 169). It is therefore apparent that if any interpretations of the findings are to be made, the credibility of the study must be established through the determination of its reliability and validity (Sardha, 2000: 41).

3.7.6.1 Reliability

According to Joseph *et al.* (2003: 169) reliability is concerned with the consistency of the research findings. In this study reliability was determined using Cronbach's Co-Efficient Alpha. According to Sekaran (2006: 307), Cronbach's Co-Efficient Alpha is a reliability co-efficient that indicates how each of the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Cronbach's Alpha is computed in terms of the average intercorrelations among the items measuring the concept. The closer Cronbach's Alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability.

3.7.6.2 Validity

In this study, factor analysis was used to determine the validity of the questionnaires. According to Yao (2007: 73) factor analysis is a general description for several specific computational techniques. Sekaran (2000: 214) adds that the results of the factor analysis will confirm whether or not theorised dimensions emerge.

3.8 ETHICS

The Free Encyclopaedia (2009) explains "research ethics" as the application of fundamental ethical principles to a variety of topics involving scientific research. These include the design and implementation of research involving human experimentation, animal experimentation, various aspects of academic

scandal including scientific misconduct (such as fraud, fabrication of data and plagiarism), whistleblowing, regulation of research, etc.

Ethics are important in the choice of topic, the samples selected, the interventions designed and the data collection procedures. After data are collected, ethics are of great importance in the analysis and reporting of data. The goal of ethics in this research was to ensure that no one was harmed or suffered adverse consequences from the research activities.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the methodology and highlighted the various techniques that were employed to conduct this study.

The reliability and validity of the questionnaires and analyses of the data are crucial for the acceptance of the results and the credibility of the study. This chapter has also shown that the methodology was designed to maximize reliability and validity, the findings of the study can thus be accepted with a reasonable degree of confidence.

Chapter four is dedicated to the presentation of the findings, data analysis and discussion of the empirical research results.

CHAPTER FOUR – ANALYSES OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. The questionnaires completed by the Zulu and the Chinese students were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16.0. Analyses of the results are presented in themes in this chapter as follows: theme one examines the communication ability of the respondents, theme two examines language problems, theme three focuses on cultural differences, theme four examines the barriers to intercultural communication (racism, trust, ethnocentrism and stereotyping), theme five investigates nonverbal behaviour, and theme six examines the common interests amongst the respondents.

4.2 THEME ONE – COMMUNICATION

In this theme, a combination of questions six, seven and seventeen are analyzed.

4.2.1 Analysis of Question Six: Communication Frequency

(see Appendix A, Question Six and Appendix B, Question Six)

Figure 4.1: Frequency of Communication (Zulu Respondents)

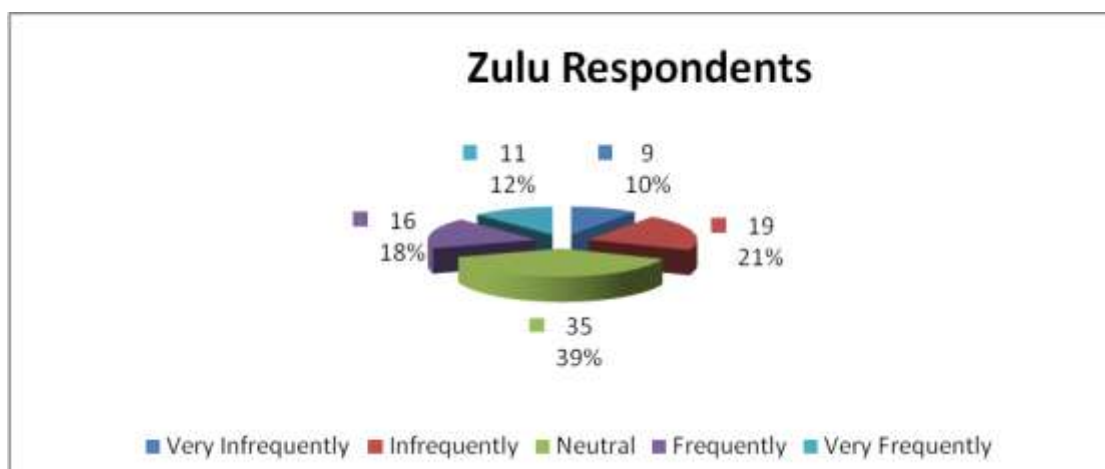


Figure 4.1 (on page 58) reveals the communication frequencies of Zulu respondents when they communicate with Chinese students: 10% (N=9) of respondents revealed they communicate very infrequently, 21% (N=19) communicate infrequently, 39% (N=35) of the respondents were neutral, 18% (N=16) responded that they communicated frequently, while 12% (N=11) communicated very frequently.

Figure 4.2: Frequency of Communication (Chinese Respondents)

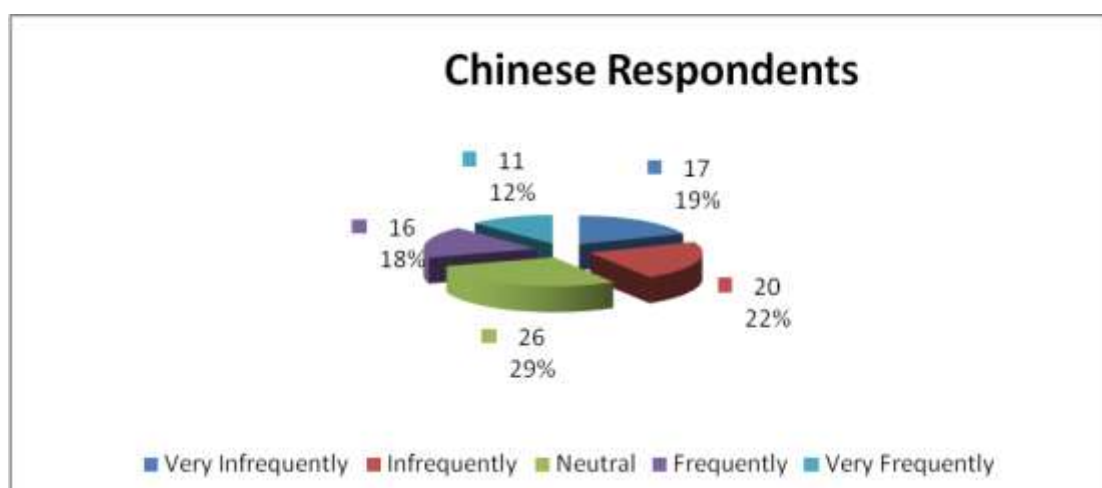


Figure 4.2 (above) reveals the frequency of communication between Chinese and Zulu students: 19% (N=17) of respondents revealed they communicate very infrequently, 22% (N=20) communicate infrequently, 29% (N=26) of the respondents were neutral, 18% (N=16) responded that they communicated frequently, while 12% (N=11) communicate very frequently.

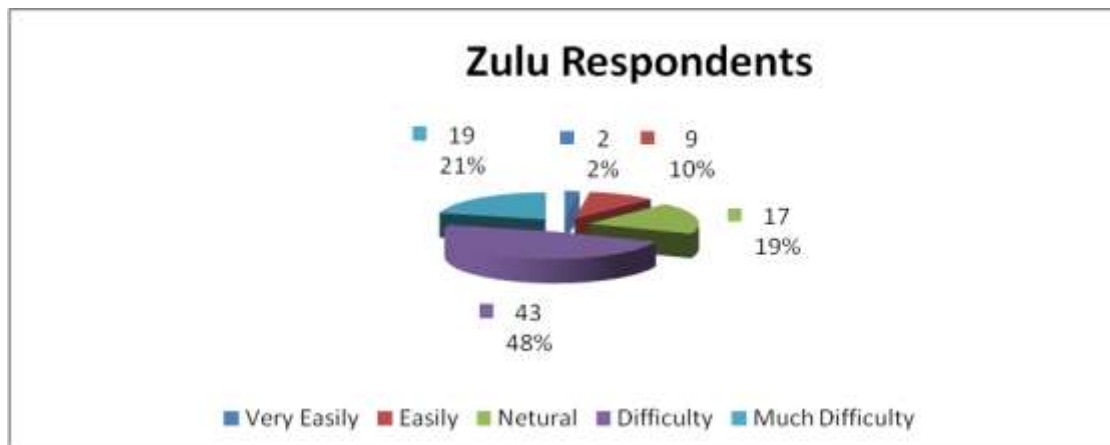
The target population in this study comprised male or female Chinese and Zulu students at selected HEIs within the Durban area who have direct communication opportunities with each other. From these results, it is evident that 69% (N=62) of Zulu respondents and 59% (N=53) of Chinese respondents communicate with each other frequently and directly. They have had much interaction and intercultural communication experiences with each other, which has allowed them to answer questions in this study. Pearson *et al.* (2006: 9) defined communication as the process of using messages to generate meaning. Communication is considered a process because it is an activity, an exchange, or a set of behaviours. Steinberg (2007: 19) believes that it is

generally agreed that we communicate with some purpose which is to satisfy a personal or social need. Hence, from the results obtained it is evident that communication between Chinese and Zulu students is necessary to fulfill a need.

4.2.2 Analysis of Question Seven: Communication Ability

(see Appendix A, Question Seven and Appendix B, Question Seven)

Figure 4.3: Communication Ability (Zulu Respondents)



In question seven, Zulu and Chinese respondents were asked whether they were able to communicate easily with each other. Figure 4.3 (above) reveals that 2% (N=2) of Zulu respondents revealed they communicate very easily, 10% (N=9) revealed that they communicate easily, 19% (N=17) were neutral, 48% (N=43) responded that they communicated with difficulty, and 21% (N=19) communicated with much difficulty.

Figure 4.4: Communication Ability (Chinese Respondents)

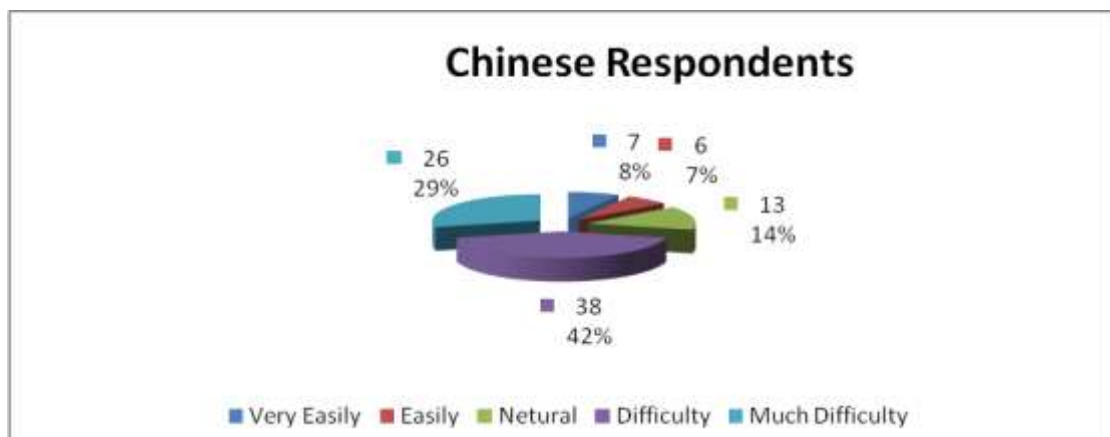


Figure 4.4 (on page 60) reveals that 7.8% (N=7) of respondents indicated they communicate very easily, 7% (N=6) found it easy, 14% (N=13) of the respondents were neutral, 42% (N=38) responded that they communicated with difficulty, and 29% (N=26) communicated with much difficulty.

The results from Figure 4.3 (on page 60) and Figure 4.4 (on page 60) indicated that a total of 69% of Zulu and 71% of Chinese respondents believe that it is difficult to communicate with each other.

Table 4.1: Central Tendency Statistics on Question Seven

Statistics			
Question Seven: Communication Ability			
	N	Valid Missing	90 0
Zulu Respondents	Mean		3.7556
Chinese Respondents	Mean		3.7778

Table 4.1 (above) reveals the central tendency statistics results for question seven (see Appendix A, Question Seven) from the Zulu respondents. A mean value of 3.7556 reveals that the Zulu respondents articulate an average perception of *Neutral to Difficulty*. A mean value of 3.7778 reveals that the Chinese respondents had also articulated an average perception of *Neutral to Difficulty*. These results are in accordance with Rampersad (2007), who found that learners are either unhappy or reluctant to work or associate with people of other cultures or are shy or intolerant to engage in discussions.

4.2.3 Analyses of Question Seventeen: Communication Experiences

(see Appendix A, Question Seventeen and Appendix B, Question Seventeen)

Question seventeen consists of responses to eight different areas from both the Zulu and the Chinese respondents:

4.2.3.1 *Statement One*: It is important to send nonverbal signals which are not confusing when communicating

Figure 4.5: Responses to Statement One

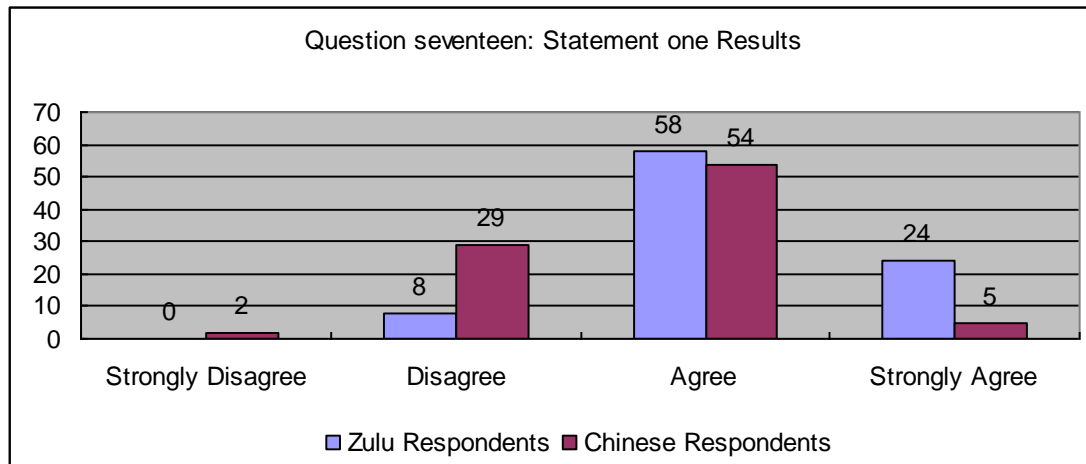


Figure 4.5 (above) reveals perceptions of the Zulu and the Chinese respondents toward the statement “it is important to send nonverbal signals which are not confusing when communicating”.

Figure 4.5 (above) indicates that 64.4% (N=58) of the Zulu respondents and 60% (N=54) of the Chinese respondents agreed with this statement. However, only 8.9% (N=8) of the Zulu respondents and 32.2% (N=29) of the Chinese students disagreed with this statement, while 5.6% (N=5) of the Chinese respondents and 26.7% (N=24) of the Zulu respondents strongly agreed. Respondents believed that nonverbal communication can help to complete verbal communication. Respondents who disagreed with this statement commented that nonverbal signals confuse communication as nonverbal behaviour differs from culture to culture.

4.2.3.2 *Statement Two*: A person who is silent means that s/he does not understand the message

Figure 4.6: Responses to Statement Two

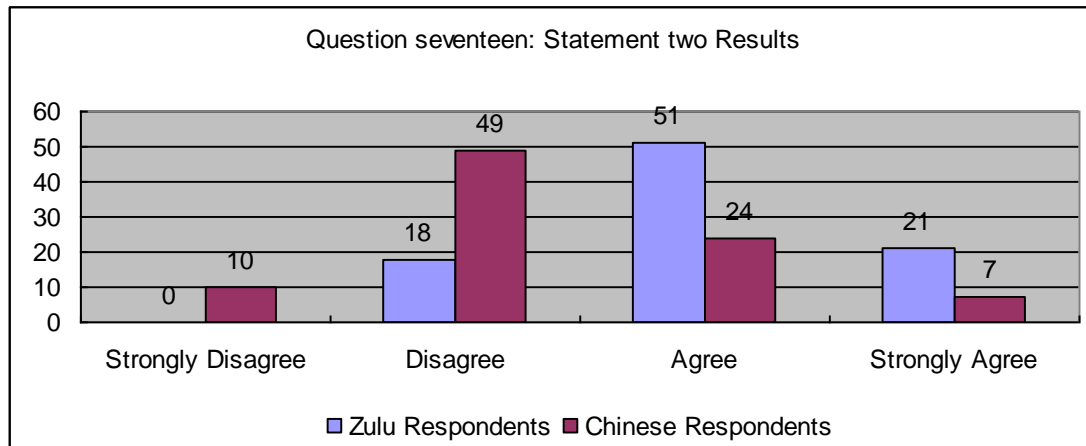


Figure 4.6 (above) reveals the perceptions of the Zulu and the Chinese respondents toward the statement “a person who is silent means that s/he does not understand the message”. More than half (56.7%, N=51) of the Zulu students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However more than half (54.4%, N=49) of the Chinese students disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

The Zulu respondents commented that in Zulu culture, the receiver should regularly respond with words like “yes”, “is it?”, “how?” etc. to show understanding, interest in the topic and respect to the sender.

The Chinese respondents commented that listening quietly during a conversation is considered courteous in Chinese culture. People can nod slightly to express their agreement or they can use some other facial expression to show their reaction.

4.2.3.3 *Statement Three*: It is important to maintain eye contact with a person in order to see whether s/he is honest or not

Figure 4.7: Responses to Statement Three

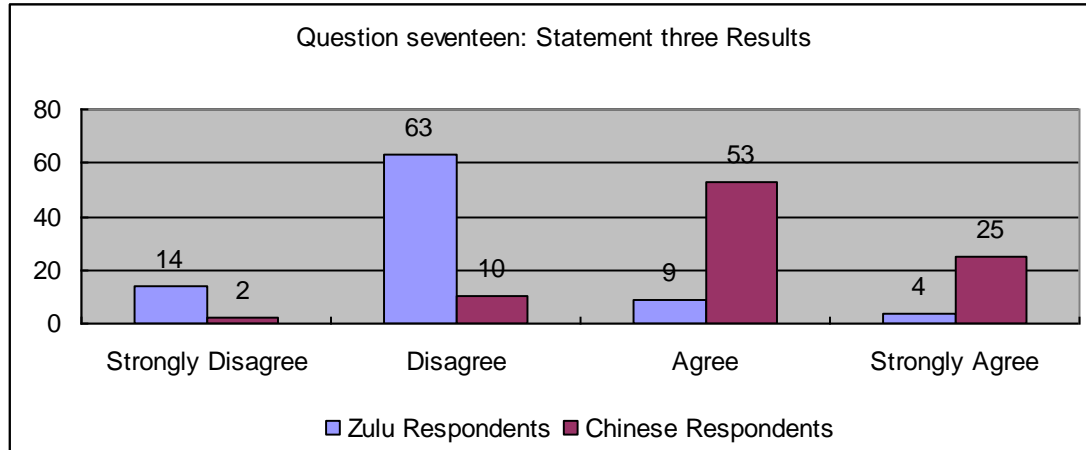


Figure 4.7 (above) reveals the perceptions of the Zulu and the Chinese respondents towards the statement “it is important to maintain eye contact with a person in order to see whether s/he is honest or not”. 70.0% (N=63) of the Zulu respondents disagreed and 15.6% (N=14) strongly disagreed with this statement. However, 58.9% (N=53) of the Chinese respondents agreed with and 27.8% (N=25) strongly agreed with this statement.

Zulu respondents commented that they avoid unnecessary eye contact since it is considered misbehaviour or being defiant. Chinese respondents commented that they do not always express themselves through words, they sometimes just observe other people’s facial expressions and moods and that they use eye contact to judge a person.

4.2.3.4 *Statement Four*: Interrupting a person during a conversation is rude and impolite

Figure 4.8: Responses to Statement Four

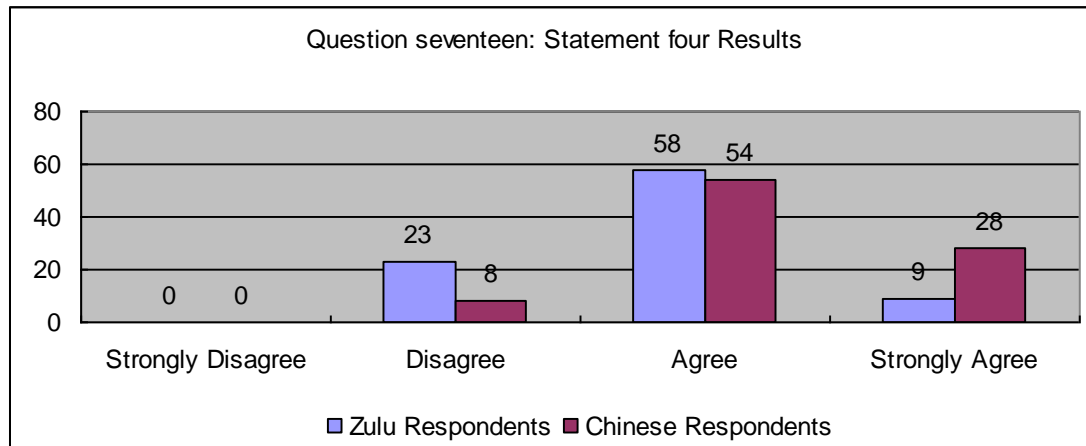


Figure 4.8 (above) reveals perceptions of the Zulu and Chinese respondents to the statement “interrupting a person during a conversation is rude and impolite”. 64.4% (N=58) of the Zulu respondents and 60% (N=54) of the Chinese students agreed with this statement; 10% (N=9) of the Zulu respondents and 31.1% (N=28) of the Chinese respondents strongly agreed with this statement. 25.6% (N=23) of the Zulu respondents and 8.9% (N=8) of the Chinese respondents disagreed with this statement.

Zulu respondents commented that in their culture, participation during another’s conversation shows their interest in the topic. They thought that everyone has the same opportunities to show their point of view to others. On the contrary, Chinese respondents commented that interrupters are not welcome in their culture. People can give their own opinion after others have finished their conversation. A too strong opposition to the communicator may also be viewed as disrespect.

4.2.3.5 *Statement Five: A person who speaks with a loud tone of voice is either upset or angry*

Figure 4.9: Responses to Statement Five

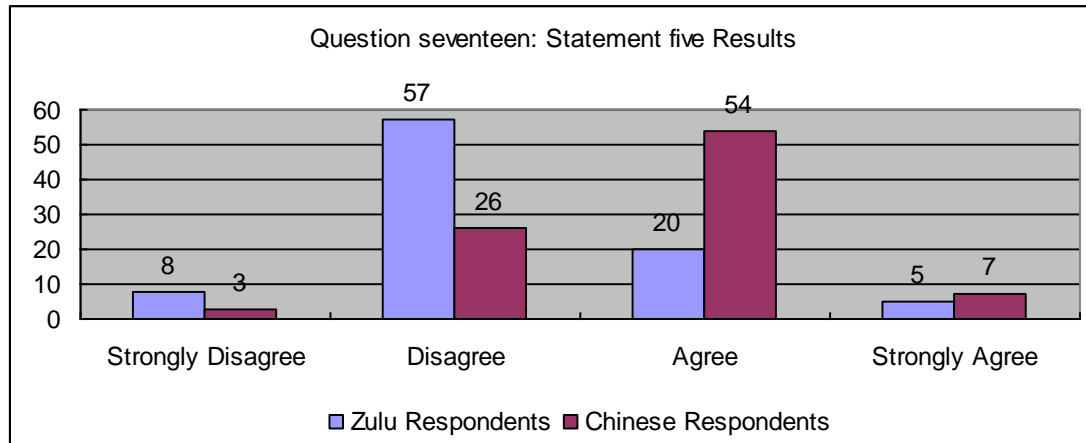


Figure 4.9 (above) reveals perceptions of the Zulu and the Chinese respondents to the statement “a person who speaks with a loud tone of voice is either upset or angry”. 63.3% (N=57) of the Zulu respondents and 28.9% (N=26) of the Chinese respondents disagreed with this statement. 22.2% (N=20) of the Zulu and 60.0% (N=54) of the Chinese students agreed with this statement.

Chinese respondents commented that they try to have peaceful relationships with others. They do not like to argue even when they have a different opinion from their friends. They are also too shy to say “no” or to refuse their friends. They talk to people with a smile, listen carefully and respond as politely as they can. If someone speaks to a Chinese person in a loud tone of voice, the Chinese will think that this person does not like them or that they are upset or angry with them. Chinese people do not talk to people loudly especially with their friends, elders and other important people since they do not want to destroy their friendly relationship with them.

The Zulu respondents commented that in their culture people are welcome to have different opinions and they like to exchange ideas with each other. They can also rebut other people especially their friends if they say something wrong. They speak loudly to discuss, argue or criticize. Therefore, speaking loudly is considered as normal in the Zulu culture.

4.2.3.6 *Statement Six: Receiving a gift with both hands is a sign of appreciation*

Figure 4.10: Responses to Statement Six

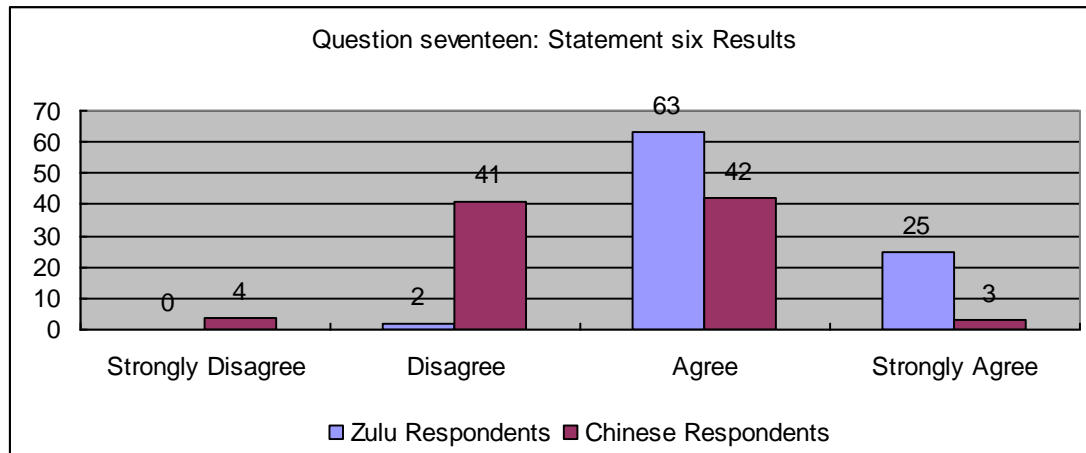


Figure 4.10 (above) reveals perceptions of the Zulu and Chinese respondents to the statement “receiving a gift with both hands is a sign of appreciation”. 70.0% (N=63) of the Zulu respondents and 46.7% (N=42) of the Chinese respondents agreed with this statement; 27.8% (N=25) of the Zulu respondents and 3.3% (N=3) of the Chinese respondents strongly agreed with this statement. However, 2.2% (N=2) of the Zulu respondents and 45.6% (N=41) of the Chinese respondents disagreed with this statement, and 4.4% (N=4) of Chinese respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

Chinese respondents commented that people can receive gifts either with one hand or both hands in their culture. There is no criterion for how to receive a gift, but on formal occasions Chinese people prefer to receive gifts or certificates with both hands to show respect.

Zulu respondents commented that in their culture, people receive gifts with both hands to show appreciation. They follow the tradition of putting the left hand on the right wrist and using the right hand to accept goods. Therefore, they think that people who accept gifts with one hand are rude and disrespectful.

4.2.3.7 *Statement Seven: Accepting a gift with one hand is a sign of disrespect*

Figure 4.11: Responses to Statement Seven

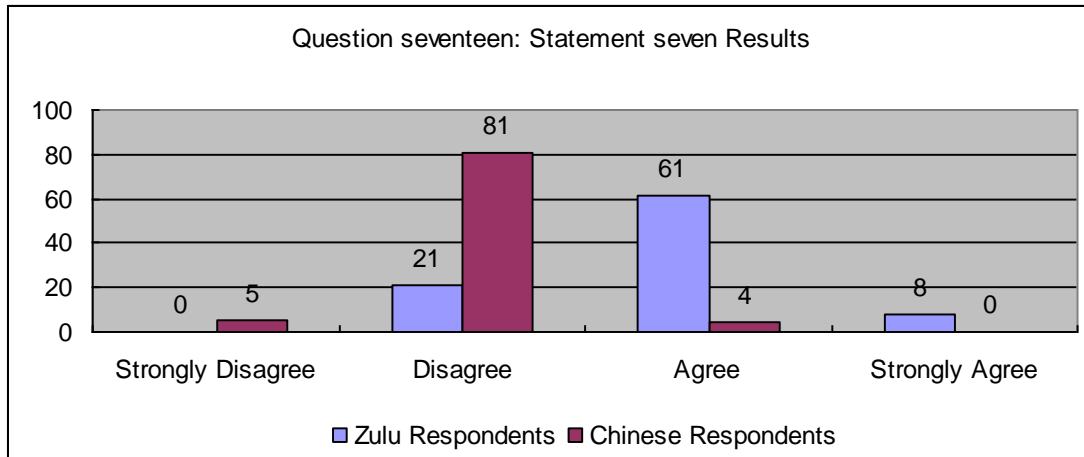


Figure 4.11 (above) reveals perceptions of the Zulu and the Chinese respondents to the statement “accepting a gift with one hand is a sign of disrespect”. 4.4% (N=4) of the Chinese respondents and 67.8% (N=61) of the Zulu respondents agreed with this statement. However, 90.0% (N=81) of the Zulu respondents and 23.3% (N=21) of the Chinese respondents disagreed with this statement.

Chinese respondents did not think that accepting a gift with one hand was a sign of disrespect but the Zulu respondents did.

4.2.3.8 *Statement Eight: A smile is enough as a form of greeting*

Figure 4.12: Responses to Statement Eight

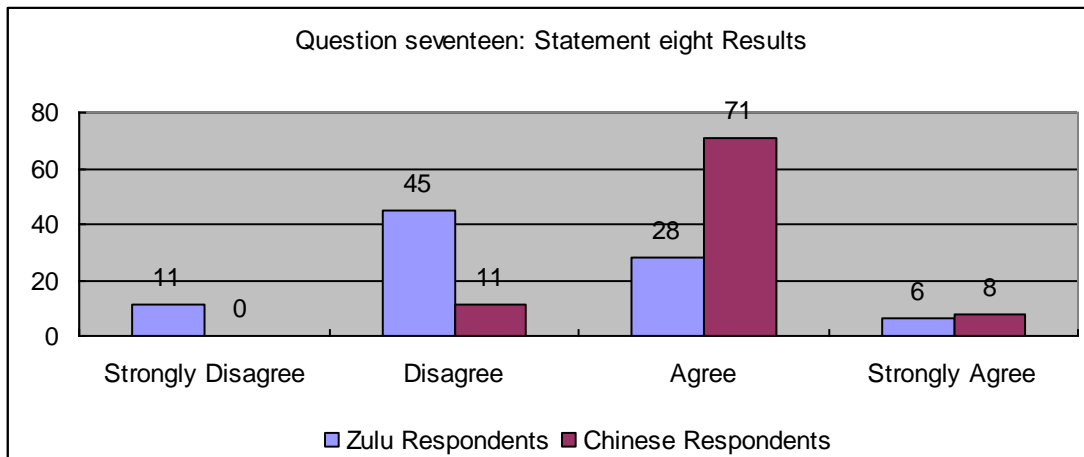


Figure 4.12 (on page 68) reveals perceptions of the Zulu and the Chinese respondents to the statement “a smile is enough as a form of greeting”. 12.2% (N=11) of Zulu students strongly disagreed with and 50.0% (N=45) disagreed with this statement. 31.1% (N=28) agreed with and 6.7% (N=6) strongly agreed with this statement. However no Chinese students strongly disagreed with this statement. 12.2% (N=11) of them disagreed with, 78.9% (N=71) agreed with and 8.9% (N=8) strongly agreed with this statement.

The Chinese respondents commented that the most familiar greeting behaviour they use is a smile. They also use a smile to show their good mood, appreciation, understanding and more. Therefore, the smile for a greeting is sufficient.

The Zulu respondents commented that they are a passionate group of people. They show their hospitality friendship, and feelings of missing each other etc. with an amiable hug, a handshake or excited facial expressions when they meet. Zulu respondents did not think that a smile is enough to express all their feelings. If people just give each other a smile, it may be because they do not know each other well enough.

4.2.4 Discussion: Theme One - Communication

This section analyzed eight specific communication experiences of the Zulu and the Chinese respondents. The findings revealed that the Zulu and the Chinese respondents had completely different attitudes toward to these statements. Findings from respondents’ comments indicated that their perceptions to the communication experiences were influenced by their cultural values, beliefs and norms which are rooted in their own cultures.

According to Martin and Nakayama (2001: 24) people share perceptions or ways of looking at the world. Thus, all of their prior learning, that is, the information people have already stored in their brains, affects how they interpret new information. Some of this learning and perception is related to the values of the cultural groups they belong to.

In this study it is evident that although many intercultural communication problems occur on the interpersonal level, most of the serious confrontations and misunderstandings can be traced to cultural differences that go to the basic core of what it means to be a member of a specific culture (Samovar *et al.*, 2007: 36).

4.3 THEME TWO – LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

In this theme, a combination of questions eight and sixteen are analyzed.

4.3.1 Analyzed Question Eight: Language Problems

(see Appendix A, Question Eight and Appendix B, Question Eight)

Table 4.2: Language Problems

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Language problem	74.4% (N=67)	25.6% (N=23)	72.2% (N=65)	27.8% (N=25)

Table 4.2 (above) clearly indicates that a large percentage of the Zulu (74.4%, N=67) and the Chinese respondents (72.2%, N=65) found that language is a problem when they communicate with each other.

Both the Zulu and the Chinese respondents indicated that the communicators' accent was one of the barriers. Communicators may have their own sentence structure, special understanding of words which cannot be followed by others, unique pronunciation or they may be short of word to express themselves as they are not familiar with English which may be their second language.

Findings indicated that communicators who speak English as their home language have less intercultural communication barriers in terms of language problems than those who speak isiZulu or Chinese as their home language. This finding strongly supports the research findings of Bruhns *et al.* (cited in Njobe, 2007: 1) which indicated that numerous studies on language abilities of second language learners' indicate that learners have difficulties learning in a second language.

Analysis of variance from SPSS 16 indicated that respondents' communication frequency can influence language problems as reflected in Table 4.3 (below) there was a *statistically significant difference* of $p (0.000) < 0.05$ for the Zulu respondents and $p (0.043) < 0.05$ for the Chinese respondents. Therefore, the significant difference between language problems and communication frequency, it is accepted that both the Zulu and the Chinese respondents who communicate more frequently have less intercultural communication barriers in terms of language problems as reflected in Table 4.4 (below).

Table 4.3: Analysis of Variance: Language Problems and Communication Frequency

Question 8: Language Problem		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Zulu Respondents	Between Groups	4.975	4	1.244	8.703	.000
	Within Groups	12.147	85	.143		
	Total	17.122	89			
Chinese Respondents	Between Group	1.957	4	.489	2.584	.043
	Within Groups	16.098	85	.189		
	Total	18.056	89			

Table 4.4: Cross Tabulation of Language Problems and Communication Frequency

	Communication Frequency	Language Problem		Total
		Yes	No	
Zulu Respondents	Very Infrequently	9(100%)		9
	Infrequently	17(89.5%)	2(10.5%)	19
	Neutral	29(82.9%)	6(17.1%)	35
	Frequently	10(62.5%)	6(37.5%)	16
	Very Frequently	2(18.2%)	9(81.8%)	11
Total		67	23	90
Chinese Respondents	Very Infrequently	9(52.90%)	8(47.1%)	17
	Infrequently	18(90%)	2(10%)	20
	Neutral	16(61.5%)	10(38.5%)	26
	Frequently	12(75%)	4(25%)	16
	Very Frequently	10(90.9%)	1(9.1%)	11
Total		65	25	90

Table 4.5 (on page 72) reflects that there was a *statistically significant difference* between different levels of communication competence and language problems since $p (0.000) < 0.05$ for the Zulu respondents and $p (0.003) < 0.05$ for the Chinese respondents. Therefore, because of the

significant difference between language problems and communication ability, it is accepted that respondents with better communication ability experience less intercultural communication barriers as reflected in Table 4.6 (below).

Table 4.5: Analysis of Variance: Language Problems and Communication Ability

Question 8: Language Problem		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Zulu Respondents	Between Groups	5.043	4	1.261	8.872	.000
	Within Groups	12.079	85	.142		
	Total	17.122	89			
Chinese Respondents	Between Group	3.078	4	.769	4.366	.003
	Within Groups	14.978	85	.176		
	Total	18.056	89			

Table 4.6: Cross Tabulation of Language Problems and Communication Ability Level

	Communication Ability Level	Language Problem		Total
		Yes	No	
Zulu Respondents	Very Easily	1(50%)	1(50%)	2
	Easily	1(11.1%)	8(88.9%)	9
	Neutral	11(64.7%)	6(35.3%)	17
	Difficulty	36(83.7%)	7(16.3%)	43
	Very Difficulty	18(94.7%)	1(5.3%)	19
Total		67	23	90
Chinese Respondents	Very Easily	1(14.3%)	6(85.7%)	7
	Easily	5(83.3%)	1(16.7%)	6
	Neutral	11(84.6%)	2(15.4%)	13
	Difficulty	26(68.4%)	12(31.6%)	38
	Very Difficulty	22(84.6%)	4(15.4%)	26
Total		65	25	90

Findings from question eight indicated that language is one of the intercultural communication barriers experienced by students because of language varieties, especially for those communicators for whom English is not their home language.

4.3.2 Analysis of Question Sixteen: Specified Language Problems

This section analyses question sixteen of the Zulu and the Chinese questionnaire that listed five specified language problems which respondents may encounter.

Table 4.7: Specified Language Problems (Zulu Respondents)

	Zulu respondents	
	YES	NO
I cannot understand them.	62.2% (N=56)	37.8% (N=34)
They do not clearly understand me.	76.7% (N=69)	23.3% (N=21)
I do not have enough words to express myself.	52.2% (N=47)	47.8% (N=43)
I have to repeat myself several times.	82.2% (N=74)	17.8% (N=16)
I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them.	15.6% (N=14)	84.4% (N=76)

Table 4.7 (above) indicates that 62.2% (N=56) of the Zulu respondents cannot understand the Chinese communicators. 76.7% (N=69) of them think that the Chinese communicators cannot clearly understand them, 52.2% (N=47) do not have enough words to express themselves and 82.2% (N=74) of them indicated that most of the time they have to repeat themselves several times.

Table 4.8: Specified Language Problems (Chinese Respondents)

	Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO
I cannot understand them.	70.0% (N=63)	30.0% (N=27)
They do not clearly understand me.	72.2% (N=65)	27.8% (N=25)
I do not have enough words to express myself.	74.4% (N=67)	25.6% (N=23)
I have to repeat myself several times.	74.4% (N=67)	25.6% (N=23)
I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them.	41.4% (N=37)	58.9% (N=53)

Table 4.8 (above) indicates that 70.0% (N=63) of the Chinese respondents cannot understand the Zulu communicators. 72.2% (N=65) of them think that the Zulu communicators cannot clearly understand them, 74.4% (N=67) do not have enough words to express themselves, 74.4% (N=67) of them indicated that most of the time they have to repeat themselves several times and 41.4% (N=37) of the Chinese respondents indicated that they do not communicate

with the Zulu communicators because they are afraid they do not know enough about them.

Findings indicated the specified language problems in question sixteen had correlation. Table 4.9 (below) analyzed the correlation of each specified language problem from the Zulu respondents' questionnaire. It revealed that the four specific language problems: "I cannot understand them", "they do not clearly understand me", "I do not have enough words to express myself" and "I have to repeat myself several times" have a statistically significant correlation with each other since p is less than 0.01.

Table 4.9: Correlation of Specified Language Problems in Question Sixteen (Zulu Questionnaire)

	I cannot understand them	They do not clearly understand me	I do not have enough words to express myself	I have to repeat myself several times	I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them
I cannot understand them					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	1.000	.383**	.769**	.357**	.145
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.	.000	.000	.001	.174
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
They do not clearly understand me					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.383**	1.000	.366**	.843**	.092
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.	.000	.000	.389
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
I do not have enough words to express myself					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.769**	.366**	1.000	.370**	.042
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000	.	.000	.692
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
I have to repeat myself several times					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.357**	.843**	.370**	1.000	.039
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.001	.000	.000	.	.714
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.145	.092	.042	.039	1.000
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.174	.389	.692	.714	.
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90

** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.10 (below) analyzed the correlation of each specified language problem from the Chinese respondents' questionnaire. The findings revealed that five specific language problems: "I cannot understand them", "they do not clearly understand me", "I do not have enough words to express myself", "I have to repeat myself several times" and "I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them" have a statistically significant correlation with each other since the value of p is less than 0.01.

Table 4.10: Correlation of Specified Language Problems in Question Sixteen (Chinese Questionnaire)

	I cannot understand them	They do not clearly understand me	I do not have enough words to express myself	I have to repeat myself several times	I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them
I cannot understand them					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	1.000	.298**	.450**	.450**	.399**
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
They do not clearly understand me					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.298**	1.000	.603**	.490**	.417**
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
I do not have enough words to express myself					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.450**	.603**	1.000	.708**	.386**
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
I have to repeat myself several times					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.450**	.490**	.708**	1.000	.438**
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90
I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them					
<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.399**	.417**	.386**	.438	1.000
<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	90	90	90	90	90

** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

Findings from Table 4.9 (on page 74) and Table 4.10 (above) indicate that all of the language problems specified in question sixteen are correlated which means that they influence each other. These language problems therefore add to the barriers of intercultural communication between the Zulu and the Chinese communicators.

Table 4.11 – Table 4.14 (below) use Chi-square (χ) tests to identify whether the influencing factors (Zulu respondents' gender, age, home language, educational level, communication ability and communication frequency) has statistically significant relationships with each specified language problem statement from the Zulu students.

Table 4.11: Chi-Square Results: Language Problems and Communication Ability (Zulu respondents)

Variables	Sig. (2-sided)
16.1 I cannot clearly understand them	0.007
16.2 They do not clearly understand me	0.004
16.3 I do not have enough words to express myself	0.000
16.4 I have to repeat myself several times	0.008
16.5 I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	0.284

Table 4.12: Chi-Square Results: Language Problems and Educational Level (Zulu respondents)

Variables	Sig. (2-sided)
16.1 I cannot clearly understand them	0.003
16.2 They do not clearly understand me	0.078
16.3 I do not have enough words to express myself	0.000
16.4 I have to repeat myself several times	0.043
16.5 I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	0.550

Table 4.13: Chi-Square Results: Language Problems and Communication Frequency (Zulu respondents)

Variables	Sig. (2-sided)
16.1 I cannot clearly understand them	0.009
16.2 They do not clearly understand me	0.018
16.3 I do not have enough words to express myself	0.000
16.4 I have to repeat myself several times	0.055
16.5 I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	0.396

Table 4.14: Chi-Square Results: Language Problems and Home Language (Zulu respondents)

Variables	Sig. (2-sided)
16.1 I cannot clearly understand them	0.009
16.2 They do not clearly understand me	0.016
16.3 I do not have enough words to express myself	0.009
16.4 I have to repeat myself several times	0.027
16.5 I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	0.175

- The statement: “I cannot clearly understand them” has statistically significant relationships with the factors: respondents’ communication ability, educational level, communication frequency and home language since the values of p are *below 0.05*.
- The statement: “they do not clearly understand me” has statistically significant relationships with the factors: respondents’ communication ability, educational level and home language since the values of p are *below 0.05*.
- The statement: “I do not have enough words to express myself” has statistically significant relationships with the factors: respondents’ communication ability, educational level, communication frequency and home language since the values of p are *below 0.05*.
- The statement: “I have to repeat myself several times” has statistically significant relationships with the factors: respondents’ communication ability, communication frequency and home language since the values of p are *below 0.05*.
- The statement: “I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them” has *no* statistically significant relationships with any factors since the p values are *above 0.05*.

Table 4.15 (below) and Table 4.16 (below) reveal the Chi-square (χ) test results from the Chinese students' responses to determine whether their gender, age, home language, educational level, communication ability and communication frequency has statistically significant relationships with each specified language problem statement.

Table 4.15: Chi-Square Results: Language Problems and Home Language (Chinese Respondents)

Variables	Sig. (2-sided)
16.1 I cannot clearly understand them	0.011
16.2 They do not clearly understand me	0.000
16.3 I do not have enough words to express myself	0.000
16.4 I have to repeat myself several times	0.001
16.5 I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	0.071

Table 4.16: Chi-Square Results: Language Problems and Communication Ability (Chinese Respondents)

Variables	Sig. (2-sided)
16.1 I cannot clearly understand them	0.019
16.2 They do not clearly understand me	0.001
16.3 I do not have enough words to express myself	0.000
16.4 I have to repeat myself several times	0.001
16.5 I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	0.182

- The statements: "I cannot clearly understand them", "they do not clearly understand me", "I do not have enough words to express myself" and "I have to repeat myself several times" have statistically significant relationships with the factors: *respondents' home language* and *communication ability* since the *p* values are *below 0.05*.
- The statement: "I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them" has *no* statistically significant relationships with any factors since the *p* values are *above 0.05*.

Findings from question sixteen indicates that the communicators' personal factors affect language problems and that communicators who do not speak

English as a first language, do not have the requisite communicational ability to express themselves properly.

According to Samovar *et al.* (1998: 144) language problems become intercultural communication barriers since the meanings people have for words are determined by the culture in which they have been raised; word usage and meanings are learned, and all cultures and co-cultures have special experiences that frame usage and meaning; people learn and use language as they do because of their cultural background.

Taking the above into account, it is necessary to find out how cultural differences affect intercultural communication.

4.4 THEME THREE – CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In this theme, question nine (see Appendix A, Question Nine and Appendix B, Question Nine) is analyzed.

Table 4.17: Cultural Differences

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Culture differences	65.6% (N=59)	34.4% (N=31)	61.1% (N=55)	38.9% (N=35)

Table 4.17 (above) reveals that 65.6% (N=59) of the Zulu respondents and 61.1% (N=55) of the Chinese respondents indicated that cultural differences create problems when they communicate with each other.

Cultural differences cause problems as Chinese and Zulu students do not share a common cultural background. Lustig and Koester (1993: 96) agree that the differences among cultures produce motivations that inhibit people as they communicate intercultural. It was therefore evident that intercultural problems do exist between the Zulu and the Chinese communicators.

To corroborate the above finding, Analysis of Variance Test was conducted to determine whether communicators' age and communication frequency had statistically significant relationships with the cultural differences variable.

The tests examined by SPSS V16 - Analysis of variance indicated that communicators' age and communication frequency have statistically significant different affect cultural differences since:

Table 4.18 (below) revealed that there is a *statistically significant difference* between the variables: communicators' age and cultural differences since: $p (0.033) < 0.05$ (Zulu respondents) and $p (0.002) < 0.05$ (Chinese respondents).

Table 4.18: Analysis of Variance: Cultural Differences and Communicators' Age

Question 9: Cultural Differences		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Zulu Respondents	Between Groups	1.956	3	.652	3.054	.033
	Within Groups	18.366	86	.214		
	Total	20.322	89			
Chinese Respondents	Between Group	3.333	3	1.111	5.292	.002
	Within Groups	18.056	86	.210		
	Total	21.389	89			

Table 4.19 (below) indicates that both Zulu and Chinese respondents who are younger experienced fewer cultural problems than the older respondents.

Table 4.19: Cross Tabulation: Cultural Differences and Communicators' Age

	Communicators' Age	Cultural Differences		Total
		Yes	No	
Zulu Respondents	18 – 21 Years	19(48.7%)	20(51.3%)	39
	22 – 25 Years	28(77.8%)	8(22.2%)	36
	26 – 30 Years	8(80%)	2(20%)	10
	Above 30 Years	4(80%)	1(20%)	5
Total		59	31	90
Chinese Respondents	18 – 21 Years	5(29.4%)	12(70.6%)	17
	22 – 25 Years	30(60%)	20(40%)	50
	26 – 30 Years	16(84.2%)	3(16.8%)	19
	Above 30 Years	4(100%)		4
Total		55	35	90

This finding can be attributed to the claim that cultures exist in the minds of people, and are shaped since they were young. As they grow up, culture becomes rooted deeper and deeper. This deep structure that unifies a culture, makes each culture unique, and explains the how and why behind a culture's collective action (Samovar *et al.*, 2007: 35). This study found that younger people like to experience new cultures.

Table 4.20 (below) reveals that there is a *statistically significant difference* between the variables: communication frequency and cultural differences since $p (0.029) < 0.05$ for the Chinese respondents. There was *no* statistically significant difference for the Zulu respondents.

Table 4.20: Analysis of Variance: Cultural Differences and Communication Frequency

Question 9: Cultural Differences		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Zulu Respondents	Between Groups	.302	4	7.545E-02	.320	.864
	Within Groups	20.020	85	.236		
	Total	20.322	89			
Chinese Respondents	Between Group	2.522	4	.630	2.84	.029
	Within Groups	18.867	85	.222	0	
	Total	21.389	89			

Findings revealed that the significant difference between the variables: cultural differences and communication frequency can be attributed to the fact that Chinese respondents with more communication frequency have less intercultural communication problems as reflected in Table 4.21 (on page 82).

Table 4.21: Cross Tabulation: Cultural Differences and Communication Frequency (Chinese Respondents)

	Communication Frequency	Cultural Differences		Total
		Yes	No	
Chinese Respondents	Very Infrequently	11(64.7%)	6(35.3%)	17
	Infrequently	15(75%)	5(25%)	20
	Neutral	19(73.1%)	7(26.9%)	26
	Frequently	7(43.8%)	9(56.2%)	16
	Very Frequently	3(27.3%)	8(72.7%)	11
Total		55	35	90

All cultures tend to train their members to use the categories of their own cultural experiences when they judge the experiences of people from other cultures (Lustig and Koester, 1993: 92). That is why cultural differences create intercultural communication barriers. If people have more opportunities to communicate with other cultures, they will be able to learn more about the other cultures, thereby reducing misunderstanding between them. As stated earlier (see 4.3.1, on page 70), both the Zulu and the Chinese respondents with more communication frequency experienced less intercultural communication barriers when communicating with each other.

Cultural differences also cause other barriers, for example, racism problem, lack of trust, ethnocentrism and cultural stereotyping which are discussed in the next section.

4.5 THEME FOUR – CULTURAL BARRIERS

In this theme, a combination of questions ten, eleven, thirteen and fourteen are analyzed.

4.5.1 Analysis of Question Ten: Racism

(see Appendix A, Question Ten and Appendix B, Question Ten)

Table 4.22: Racism

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Racism as a problem	12.2% (N=11)	87.8% (N=79)	54.4% (N=49)	45.6% (N=41)

In Table 4.22 (on page 82), more than half of the Chinese respondents (54.4%, N=49) indicated that racism is a problem but only a few of the Zulu respondents (12.2%, N=11) thought so.

It was evident that racism was a problem for the Chinese students. Taylor and Katz (1988: 7) recognised that racism can occur at three distinct levels: individual, institutional, and cultural. According to respondents' comments, it was found that Chinese students are a small community in the selected university environment. They came from another country and another culture to a totally unfamiliar country which made them sensitive and aware of differences. On the questionnaires many Chinese students had also mentioned that the employment laws in South Africa are unfair. All of the above added to the Chinese respondents' negative perceptions and were translated into problems of racism. According to Lustig and Koester (1993: 282) prejudice has been employed by cultures to oppress entire groups of people and to make it virtually impossible for their members to have access to political, economic, and social power. In this form, prejudice is considered as racism as Chinese students are not allowed access to the same privileges as South African students.

4.5.2 Analysis of Question Eleven: Lack of Trust

(see Appendix A, Question Eleven and Appendix B, Question Eleven)

Table 4.23: Lack of Trust

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Lack of trust	27.8% (N=25)	72.2% (N=65)	57.8% (N=52)	42.2% (N=38)

As Table 4.23 (above) reveals, 27.8% (N=25) of the Zulu respondents and 57.8% (N=52) of the Chinese respondents indicated that there was a lack of trust between them. 72.2% (N=65) of the Zulu respondents and 42.2% (N=38) of the Chinese respondents did not think so.

Findings revealed that the Chinese respondents experienced the "lack of trust problem" more than the Zulu respondents. Chinese respondents' comments indicated that South Africa's high crime rate was the primary reason why they

had lost their trust in “most of the black people” which also included their lack of trust in Zulu people. On the other hand, the Zulu students commented that Chinese people do not keep their promises. This is an example of misunderstanding because of cultural differences. In Chinese culture, people do not like to refuse other people especially when they are face-to-face. They would comply with the other’s request first, thereafter, they would send a message or telephone to say they cannot make it – this causes the Zulu students to lose trust in the Chinese students.

Table 4.24 (below) revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between communication frequency and “lack of trust” in the case of the Zulu respondents as $p (0.000) < 0.05$ and in the case of the Chinese respondents where $p (0.016) < 0.05$. it is also evident from Table 4.25 (on page 85) that both the Zulu and the Chinese respondents with more communication frequency have less intercultural communication problems in terms of “lack of trust” when communicating with each other.

Table 4.24: Analysis of Variance: Lack of Trust and Communication Frequency

Question 11: Lack of Trust		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Zulu Respondents	Between Groups	4.607	4	1.152	7.280	.000
	Within Groups	13.488	85	.158		
	Total	18.056	89			
Chinese Respondents	Between Group	2.900	4	.725	3.233	.016
	Within Groups	19.056	85	.224		
	Total	21.956	89			

Table 4.25: Cross Tabulation: Lack of Trust and Communication Frequency

	Communication Frequency	Lack of trust		Total
		Yes	No	
Zulu Respondents	Very Infrequently	6(66.7%)	3(33.3%)	9
	Infrequently	11(57.9%)	8(42.1%)	19
	Neutral	3(8.8%)	32(91.2%)	35
	Frequently	3(18.8%)	13(81.2%)	16
	Very Frequently	2(18.2%)	9(81.8%)	11
Total		25	65	90
Chinese Respondents	Very Infrequently	13(76.5%)	4(23.5%)	17
	Infrequently	11(55%)	9(45%)	20
	Neutral	19(73.1%)	7(26.9%)	26
	Frequently	6(37.5%)	10(62.5%)	16
	Very Frequently	3(27.3%)	8(72.7%)	11
Total		52	38	90

The findings above suggest that in order to avoid intercultural communication barriers caused by lack of trust, communicators should increase communication frequency which in turn will increase understanding between them and make them familiar with other’s culture. In this way, they may be able to overcome obstacles to intercultural communication. Sigband and Bell (1990: 76) agree that the way to achieve better communication is through knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of cultural differences rather than through acceptance or integration.

4.5.3 Analysis Question Thirteen: Ethnocentrism

(see Appendix A, Question Thirteen and Appendix B, Question Thirteen)

Table 4.26: Ethnocentrism

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Ethnocentrism as a problem	23.3% (N=21)	76.7% (N=69)	26.7% (N=24)	73.3% (N=66)

23.3% (N=21) of the Zulu respondents and 26.7% (N=24) of the Chinese respondents in Table 26 (above) indicated that ethnocentrism is a problem when they communicate with each other; 76.7% (N=69) of the Zulu respondents and 73.3% (N=66) of the Chinese respondents did not think so.

According to Lustig and Koester (1993: 277) all cultures have a strong ethnocentric tendency, that is, the tendency to use the categories of one's own culture to evaluate the actions of others. However, it is evident from Table 4.26 (on page 85) that ethnocentrism does not have too much of an influence on the communication between the Zulu and the Chinese students.

4.5.4 Analysis Question Fourteen: Cultural Stereotyping

(see Appendix A, Question Fourteen and Appendix B, Question Fourteen)

Table 4.27: Cultural Stereotyping

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Cultural stereotyping	56.7% (N=51)	43.3% (N=39)	47.8% (N=43)	52.2% (N=47)

Table 4.27 (above) reveals that 56.7% (N=51) of the Zulu respondents and 47.8% (N=43) of the Chinese respondents indicated that cultural stereotyping is a problem when they communicate with each other. 43.3% (N=39) of the Zulu respondents and 52.2% (N=47) of the Chinese respondents did not think so.

Samovar *et al.* (1998: 246) explain that people learn stereotypes from their parents, relatives, and friends. Stereotypes develop through limited personal contact. Dlomo (2003: 43) added that there are two main reasons for the occurrence of stereotypes and prejudice in intercultural miscommunication. One is that people expect the same behaviour in the target culture that they find in their own culture. The second reason is that people often don't realize that the same behaviour can be interpreted differently in two cultures (Albert, 1996: 343).

Lustig and Koester (1993: 286) suggest that there must be a willingness to explore various cultural experiences without prejudgment and that there must be a commitment both to learn about other cultures and to understand one's own. Although no one can completely overcome all the obstacles to intercultural competence that naturally exist, the requisite knowledge,

motivation, and skill can certainly help to minimize the negative effects of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice and other barriers.

4.6 THEME FIVE – NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

In this theme, question twelve (see Appendix A, Question Twelve and Appendix B, Question Twelve) is analyzed.

Table 4.28: Nonverbal Communication

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Nonverbal communication	41.1% (N=37)	58.9% (N=53)	50.0% (N=45)	50.0% (N=45)

In Table 4.28 (above), 41.1% (N=37) of the Zulu respondents and 50.0% (N=45) of the Chinese respondents indicated that nonverbal communication is a problem when they communicate with each other. 58.9% (N=53) of the Zulu respondents and 50.0% (N=45) of the Chinese respondents did not think so.

Mitchell (2005: 181) explained that nonverbal communication plays six major communicative roles, i.e. repetition, contradiction, substitution, accentuation, complement and regulation that are closely related to verbal communication. Therefore, nonverbal communication helps communicators to complete their conversion. However, Chinese respondents commented that the Zulu students use their own gestures to greet each other and they therefore feel that they cannot join the Zulu students' group. Chinese students also encounter nonverbal communication problems in their daily lives, for example, when they call for a taxi, they are required to use different gestures to indicate different destinations, but Chinese students are not familiar with these gestures and therefore experience difficulties with transport. The Zulu respondents commented that nonverbal communication also brings them difficulty sometimes, like for example when they engage in conversation with Chinese students. The Chinese students like to keep eye contact to show their respect and to indicate that they are paying attention but Zulu people avoid direct eye contact since that is considered rude and defiant behaviour in their culture. It is evident that nonverbal expressions vary from culture to culture and it is

precisely those variations that make misinterpretation of nonverbal communication a barrier. Therefore, nonverbal communication can create confusion when people from different cultures communicate with each other.

4.7 THEME SIX – COMMON INTERESTS

In this theme, question fifteen (see Appendix A, Question Fifteen and Appendix B, Question Fifteen) is analyzed.

4.7.1 Analysis of Question Fifteen (a): Sharing Interesting Topics

Table 4.29: Sharing Interesting Topics

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
sharing interesting topics	54.4% (N=49)	45.6% (N=41)	61.1% (N=55)	38.9% (N=35)

Table 4.29 (above) reveals that 54.4% (N=49) of Zulu respondents and 61.1% (N=55) of Chinese respondents indicated that they share common interests in terms of topics of discussion with each other. 45.6% (N=41) of the Zulu respondents and 38.9% (N=35) of the Chinese respondents did not share common interests topics.

Table 4.30 (below) reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between “communication frequency” and “sharing interesting topics” as $p(0.000) < 0.05$ for the Zulu respondents and $p(0.047) < 0.05$ for the Chinese respondents.

Table 4.30: Analysis of Variance: “Sharing Interesting Topics” and Communication Frequency

Question 15a: Sharing Interesting Topics		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Zulu Respondents	Between Groups	9.549	4	2.387	15.887	.000
	Within Groups	12.773	85	.150		
	Total	22.322	89			
Chinese Respondents	Between Group	2.264	4	.566	2.515	.047
	Within Groups	19.125	85	.225		
	Total	21.389	89			

It is evident from Table 4.31 (below) that the Zulu and the Chinese respondents with more communication frequency share more interesting topics together.

Table 4.31: Cross Tabulation: “Sharing Interesting Topics” and Communication Frequency

	Communication Frequency	Sharing interesting topics		Total
		Yes	No	
Zulu Respondents	Very Infrequently		9(100%)	9
	Infrequently	3(15.8%)	16(84.2%)	19
	Neutral	21(60%)	14(40%)	35
	Frequently	15(93.8%)	1(6.2%)	16
	Very Frequently	10(90.9%)	1(9.1%)	11
Total		49	41	90
Chinese Respondents	Very Infrequently	6(35.3%)	11(65.7%)	17
	Infrequently	13(65%)	7(35%)	20
	Neutral	15(57.5%)	11(42.3%)	26
	Frequently	11(68.8%)	5(31.2%)	16
	Very Frequently	10(90.9%)	1(9.1%)	11
Total		55	35	90

Comments from both the Zulu and the Chinese respondents indicated that if they have interesting topics to share, their conversations last long. Both groups said that they would like to exchange ideas and share new information about these interesting topics with each other. They would therefore like to communicate with each other more frequently.

4.7.2 Analysis Question fifteen (b): Interests Sharing

Table 4.32: Interests Sharing

	Zulu respondents		Chinese respondents	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Interest sharing	53.3% (N=48)	46.7% (N=42)	61.1% (N=55)	38.9% (N=35)

Table 4.32 (above) reveals that 53.3% (N=48) of the Zulu respondents and 61.1% (N=55) of the Chinese respondents indicated that they shared their interests with each other. 46.7% (N=42) of the Zulu respondents and 38.9% (N=35) of the Chinese respondents did not do this.

Table 4.33 (on page 90) reveals that there is a statistically significant

difference between “communication frequency” and “interests sharing” as $p(0.000) < 0.05$ for the Zulu respondents and $p(0.047) < 0.05$ for the Chinese respondents.

Table 4.33: Analysis of Variance: “Interests Sharing” and Communication Frequency

Question 15b: Interests Sharing		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Zulu Respondents	Between Groups	10.364	4	2.591	18.298	.000
	Within Groups	12.036	85	.142		
	Total	22.400	89			
Chinese Respondents	Between Group	2.264	4	.566	2.515	.047
	Within Groups	19.125	85	.225		
	Total	21.389	89			

Table 4.34 (below) also reveals that Zulu and Chinese respondents with more communication frequency get more of an opportunity to share their interests with each other.

Table 4.34: Cross Tabulation: Interests Sharing and Communication Frequency

	Communication Frequency	Interests sharing		Total
		Yes	No	
Zulu Respondents	Very Infrequently		9(100%)	9
	Infrequently	2(10.5%)	17(89.5%)	19
	Neutral	21(60%)	14(40%)	35
	Frequently	15(93.8%)	1(6.2%)	16
	Very Frequently	10(90.9%)	1(9.1%)	11
Total		48	42	90
Chinese Respondents	Very Infrequently	6(35.3%)	11(65.7%)	17
	Infrequently	13(65%)	7(35%)	20
	Neutral	15(57.7%)	11(42.3%)	26
	Frequently	11(68.8%)	5(31.2%)	16
	Very Frequently	10(90.9%)	1(9.1%)	11
Total		55	35	90

Tables 4.35 and 4.36 (on page 91) indicate that “sharing interesting topic” and “interests sharing” have a statistically significant correlation with each other since these variables have a p value of 0.000 , which is *below* 0.05 . This means that communicators who share interesting topics should have the same interests and *vice versa*, in other words if people have common interests they are easily able to share interesting topics. Respondents’ comments indicated

that playing soccer and basketball are common interests for males but not badminton or tennis. Female respondents share most of each other's interests which include fashion, shopping, entertainment news, movie, soopies, etc.

Table 4.35: Correlation: Sharing Interesting Topics and Interests Sharing (Zulu Respondents)

		Sharing interesting topics	Interests sharing
Sharing interesting topics	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.978**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	90	90
Interests sharing	Pearson Correlation	.978**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	90	90

** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.36: Correlation: Sharing Interesting Topics and Interests Sharing (Chinese Respondents)

		Sharing interesting topics	Interests sharing
Sharing interesting topics	Pearson Correlation	1.000	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	90	90
Interests sharing	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	90	90

** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

It is clear from the above discussion that “interests sharing” and “sharing interesting topics” occur when communicators’ communicate with each other frequently. Respondents also remarked that when they share interesting topics with people from another culture, they feel closer to each other, and that this also enables them to learn more about each others’ cultures. This also reveals that common interests are incentives to have intercultural conversations.

4.8 SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION REPORT

Table 4.37 (on pages 92-93) is a report on the observations of Zulu and Chinese students’ daily communication with each other. It includes communicators’ behaviours, customs, and characteristics of their verbal and nonverbal communication.

Table 4.37: Observation Report

Types	Focus on	Name of group members	
		Zulu Respondents	Chinese Respondents
Daily behaviours	Greeting behaviour	Zulu students like to hug each other or have a special handshake when they meet.	When Chinese students meet each other, most of them smile or nod and say “Hi” or “Hello”.
	Compliment and response behaviour	Zulu students like to receive compliments.	Chinese students usually refuse compliments and respond with humility.
Customs	Accepting goods	They put their left hand on the right wrist and use the right hand to accept goods.	They use one hand to accept goods, but on formal occasions, people prefer to receive gifts or certificates with both hands to show respect.
	Sitting	They usually find a seat and sit down when they come into a room without waiting for permission or consent.	They won't sit down until they are given permission or consent to do so.
	Manners	To old people: they do not pay special attention to old people because helping an old man may sometimes be viewed negatively, like you think them too old to do anything for themselves. The old people are usually not happy to accept other people's help, because they think they can do things for themselves.	To old people: They help their elders and the elders are happy to accept.
		They are able to wait patiently in queues.	They are not used to standing in queues.

Characteristic of verbal communication	Pronunciation	They have a distinct accent when they speak English. These pronunciations can be understood by Indians, Whites and other students.	They have a distinct accent when they speak English. Their pronunciations are not understood easily not only by Zulu students but also by other cultures in South Africa. They cannot pronounce a word clearly if it is too long.
	Tone	They have certain sounds which are not available in English, for example clicks like 'c', 'q', 'gq' and 'xh'”	Their words sometimes have a Chinese “sound” even when they speak English.
	Language	They speak Zulu as a first language, but if they are speaking with students from other languages backgrounds they usually speak English.	They speak Chinese most of the time. Even when there are English speaking students present, Chinese students still prefer to communicate in Chinese.
	Phrasing (syntax)	They use simple, easy words and sentences.	They are used to Chinese syntax to construct sentences.
	Content of dialogue	When they meet, they normally talk about the weather, what they did or are going to do and other interesting topics. They avoid personal questions.	When they meet they normally ask each other where they are going and what they are going to do. They talk about their life and they exchange school news, job information or entertainment news.
Characteristics of nonverbal communication	Eye contact	They avoid too much eye contact during a conversation.	They maintain eye contact to show their interest and understanding in a conversation.
	Gestures	They have special gestures, for example, greeting gestures and gestures to take a taxi.	They do not use too many gestures.
	Facial expressions	They like to express their emotion <i>via</i> facial expressions.	When they talk, they do not have too many facial expressions.

As Lustig and Koester (1993: 262) explained competent interpersonal relationships among people from different cultures do not happen just by accident. They occur as a result of the knowledge and perceptions that people have about one another, their motivations to engage in meaningful interaction, and their ability to act in ways that are regarded as appropriate and effective. The report (Table 4.37, on pages 92-93) reveals that the Zulu and the Chinese students have totally different behaviours, customs, and verbal and nonverbal communication characteristics. When they communicate with each other, some or all of these factors may become obstacles in the communication process. The findings suggest that it is necessary to learn about peoples' cultures, to share your culture with those people in order to overcome the inevitable differences which may occur in intercultural relationships. Lustig and Koester (1993: 272) add that learning to use culturally sensitive ways to handle the differences and disagreements that may arise are additional ways to improve intercultural relations.

4.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter Four analysed the quantitative and qualitative data gathered in this study.

It presented the findings of the questionnaires from the Zulu and the Chinese respondents to investigate the intercultural communication barriers between them. It analyzed the findings under six research themes: communication ability, language problems, cultural differences, barriers to intercultural communication (racism, trust, ethnocentrism and stereotyping), nonverbal behaviour and common interests amongst the respondents.

Chapter five discusses the conclusions of this study and makes recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four analyzes and interprets the data from the questionnaires by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

In this final chapter, discussion of the theoretical and practical implications regarding intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students based on the results obtained in this study are presented. Finally, recommendations are made for further study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Chapter two reviewed theories and literature relevant to defining and understanding the barriers of intercultural communication. The Transactional Communication Model was introduced to provide a basis for the investigation into intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students. In intercultural communication, misunderstandings often occur because of the way people interpret verbal and nonverbal behaviours. This is caused by the display rules of cultures and how each culture attaches different meanings concerning the appropriateness and effectiveness of particular interaction sequences. It is therefore important for one to understand the display rules before one exhibits certain verbal and nonverbal behaviours in order to avoid misunderstanding. Cultural differences also cause other problems of racism, lack of trust, ethnocentrism, cultural stereotyping and prejudices. Although no one can completely overcome all the possible obstacles to intercultural competence, the requisite knowledge, motivation, and skill can certainly help to minimize the negative effects of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice and other barriers.

Chapter three described the methodology in this study. The various techniques that were employed in this study were highlighted. The research design was discussed and provided insight into the sampling method, i.e. the questionnaire and observation report. This chapter has also revealed that the methodology was

designed to maximize reliability and validity which is crucial for the analysis of the results and the credibility of this study.

Chapter four categorised six themes to present the findings of the questions that were posed to the Zulu and the Chinese students to elicit their opinions about their intercultural interaction in the communication process. Theme one examined the communication ability of the respondents, theme two examined language problems, theme three focused on cultural differences, theme four examined the barriers to intercultural communication (racism, trust, ethnocentrism and stereotyping), and theme five investigated nonverbal behaviour. Theme six examined the common interests amongst respondents.

The findings revealed that intercultural communication barriers do exist between Zulu and Chinese students. Cultural differences and language problems were found to be the main intercultural communication barriers. In addition, the problems of nonverbal communication, racism, ethnocentrism, cultural stereotyping were also viewed as obstacles of the intercultural communication process.

5.3 ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to investigate the intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students at selected HEIs in Durban.

5.3.1 First Objective

The first objective was to determine whether intercultural communication problems do exist between Zulu and Chinese students.

The literature provided an understanding of intercultural communication and its barriers. It was found that verbal and nonverbal cultural differences can affect communicators' encoding and decoding messages which can lead to misunderstanding. Culture shares interpretations about beliefs, values and norms and these can be observed in people's behaviours. Culture provides

guidelines about how people should behave and indicates what to expect in interactions with others. Therefore, when one interacts with someone from another culture, one may find that an appropriate interpretation and reaction in one's own culture may be viewed as inappropriate in the other culture.

Language and nonverbal communication are influenced by culture, especially in this study where the communicators spoke different languages. Their tone, accent, verbal code system, conversational style, body language, facial expressions and other verbal and nonverbal communication behaviours differed from each other.

Evidence from this study suggests that the objectives have been achieved, as intercultural communication barriers do exist between Zulu and Chinese students.

5.3.2 Second Objective

The second objective was to identify the intercultural communication problems experienced between Zulu and Chinese students.

The findings revealed that culture and language problems are the main barriers. Racism, cultural stereotyping, nonverbal communication and lack of trust were other obstacles in intercultural communication between the Zulu and the Chinese students. The particular characteristics of respondents, such as their age, educational level and home language influenced intercultural communication. Other factors included respondents' communication ability and communication frequency.

The Transactional Model of Communication was utilized in this study to relate the process of communication. The model displayed the components of communication, *viz.* source, encoding, message, channel, noise, decoding, feedback, and context which are relative to this study. The conclusions on the application of this model revealed that all ten components were effectively utilized during the communication process between the Zulu and the Chinese

students.

Chapter four analyzed and reported on the Zulu and the Chinese respondents' intercultural communication experiences. Findings revealed that language problems amongst Zulu and Chinese students are viewed as common barriers. Comments from respondents revealed that a communicators' accent, different grammar structure and the words they use are confusing during their intercultural communication experiences. This is supported by Seiler and Beall (2008: 85) who believe that the ability to use sounds and grammar correctly is crucial to competent communication. Successful communication with someone from another culture involves understanding a common language (Chaney and Martin, 2004: 85).

An observation report also revealed further intercultural communication problems. Different customs, nonverbal communication problems and different daily communication behaviours were noted. It is evident that language provides the conceptual categories that influence how its speakers' perceptions are encoded and stored. Language holds us together as groups, differentiates us into groups, and also controls the way we shape concepts, how we think, how we perceive, and how we judge others (Jandt, 2004: 49). Findings revealed that the Zulu students would like to use nonverbal communication to complete their conversations, however the observation report indicates that Chinese students are not good at using nonverbal communication especially unfamiliar gestures as it confuses the communication process.

Findings from the analyses in chapter four revealed that if people communicate regularly, there will be less intercultural barriers. This finding may suggest that students should be encouraged to participate regularly in intercultural communication to improve intercultural competence. These findings are in line with Lustig and Koester (1993: 317) who believe that the ability to manage interactions with others, skills in enacting appropriate task and relational role behaviours, the capacity to tolerate uncertainty without anxiety, and a non evaluation posture toward the beliefs and actions of others must be in order to set up an acculturation environment.

5.3.3 Third Objective

The third objective was to examine the reasons why cultural divides exist between Chinese and Zulu students. To achieve this objective, in chapter four, question seventeen analyzed Zulu and Chinese students' responses using eight specific statements. Results revealed answers to each statement were totally different. The reason is that people are influenced by their culture from an early age and this affects the way they interpret information regarding intercultural experiences. Cultures differ not only in their beliefs and values but also in terms of their norms. Beliefs affect people's conscious and unconscious minds, as well as the manner in which they communicate. Therefore beliefs are the first cultural influence which may lead to misunderstanding in intercultural communication. Each person has a unique set of individual values which tend to permeate a culture. People use their own value to judge other people which make it a complex situation. Different norms may cause disagreements especially in an intercultural environment since people have different cultural backgrounds and they have their own rules to judge behaviours and social routines. Therefore, people from other cultures may organize their ideas, put their customs first and structure their conversations in a manner that differs from another culture.

Findings revealed that cultural differences may also led to racism, lack of trust, ethnocentrism and stereotyping. Racism involves beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of a given person toward people of a different racial group. It also excludes people from participating with other race groups and denies the interaction of cultural participation with other groups. Lack of trust led to uncomfortable situations marred by doubt and suspicion. Ethnocentrism makes people believe that the values of their culture are natural and correct and that people from other cultures, who do things differently, are wrong. Cultural stereotyping classifies every member of a culture in the same way. Therefore, stereotypes are a form of generalization about groups of people and makes assertions about the characteristics of all people who belong to that group.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the context of this study the following recommendations can be made:

- Communicators from different cultures should ideally study the language of another culture. Simple terms like greetings would be useful to avoid unnecessary barriers and would assist in building relationships.
- This study emphasized how cultural differences give rise to intercultural communication barriers. Therefore, it is important that communicators acquire knowledge about other cultures. Communicators can study about a different culture from books, movies, or by making regular contact with another culture.
- Cultural studies should be included in relevant syllabi at universities.
- Communicators should be advised to explore various cultural experiences without prejudice. The ability to adapt to changes in terms of different beliefs, values, norms as well as verbal and nonverbal codes and to behave appropriately and effectively with different cultures is advised.

5.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Several aspects emerged during the course of this study, but were not discussed in detail as they were beyond the scope of this study but are certainly important for further study.

Further research could explore the following:

- A study on Zulu and Chinese cultures in terms of specific approaches including cultural differences, which works as a determining factor to influence intercultural communication should be analysed.

- A study to investigate intercultural communication barriers in a multicultural learning environment.
- This study focused on respondents in a university environment. Research into intercultural communication in the corporate sector should also be explored.
- This study was limited to universities in KwaZulu-Natal further study could gather information on a wider scale and involve more universities in South Africa.

Cultural issues are resilient to contemporary life in South Africa and across the globe. Intercultural communication is a necessity to understand how people communicate, using verbal varieties and nonverbal codes which allows them to work together to build relationships. In this complex academic world, the mixing of different cultures and languages are necessary for effective communication and to ensure that harmonious team work takes place.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire: Zulu Students

Dear Students

I am studying towards an M-Tech degree in Public Relations Management at the Durban University of Technology. I am conducting a study on intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students at selected Higher Education Institutions in Durban. This questionnaire is part of an M-Tech dissertation.

Kindly assist me by completing the attached questionnaire. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and only aggregate figures will be reported.

Please return the complete questionnaire to Jin Zheng at the address below.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Yours Sincerely,

Jin Zheng

263 Fenniscowles Road, Umbilo, Durban 4001, SA.

mia.zhengjin@gmail.com

Cell: 072 2356 597

3 March 2008

Questionnaire for Zulu Students

Section A: Personal Data

1. Please indicate your gender. (Please tick one)

Male

Female

2. Please indicate your age. (Please tick one)

18-21 Years

22-25 Years

26-30 Years

Above 30 Years

3. Please tick your home language:

English

IsiZulu

Other

4. Please indicate your highest educational level. (Please tick one)

Matric

Diploma/Degree

Masters

Doctorate

Other (Please specify).....

5. Please indicate the name of your university and the department you are registered with.

6. How many times a week do you communicate with Chinese students?
Please tick where applicable.

Infrequently → Frequently

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Section B

7. Are you able to communicate easily with Chinese students?

Yes → No

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

8. Do you think language is a problem when you communicate with Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

9. Do you think cultural differences are a problem when you communicate with Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

10. Is racism a problem when you communicate with Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

11. Is there a lack of trust between yourself and the Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

12. Do you experience problems with nonverbal communication, i.e. gestures, eye contact, facial expressions with Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please state what problems you have experienced with nonverbal communication.

13. Does ethnocentrism (a person's belief that their culture is superior to others) affect communication with Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your answer.

14. Does cultural stereotyping (generalization about people from a specific culture) affect your communication with Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your answer.

15 (a). Do you share common interests in terms of topics of discussion with Chinese students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your answer.

15 (b). Do you think that Chinese students share your interests in terms of sport and leisure?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your answer.

16. Specify any language problems you encounter when you communicate with Chinese students who do not speak your language. Please tick the relevant box/es.

I cannot clearly understand them	
They do not clearly understand me	
I do not have enough words to express myself	
I have to repeat myself several times	
I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	
Other (specify)	

17. Consider the following statements when you communicate with Chinese students. Please tick the relevant box/es.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It is important to send nonverbal signals which are not confusing when communicating				
A person who is silent means that s/he does not understand the message				
It is important to maintain eye contact with a person in order to see whether s/he is honest or not				
Interrupting a person during a conversation is rude and impolite				
A person who speaks with a loud tone of voice is either upset or angry				
Receiving a gift with both hands is a sign of appreciation				
Accepting a gift with one hand is a sign of disrespect				
A smile is enough as a form of greeting				

*** Please note that all information provided above will remain anonymous ***

Thank you for your time!

Appendix B

Questionnaire: Chinese Students

Dear Students

I am studying towards an M-Tech degree in Public Relations Management at the Durban University of Technology. I am conducting a study on intercultural communication barriers between Zulu and Chinese students at selected Higher Education Institutions in Durban. This questionnaire is part of an M-Tech dissertation.

Kindly assist me by completing the attached questionnaire. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and only aggregate figures will be reported.

Please return the complete questionnaire to Jin Zheng at the address below.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Yours Sincerely,

Jin Zheng

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Questionnaire for Chinese Students

Section A: Personal Data

1. Please indicate your gender. (Please tick one)

Male

Female

2. Please indicate your age. (Please tick one)

18-21 Years

22-25 Years

26-30 Years

Above 30 Years

3. Please tick your home language:

English

Chinese

Other

4. Please indicate your highest educational level. (Please tick one)

Matric

Diploma/Degree

Masters

Doctorate

Other (Please specify).....

5. Please indicate the name of your university and the department you are registered with.

6. How many times a week do you communicate with Zulu students?
Please tick where applicable.

Infrequently Frequently

_____→

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Section B

7. Are you able to communicate easily with Zulu students?

Yes No

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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8. Do you think language is a problem when you communicate with Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

9. Do you think cultural differences are a problem when you communicate with Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

10. Is racism a problem when you communicate with Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

11. Is there a lack of trust between yourself and the Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what problems you have experienced.

12. Do you experience problems with nonverbal communication, i.e. gestures, eye contact, facial expressions with Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please state what problems you have experienced with nonverbal communication.

13. Does ethnocentrism (a person's belief that their culture is superior to others) affect communication with Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your answer.

14. Does cultural stereotyping (generalization about people from a specific culture) affect your communication with Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your answer.

15 (a). Do you share common interests in terms of topics of discussion with Zulu students?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain what those topics are.

15 (b). Do you think that Zulu students share your interests in terms of sport and leisure?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your answer.

16. Specify language problems you encounter when you communicate with Zulu students who do not speak your language. Please tick the relevant box/es.

I cannot clearly understand them	
They do not clearly understand me	
I do not have enough words to express myself	
I have to repeat myself several times	
I do not communicate with them because I am afraid I do not know enough about them	
Other (specify)	

17. Consider the following statements when you communicate with Zulu students. Please tick the relevant box/es.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It is important to send nonverbal signals which are not confusing when communicating				
A person who is silent means that s/he does not understand the message				
It is important to maintain eye contact with a person in order to see whether s/he is honest or not				
Interrupting a person during a conversation is rude and impolite				
A person who speaks with a loud tone of voice is either upset or angry				
Receiving a gift with both hands is a sign of appreciation				
Accepting a gift with one hand is a sign of disrespect				
A smile is enough as a form of greeting				

*** Please note that all information provided above will remain anonymous ***

Thank you for your time!